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CPEA® HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



Caribbean Examinations Council

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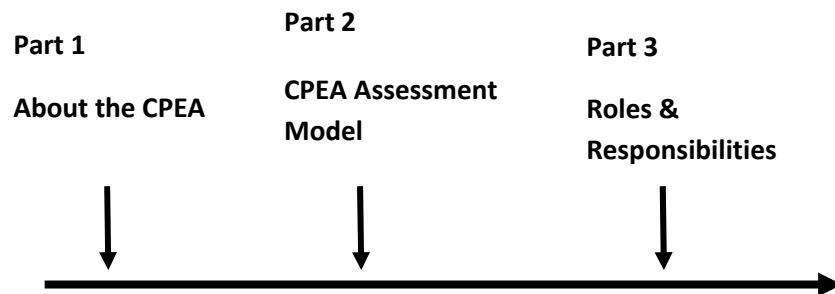
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Introduction

This *Administrator's Handbook* is designed for primary school administrators whose teachers are preparing pupils for the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA®). The objective of this handbook is to assist administrators to work effectively with teachers, pupils and parents in guiding learning and enhancing the performance of pupils in the CPEA.

The handbook is divided into three parts; the first part provides an overview of the CPEA and offers a rationale for the CPEA. Part two provides details about the Assessment Model employed in the CPEA. Finally, part three describes the roles and responsibilities of key partners in ensuring pupils' success in the CPEA.

Your Guide/Map through this Handbook



Part 1 – About the CPEA

Key Questions:

1. What is the CPEA?
2. What is the rationale for the CPEA?

Section A: What is the CPEA?

The Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) is an assessment of the literacies required by all pupils exiting the primary school system. The focus of this assessment is on a set of literacies which are common to all primary curricula across the region and are necessary for students to achieve at higher levels of education. These include mathematical, language, civic and scientific literacies, all of which are solidly grounded in learning theories espoused by Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky among others. The CPEA will therefore focus on the assessment of literacies and not individual subjects as is the case with traditional end-of-primary examinations.

Section B: Why the CPEA?

It is anticipated that the CPEA, as a regional assessment offered by CXC, will provide the foundations for a seamless transition to secondary education and facilitate portability of qualifications across the Caribbean Region and should:

1. assist with the quality measures in the primary education system;
2. offer a common measure across schools and territories in the region.

Part 2 – Assessment Model for the CPEA

Key Questions:

1. How will my pupils be assessed in the CPEA?
2. Will teachers be required to teach a new curriculum?
3. Which tasks will be assessed internally and which will be assessed externally?
4. What are the main features of the CPEA Assessment Model?

Section A: How are pupils assessed differently in the CPEA?

The CPEA is predicated on the following two principles of assessment:

1. Formative assessment when used by teachers raises the levels of performance of all students, even more so for low-achieving students.
2. Strong gains in examination scores are obtainable when pupils are involved in their own assessment (self-assessment) and the assessment of others (peer assessment) and are given opportunities to use these skills and associated knowledge. In addition, pupils perform better when their parents are involved in their education.

In the CPEA, formative assessment (assessment *for* learning) and summative assessment (assessment *of* learning) are carefully balanced in the assessment model. These two aspects complement and integrate a view of assessment as part of the natural learning environment of a classroom. It also provides multiple measures which tap different aspects of a pupil's knowledge, skills and abilities obtained under a variety of conditions from a variety of sources. The formative and summative aspects are jointly operationalised by teachers, pupils, parents and CXC. The curriculum is defined not in terms of subjects but as literacies achieved or standards reached.

This assessment model is based on solid educational and psychometric principles. It therefore means that the CPEA should include opportunities for formative as well as summative assessment, the involvement of students in self and peer assessment, and linkages between the home and school.

Section B: Will teachers be required to teach a new curriculum?

Teachers will not be required to teach a new curriculum. The curriculum followed by the schools would be that which is pursued. The internal assessment will be based on these curricula while the external assessment will be based on those literacies that are common in the various curriculums across the region.

Section C: Which tasks will be assessed internally and which will be assessed externally?

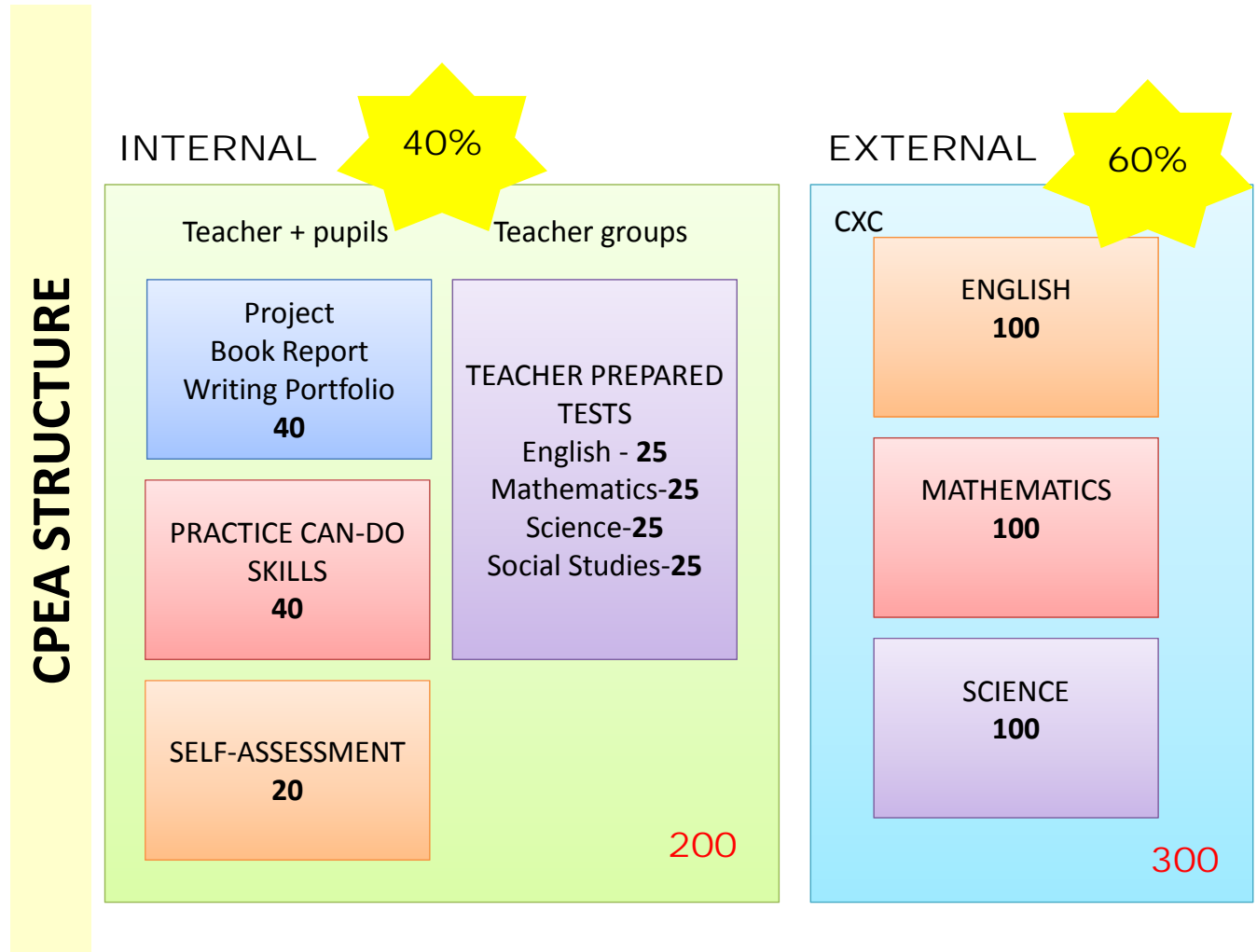


Figure 1: CPEA Structure

Section D: What are the main Features of the CPEA Assessment Model?

1. Developing among pupils, teachers and parents a shared vision of *why* assess in the primary schools, *what* to assess and *how* to assess.
2. Making the assessment process within each school participatory, dynamic and flexible.
3. Viewing assessment as composed of two main facets; formative assessment as assessment for learning and summative assessment as assessment of learning.
4. Using assessment results with a well-defined feedback process to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve their potential.
5. Aligning assessment with curriculum and instruction.
6. Giving pupils multiple opportunities to demonstrate their competencies.
7. Basing inferences on multiple sources of evidence.
8. Assessing holistically pupils' competence in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.
9. Giving credence and recognition to teachers' informed judgement about pupil's performance.
10. Viewing pupils as active participants in the assessment process.
11. Establishing inferences from test scores to include at least three domains: curricular domain, cognitive-meta-cognitive domain and real world domain.
12. Viewing teachers as critical leaders of the assessment process.

Part 3 – Roles and Responsibilities

Key Questions:

1. How can administrators help teachers effectively prepare pupils for the CPEA?
2. How can administrators help pupils succeed in the CPEA?
3. How can administrators engage parents?

The Assessment Model for the CPEA assumes a number of roles for teachers, pupils and parents and requires:

teachers, pupils and parents to participate in developing pupil's ability to learn, to learn how to learn and to learn about learning;

- *teachers* to play critical roles in collecting evidence about the development of pupils as learners and teaching under a formative assessment mode;
- *pupils* accept and practice leadership role in conducting self-assessment and peer assessment and in defining the way they behave, what it means to learn and how to learn; and
- *parents* (or guardians) participate in the activities of the PTA where members discuss educational issues associated with the growth and development of pupils and seek to support relevant learning experiences at home.

Section A: How can I help teachers effectively prepare pupils for the CPEA?

The following are some ways in which you can support teachers as they engage pupils in the CPEA.

Be a Coach	Help teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses. Encourage them to establish goals and identify the best strategies for achieving these goals. Provide teachers with resources required to help them succeed.
Build a community of practice	Build a community of practice where teachers are encouraged to plan together and share ideas. Establish common planning time at specific time periods during the day/week and get teachers from specific grade levels to work together to plan their lessons and prepare their tests.
Be an instructional leader	Have high expectations of both your teachers and pupils. Provide opportunities for teacher professional development. Encourage teachers to use data from formative tasks to evaluate their pupils' progress. Communicate directly and often with teachers about teaching and learning and about their pupils' needs. Have conversations with teachers and promote an environment where teachers feel free to talk with you.
Spend time in the classroom	By spending time in the classroom, you are aware of what is going on and this gives you an opportunity to provide assistance to teachers regarding their instructional efforts. Do an occasional "walk-thru" to observe the level of teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions and make suggestions about how teaching can be improved.
Provide resources	By knowing what happens in your classroom, you will be better able to allocate resources to meet your teachers and pupils' specific needs.
Solicit feedback	Provide opportunities to interact with teachers about the learning process. Interact frequently with them and devise strategies which will assist them in improving their teaching. By soliciting feedback from teachers, you will become more aware of the challenges and success they encounter daily. This will provide you with data needed to improve the instructional process.

Section B: How can I help pupils succeed in the CPEA?

Your pupils are key partners in the learning process and will play a more active role in their own learning. Pupils must be provided with opportunities to take charge of and responsibility for their own learning. Your role will significantly impact your pupils' success in the CPEA. You should

- encourage your pupils to do well
- adopt a policy where pupils feel free to talk with you
- participate with pupils in their playtime and work activities
- provide a warm and friendly school environment
- provide an environment where pupils can feel safe
- be a mentor and role model for your pupils
- encourage your students to speak freely about things that are important to them and affect them daily
- help build students' confidence and let them know they can do well

Section C: How can administrators engage parents in the learning process?

Pupils do better where there is strong parental involvement in their learning.

Involving parents in their children's education improves the parent-child relationship. In addition, a strong relationship between the school, family and the larger community has a powerful positive impact on pupil achievement. It therefore means that it is critical that parents are engaged in the learning process and that you employ a number of strategies to enlist parents' support.

Strategies for involving parents

A different kind of PTA

Clearly articulate your expectations of parents and communicate regularly with them about what children are learning. You should make suggestions to parents about what they can do to help. Involve parents in the day-to-day activities of the school by making explicit the school's homework policies and communicate your expectations of how they can support their children's learning.

You should also provide opportunities for parents to talk with you about their role in their children's education.

A number of strategies can be used to foster this dialogue:

- Organised home visits
- Family nights held at the school or at a parent's house
- Well-planned parent-teacher conferences
- After-school activities for parents and their children
- PTA is the inclusion of a forum where members meet, discuss and explore educational issues associated with the growth and development of pupils in primary schools

Home-school communication

- Communicate frequently with parents to let them know how their children are doing in school. You should also tell parents about the school curriculum and solicit their feedback on curriculum-related decisions and activities
- Inform parents of the specific achievements of their children. For example, if a child is nominated class prefect, send a personalized communication to the parents informing them of this accomplishment.

Involve parents in homework programmes

- Indicate to parents early the nature of the homework assignments pupils will be required to complete.
- Ask parents to work out with their children specific schedules for completing their homework assignments.
- Encourage parents to carefully select and discuss with children television programmes that they watch, newspaper articles that they read and so on to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills thereby increasing pupils' awareness of what is happening around them.