



**GOVERNMENT OF SAINT LUCIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION, SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

## **ENHANCEMENT OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2005**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

#### **Why is the Saint Lucia Education Act being updated?**

There has not been a comprehensive review of the Saint Lucia Education Act in nearly 20 years. There is concern that the Act no longer meets the vision for education in Saint Lucia or the needs of the modern system of education that is desired by Saint Lucians.

#### **Who is leading the revisions to the Education Act?**

Senior members of the Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training are leading the process with support from an international consulting firm.

#### **When did this process begin, and when is it anticipated to end?**

The process began in February 2022 and will conclude when the revised Act is passed by Parliament. It is anticipated that following these Town Hall sessions, the proposed Bill and supporting Regulations will advance through the legislative process.

#### **What were the main findings from the research and consultations completed to date?**

- That the revised Act should reflect a holistic approach to education that supports student learning, development, and well-being of all students,
- That the revised Act provide clear definitions and evidenced-based practices that are presented in contemporary, plain language that is understandable by all,
- That the revised Act uphold basic human rights, including universal access to education and protection from discrimination,
- That the revised Act promote inclusive education for students with special education needs,
- That the revised Act describe the rights and duties of students, parents, educators, and Ministry leaders,
- That the revised Act address the health, safety and security of students and school personnel
- That the revised Act affirm the authority of school administrators and teachers to discipline students and protect the safety and security of persons while respecting student rights,
- That the revised Act extend the compulsory school age to cover the age span from three to seventeen years which includes Early Childhood Education,
- That the Revised Act reflect ongoing enhancements to the National Curriculum, and
- That the Revised Act be supported by Regulations that enable the consistent interpretation and implementation of the Act.

## What is an Education Act, what are Regulations, and what is the main difference between the two?

An Education Act sets the laws for the governance of Education while Regulations provide guidance on how to implement and practice what is contained in the Act. Currently, Saint Lucia has no Regulations to support the implementation of the Act. The Regulations which have been proposed provide educators, students and parents with guidelines on such matters as the school year and timetable, zoning, the National Curriculum and the National Qualifications Framework, specific schedules which support the operations of the education sector (such as applications, registration forms, fees, etc.) and the National Code of Conduct which defines what educators expect in terms of positive behaviour and supports them with suggested responses when positive behaviour is not practiced.

## How will the Town Hall feedback be collected and utilized?

At the end of each Town Hall meeting, the main themes that attendees have identified will be briefly summarized and shared. Building upon the extensive research and consultations already completed to date, these themes will inform further revision and submission of a final draft Education Act and Regulations for further advancement through the approval process.

## Which main improvements are being proposed?

The following table outlines the major changes to the proposed Act. The reference to where the changes appear in the Act has been referenced in the first column.

Section	Proposed Revisions
Long Title	Recommendations from varied stakeholders included a greater emphasis on holistic student development and well-being and the promotion of an inclusive curriculum, all of which have been addressed in the revised Long Statement.
Preliminary: Section 2 Interpretation	Multiple, additional definitions were requested, as well as revisions to existing definitions.
Preliminary: Section 3 Purpose of the Act	Recommendations included that the Purpose describe a broadened scope for supervision of school personnel that extends beyond teachers and principals; endorse an inclusive National Curriculum; advance quality education and holistic student development; and promote Educational Psychosocial Supports. The Purpose was revised to incorporate all of these recommendations.
Part I: Administration of the Education System	Multiple edits were recommended, including the clarification of the key duties of Ministry leaders in relation to each other. The issue of including crisis leadership and response among administrator's duties has been included.
Part IV: Admission, Attendance and Records  Sections 95-97	Recommendations from different respondents included retitling School Attendance Counsellors as School Attendance Officers and clarifying their powers, especially with regard to entering premises to address student truancy.
Part III: Rights and Duties of Students and Parents	The rights and duties of students and parents have been added to the Act. This section also provides recourse for parents when they disagree with educational decisions. The right of parents to appeal decisions has been included in the rights of parents, and explicitly addressed in the Appeals section of the Act.

Section	Proposed Revisions
Sections 76-85	
Part VIII: Rights and Duties of Educators  Sections 175-179	Recommended edits to this part of the Act included the addition of School Counsellors and Vice-Principals to the Act; additional duties for Principals and Teachers; and an increased emphasis on the role of Principals as Instructional Leaders.
Part V: National Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment of Students  Sections 103-107	Multiple recommendations were made to promote an inclusive, modern, culturally-responsive National Curriculum that advances quality education and supports the holistic development of children and youth. Also, it was suggested that the Act move away from an overreliance on final examinations to incorporate other forms of student assessment. In addition, multiple respondents indicated a need for uniform implementation of the National Curriculum across the Education Sector. Accordingly, throughout the Act, the National Curriculum is recommended as the standard educational programming to be offered throughout the Saint Lucia Education System in home-schooling and in public and assisted schools, with the option available for schools to offer additional programming, such as denominational schools offering religious education. In response to the feedback, this section was updated to reinforce the implementation of evidence-based practices for curriculum, instruction and assessment, promote culturally-responsive education, and include diagnostic, formative and summative assessment.
Part II: Stages and Types of Education and Schools  Sections 29-75	A wide range of edits were recommended by various sources. Included among them were requests for the addition of different types of education that have emerged since the advent of the 2005 Act, including online education and blended education. As well, requests were made to add Alternative Education to the Act to provide secondary students with nontraditional pathways to school completion, and this was added, as well, including in the definitions contained in the Interpretation section. Strong support was also expressed in several quarters, for the acknowledgement of Educational Psychosocial Supports. In response, the description of Educational Psychosocial Supports has been expanded and included in Section 6 (2) on the Powers of the Minister. Many respondents requested that Homeschooling receive greater attention in the proposed Act, including clear parameters, monitoring provisions, and the addition of regular inspections, all of which have been incorporated. In the area of Special Needs Education, multiple requests for updated language were received, as well requests for the addition of a Council on Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education. These recommendations for the basis for significant changes to the section of the proposed Act.
Part II: Stages and Types of Education and Schools  Sections 29-49	A variety of edits were put forward for this section. For example, highly variable opinions were expressed regarding the Suspension and Revocation of Permits for educational institutions and private schools. Also, there were requests for the protection of school premises, such as restrictions on vendors, loitering, vandalism, and the sale of alcohol, tobacco, etc. One of the topics that drew the most feedback was the issue of school inspections, and the need for greater clarity and structure to all aspects of the inspection process. This has been addressed in the proposed Act and Regulations. Greater clarity on the types of schools has been provided.
Part IV: Admission, Attendance and Records  Sections 86-102	Many respondents flagged the definition of compulsory school age, the ages of entry into primary and secondary school, the age range for ECE, and the continued attendance of students beyond compulsory school age in secondary schools and SEN schools as issues meriting attention. All of these have been addressed in the proposed Act. The capacity of schools to accommodate student transfers was addressed by providing a detailed definition of ‘capacity’ in the Interpretation section of the Act. Valid excuses for student absences have been specified with a list of valid excuses in this section. Provisions have been made for penalties for parents for failing to ensure their child’s school attendance. The provisions for student admission, attendance and transfer also drew feedback from other respondents, who recommended wording changes, the reordering of some clauses, and the relocation of some clauses to other parts of the Act. With regard to student registration at school, concerns were expressed about

Section	Proposed Revisions
	students' names being removed from the school register when they were taken into care, and this issue was rectified in this section. The maintenance of school logs has been clarified. There was a great deal of discussion and feedback regarding strengthening the prohibitions against impediments to student attendance. These prohibitions were consolidated and strengthened.
<p>Part VII: National Code of Conduct, School Rules and Discipline</p> <p>Sections 159-174</p>	<p>A National Code of Conduct has been proposed to support unambiguous, standardized codes for acceptable behaviour in all schools that are universally applied. One of the recurrent themes in the feedback to the National Code was the desire to move away from punishment and punitive measures, to more positive language and approaches to student discipline, and the provision of disciplinary responses beyond suspension and expulsion, There were also requests that the Code address issues of bullying cyberbullying, and cell phones, and that has been done. Also, the word 'punishment' has been replaced with the term 'disciplinary response' in the Act, and in-school suspensions and the provision of behavioural supports have been added to the repertoire of responses to student misbehaviour. In addition, a definition of in-school suspension has been added to the definitions in the Interpretation section of the Act. The National Principals' Association asked that the Ministry equip all schools with copies of the Code and a website be created so that everyone has ready access to the Code and any supporting documentation. This request has been addressed in the Code and described in full in the proposed Regulations. Another topic that garnered a lot of attention was the complex issue of search and seizure. The importance of providing educators with clear authority and procedures for conducting search and seizure, while protecting students' constitutional rights, generated several edits, most notably the proposed addition of the authority of educators to seize materials found during searches, such as weapons and illegal drugs. The National Principals' Association and the Teaching Service Commission recommended that the educators searching students should be the same gender as the student, and this has been addressed in the proposed revision. The Saint Lucia Teachers' Union pointed out that it is unacceptable for the responsibility for student discipline to fall solely on principals, and this has been rectified in the Act by proposing that teachers and principals may administer discipline to a student. In addition, various roles and responsibilities for student behaviour and discipline are spelled out in the National Code of Conduct, including those of students, parents, the Ministry and educators.</p>
<p>Part IX: Saint Lucia Island Scholarship</p> <p>Sections 180-188</p>	<p>Some rewording of this section was recommended by various stakeholders, including the confinement of scholarship eligibility to citizens of Saint Lucia. Also, requests were made by several respondents to clarify and strengthen the accountability of scholarship recipients and redress the Bonding of Scholarship Recipients, which was done.</p>
<p>Multiple Parts and Sections of the Act</p>	<p>Many different recommendations were received. For example, it was requested that the establishment, membership, powers, functions and procedures of the Council on Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education be specified, which they were. It was noted that the Council on Special Education Needs and Inclusive Education required clear guidelines. These have been provided. It was noted that the governance structures of councils, parent associations, and other bodies were not clearly articulated. This has been addressed. The need for greater school-community partnerships, and the retitling of Parent-Teacher Associations to Parent-Teacher-Community Associations was requested and completed. Requests were made by several respondents to add conditions for the revocation of membership on Education Advisory Board which has been done.</p>
<p>Part X: Appeals</p> <p>Sections 189-195</p>	<p>The clause entitled "Enforcement of Order" is procedurally incorrect. It cannot have the same effect as an order of the court by the mere filing of the decision: normally an application would have to be made. This has been amended.</p>

## **Who has provided feedback?**

Throughout the drafting process, additional feedback was sought and secured from a wide range of educators and stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the National Principals' Association, Saint Lucia Teachers' Union, Teaching Service Commission, the Opposition Party, Attorney General's Chambers, National Accreditation Council, Ministry leaders, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). In total, more than seven hundred stakeholder recommendations were received, reviewed, and addressed in the drafting of the proposed revised Act and Regulations. In addition to consultations, ongoing regional and international research was conducted to ensure that the enhancements to the Education Act reflect contemporary, evidence-based practices and address emerging issues and trends in education policy and legislation, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the emergence of online education and blended education, as well as the troubling pattern of student absenteeism that has persisted during and after the pandemic have been addressed in the proposed enhancements to the legislation.

## **How can an updated Education Act improve education in Saint Lucia?**

An updated Education Act will provide support for educators and educational administrators as they seek to continually modernise education. It will provide them with the authority to ensure that education in Saint Lucia is inclusive, supportive and focused on the growth and development of each learner. It will provide them with the authority to respond should the actions of others threaten their quest to provide the excellent education that is the hallmark of educators in Saint Lucia.