

Ministry of Education

ASTEP Summary

Students who are still operating below the required grade level having not attained mastery of the Grade 4 Literacy Test will be transitioned into the **Alternative Secondary Transitional Education Programme** (ASTEP). This programme is designed to provide a safety net for children at the end of the primary level who will require special intensive support and intervention to advance to the next stage. ASTEP will be a **two (2) year** transitional programme, students will be assessed at the beginning and throughout the programme. This is an opportunity to customise a programme for pupils to meet them at the level they are at and bring them up to the required level. ASTEP will provide a modified secondary education with the focus being on literacy so that they can make the transition and benefit from the system. They will not be lost and possibly ignored in the system but will be prepared for secondary education so that they can make a meaningful contribution to our nation. ASTEP Centres will be established in selected Primary, All Age and Primary and Junior High Schools. Centres will be carefully selected based on geographical location, accessibility, space availability and leadership in order to ensure better utilization of existing infrastructure (with the phasing out of All Age schools and the reverting of Primary and Junior High to Primary or upgrade to secondary) and adequate provision of the necessary resources. At the end of the first year of ASTEP, some students will transition to secondary schools and therefore it must be clearly understood that this is being done in line with assuring that “every child can learn, every child must learn”. It symbolizes mutual respect for individuality of our children as we seek to put the systems in place to have them achieve their true potential.

The consistent assessment of literacy through a nationally administered test, clearly identifies the pool of at risk students that must be treated. The inability to transition without literacy, cuts the conveyor belt to education as the slow learner cannot be passed on to the next level without treatment. The purpose of primary education is to deliver a literate child to the secondary system. This new policy ensures that if remediation has to be undertaken then it must be done at the level where resources already are provided for it. Previously, the failure of the school to deliver literacy would not be pronounced because the children move on from the school. Under this system, it will be easier to identify a failing primary school by their consistent performance below the national average and their non-mastery levels.