

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
APPRAISAL STAGE**

Report No.: PIDA3577

Project Name	Guyana Secondary Education Improvement (P147924)
Region	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
Country	Guyana
Sector(s)	Secondary education (100%)
Theme(s)	Education for the knowledge economy (100%)
Lending Instrument	Investment Project Financing
Project ID	P147924
Borrower(s)	Cooperative Republic of Guyana
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Education
Environmental Category	B-Partial Assessment
Date PID Prepared/Updated	17-Mar-2014
Date PID Approved/Disclosed	17-Mar-2014
Estimated Date of Appraisal Completion	25-Mar-2014
Estimated Date of Board Approval	28-May-2014
Decision	Authorization to appraise and request to negotiate: The meeting agreed that the team will appraise the Project from March 18-26, 2014. A revised PAD integrating Decision Review Meeting comments will be shared and the team will request authorization to negotiate after appraisal.

I. Project Context

Country Context

Guyana is located in the northern part of South America, bordering the Atlantic Ocean, with Suriname, Venezuela and Brazil as neighbors. It is the third smallest country in South America after Suriname and Uruguay, with a population of about 800,000 people. It is also the third poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, after Haiti and Nicaragua, with a per capita GNP of approximately US\$3,410 (2012).

For the five-year period 2008-2012, GDP growth averaged 4 percent, recovering steadily since 2007 (when it fell by 3.6 percent). The economy grew by 3.9 percent during the first half of 2013, largely driven by rapid growth in mining, and is projected to grow by 5.8 percent overall in 2013. Inflation is stable at less than 2 percent. Guyana is well endowed with natural resources, with fertile agricultural lands, bauxite, gold and extensive tropical forests which cover 80 percent of the country. However, the incidence of poverty is among the highest in the Western Hemisphere, at 43 percent of the population (2011), with much higher rates in rural and Amerindian areas. In 2012 it ranked 118 out of 187 countries on UNDP's Human Development Index, having declined from 107

in 2008. 90 percent of the population lives on the coastal plain, in and near the capital of Georgetown. Guyana's democracy remains stable but fragile, with political parties largely split along ethnic lines.

Sectoral and institutional Context

As stated in the Minister of Finance's annual Budget Speech to Parliament (2012), the Government of Guyana (GoG) recognizes that education is critical if the country is to develop a well-trained and skilled workforce necessary to meet the needs of the modern economy and implement the Low Carbon Development Strategy. While the sector has recently made remarkable progress, by achieving Universal Primary Education, Guyana's education system is still recovering from years of underinvestment. The sector's problems began with political instability in the 1970s and lasted through economic decline and fiscal adjustment until the early 1990s. Since then the education budget has risen from 2.1 percent in 1991 to an average of 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the last four years, demonstrating the Government's firm commitment to education as a national priority. In the same period, education as a percentage of the national budget has risen from a low of 4.4 percent to an average of 15 percent (2012). The attainment of Universal Secondary Education (USE)—including provision of secondary education in appropriate conditions that can remediate low levels of learning among primary education graduates—is a major priority in the current Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2008-2013, and is expected to remain so in the new ESP 2014-2018 (under preparation).

Secondary Education in Guyana. About 84,000 students are enrolled in secondary education in the country. The vast majority of students (95 percent) are enrolled in general secondary education, with just 5 percent attending one of eight technical/vocational schools. There are 110 General Secondary Schools (GSS) which enroll 89 percent of all secondary students. Most GSS are large (300-1000 students), urban-based, staffed with trained teachers, and able to offer the full secondary curriculum. Due to the increase of primary graduates in the 90's, the available GSSs could not absorb all the students ready to enter secondary. Therefore, the Government of Guyana established Secondary Departments (SD) of Primary Schools as a temporary solution to provide some kind of secondary education. Currently there are 175 SDs at primary schools offering only Grades 7 and 8 and enrolling about 11 percent of secondary students. SDs have less than 50 students on average, lack trained/qualified teachers, cannot offer the full curriculum and have no laboratories. They are mainly located in coastal urban and hinterland rural areas with low population densities.

There are critical and inter-related issues of access, quality and equity at the secondary level. Despite major progress in expanding access to primary education, the quality of primary education is highly variable and generally low; for children with poor mastery of literacy and numeracy at the primary level, these problems persist into secondary education. The average SSEE scores (covering Math, English, Science and Social Studies) have declined. In particular, the pass rate for Mathematics is only 21 percent. English language is 45 percent. Students who score poorly on the SSEE cannot enroll in GSS due to the lack of spaces and are usually placed at SDs of primary schools, which typically leads to higher dropout (9 percent compared to 6 percent of GSS), given SDs' poor learning conditions. To avoid this situation the Government of Guyana has established as a national priority to achieve universal secondary education and reduce the number of SDs as much as possible while allowing more spaces at GSSs. The MOE has constructed at least five new GSSs in the past five years; two in hinterland and three in the coastal regions.

Although the Secondary Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) is estimated at about 80 percent, only 54

percent of those who begin Grade 7 reach Grade 11. This indicates a high rate of dropout, including 15 percent in Grade 7 alone. The main factors are, inter alia, that some students can only stay in their primary schools SDs and overcrowding in GSSs, poorly trained teachers (only 64 percent are qualified), insufficient learning materials, low student attendance (70 percent average in 2013), perceived lack of relevance of the official curriculum determined by the Caribbean Examinations Council, inadequate learning levels among students entering secondary education and high opportunity costs. In addition, the capacity of the National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD) to provide necessary in-service teacher professional development at the secondary level, particularly so that teachers can remediate low levels of learning at the primary level, is weak. The Government is already tackling some of these issues by developing a new Education Strategic Plan (2014-18) which continuously addresses the quality of primary education by increasing the percentage of trained teachers as well as the improvement of teacher training institutions and of NCERD (which in addition to in-service training is also in charge of revising the curriculum and developing learning materials at the national level).

In terms of equity, the challenges faced by SDs of primary schools and overcrowding of GSS are particularly acute in poor coastal areas (Regions 3 and 4 including Georgetown). Regions 3 and 4 serve 51 percent of the country's secondary school population, and account for over 40 percent of all those in poverty. Almost all of the 60 GSS in these regions are extremely overcrowded; some are in rented facilities that lack laboratories, sufficient sanitary facilities, or even walls separating classes such that noise levels are extremely high. The MOE wants to close the 40 SDs in Regions 3 and 4 because of their sub-par learning conditions, but there is no capacity at existing GSSs to absorb students currently studying in SDs.

Gender presents another challenging equity issue. Males are less likely than females to enroll in secondary school after primary education; 91 percent of male Grade 6 graduates transition to 7th grade versus 94 percent for females. In addition, average scores of males on the SSEE are lower than those of females. Male attendance at the secondary level is lower than that of females (67 percent versus 72 percent), and male survival rate to Grade 11 is just 45 percent compared to 66 percent for females. Finally, males' completion rate is just 32 percent, compared to 46 percent for females and they consistently underperform on the CSEC. The conversion of more SDs to GSS would help to address this issue, but the relatively high male dropout rates even from GSS suggest many boys do not believe the secondary education curriculum is relevant to their needs. In addition, there are larger social pressures which impact boys more than girls, including pressure to generate income for the household and the temptations of drugs, alcohol and crime, all of which lead to higher dropout rates.

With respect to performance of students on the CSEC, Mathematics presents the most critical area. Among the low proportion of secondary students who reach Grade 11 and take the CSEC, just 50 percent pass in Mathematics compared to 70 percent in English. Equally worrisome, only 28 percent in 2013 achieved CSEC scores in Mathematics sufficient for entry into the University of Guyana (UG) or the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE), versus 46 percent in English. Similar problems are apparent from the 2013 Grade 9 National Achievement test in Mathematics, on which students scored an average of just 54 percent (48 percent for males and 59 percent for females). Understandably, raising student achievement in Mathematics, particularly among boys, is a national priority.

Another key issue is the system's low capacity to assess teacher performance; the existing teacher

appraisal system is ineffective and unreliable. As research over the past decade suggests, teacher quality is highly correlated with students learning outcomes (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010; Rockoff, 2004). Well design and implemented teacher evaluation systems are crucial to improve teacher quality. The most critical weaknesses in Guyana are the lack of established professional teaching standards and the absence of a coherent and widely understood set of teacher competencies aligned with those standards. Furthermore, the existing teacher appraisal instrument is out of date and its administration haphazard, frequently involving conflicts of interest. Finally, there is no established process for using the results of teacher appraisal either for identifying teacher professional development needs or incentivizing teachers to improve their performance. As a result, educators have lost confidence in the appraisal process and many schools have abandoned the process completely.

Finally, with respect to institutional capacity, the MOE's ability to collect, analyze and use school-level data to improve sector planning and policymaking is constrained by an outdated statistics information system. Currently, questionnaires are distributed to schools once a year covering schools, teachers and students, which are manually filled out. Once the forms are re-transmitted back to the MOE, typically with long delays, the Planning Office manually inputs data into static Access database files separated by year, making time series analysis cumbersome and time-consuming. Real-time tracking of teacher assignments and qualifications is not possible, so that schools frequently lack the number of qualified teachers they need. An earlier pilot effort to establish an EMIS at the secondary level was not successful, primarily because a proprietary EMIS software was chosen with high annual per school costs and schools lacked connectivity. This limited the system's expansion to additional schools and led to the MOE's decision to eliminate funding.

To address these issues the GoG developed and approved a strategy for achieving Universal Secondary Education (USE), as part of the National Education Sector Plan 2008-2013. This strategy was based in large part on analytical work supported by the World Bank. Beyond universal access to secondary education, the GoG is specifically focused on improving student performance on the CSEC exams in Mathematics and English language. To these ends, the GoG has allocated national funds to: (i) construct additional secondary classrooms to convert SDs of primary schools into GSS, (ii) provide dormitories for students coming from long distances; (iii) offer both bus and boat transportation for students to commute to school. Civil works are ongoing, with completion expected by mid-2015. GoG infrastructure funds have been targeted on the coastal rural and hinterland areas (Regions 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10). However, domestic financing is insufficient to address the infrastructure needs in Regions 3 and 4, and to address quality and institutional capacity issues at the national level.

II. Proposed Development Objectives

The objective of the Project is to increase the number of students with access to secondary school mathematics teachers benefiting from continuous professional development nationwide and, to increase the number of students in secondary schools with improved learning conditions in targeted regions.

III. Project Description

Component Name

Continuous Professional Development for Secondary School Math Teachers

Comments (optional)**Component Name**

Expansion of Secondary School Facilities

Comments (optional)**Component Name**

Institutional Capacity Building and Project Management

Comments (optional)**IV. Financing (in USD Million)**

Total Project Cost:	12.00	Total Bank Financing:	12.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		
For Loans/Credits/Others			Amount
BORROWER/RECIPIENT			0.00
International Development Association (IDA)			12.00
Total			12.00

V. Implementation**A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) would be the implementing agency for the Project. The MOE already has extensive experience implementing externally financed projects (World Bank, IDB, EFA-FTI). Technical responsibilities for implementation would lie with the Department of Secondary Education, which reports to the Chief Education Officer and Permanent Secretary of the MOE. Fiduciary responsibilities would be managed by the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education, which currently handles all financial management and procurement for the on-going Improving Teacher Education Project (P110018, Credit 4803-GY) and the University of Guyana Science and Technology Support Project (P125288, Credit 4969-GY).

A Project Coordinator would be hired and maintained in the MOE's Planning Unit. S/he would be responsible for day-to-day management, monitoring and coordination of project implementation, including work planning, procurement, accounting, disbursement, financial management and other Project-related activities. The Project Coordinator would report to the Chief Planning Officer of the MOE, supervise agreed work plans with the technical leads for each sub-component, and coordinate implementation among MOE departments, NCERD, CPCE and UG. In addition, the Project Coordinator would be responsible for preparing/consolidating information for Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports. Existing fiduciary staff in the MOE Planning Unit currently managing other World Bank-financed projects would handle similar responsibilities for this project. In addition, the technical capacity of the MOE to supervise the design, implementation and supervision of the proposed civil works activities would be strengthened with the addition of one project engineer financed by the Project.

B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation

The MOE's Planning Unit would be responsible for project monitoring and evaluation. It would, through the Project Coordinator, send Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports to the Bank, including on progress toward targets described in the Results Framework. Past experience with previous and ongoing World Bank education projects indicates that the Planning Unit has the necessary M&E capacity to generate reliable data using existing country systems. The MOE's M&E capacity to carry out project monitoring and evaluation would be further strengthened through the rollout of the proposed EMIS. The Planning Unit would also participate in formal implementation supervision missions along with World Bank supervision teams, to track progress in achieving project outcomes.

For the evaluation of the pilot technology-assisted program to improve learning of Mathematics, external technical assistance (national and international) would be contracted under the project. The cost of this TA and related operational costs (travel, supplies, etc.) is estimated at US\$30,000, which would be financed by the IDA Credi.

VI. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	x	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		x
Forests OP/BP 4.36		x
Pest Management OP 4.09		x
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		x
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	x	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12		x
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x

Comments (optional)

VII. Contact point

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