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EDUCATION matters

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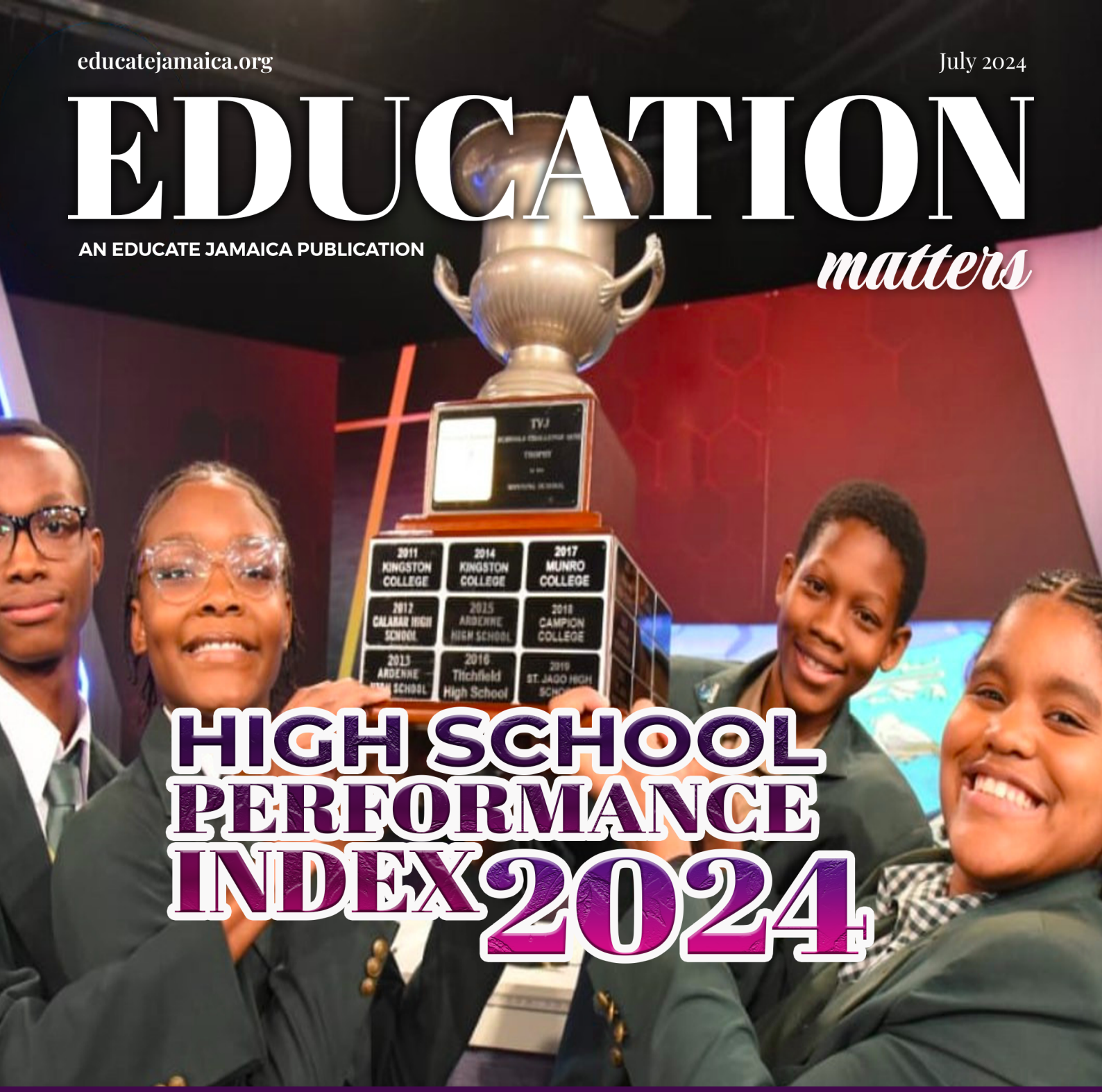

HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDEX 2024

Rivetting Articles!

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LET'S PERMIT OUR HIGH SCHOOLS TO BE DESIGNATED AS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

Educate Jamaica believes that high schools in Jamaica should be allowed to officially classify themselves as international school. If we permit this, we believe there will be great educational, social and economic benefits for high schools and Jamaica.

In the United States schools are permitted to be classified as chartered schools and in the United Kingdom (U.K), schools are permitted to be classified as academies. Chartered schools and academies experience greater funding, flexibility as well as greater autonomy and all schools who would like to take thier institution to the next level have sited funding, flexibility and greater independence as three of the main areas they would like to see improved in order to deliver on the leadership, management and learning experience they know is possible for their schools.

How will the International School status work in Jamaica?

A new status called International School will be established by the Ministry of Education, Youth & Information and all schools across the entire island will be able to apply for this status. This status will allow schools to be better funded and have greater independence over the daily operations of the school. As expected International schools will been given outcomes/targets to achieve by the Ministry of Education, Youth & Information, however, they will have greater autonomy over how their entire budget is spent (including the additional money gained from the new international status) as well as how they go about employing teachers and salaries. Teachers working in schools with International status may be given the opportunity to earn more money and experience better working conditions.

This extra cash ($15.3 - 85 million annually) in the school's budget annually, will enable schools to invest in resources and infrastructure.

Once a school acquires this status they will be able to offer 10% of their total places to the private market, allowing them to charge a different fee (for the 10%) that will be determined by the school's board. In other words, if the population of the school is 1700 students, the school will be able to offer 170 places privately. An economist consulted by Educate Jamaica believes that a private place at a designated international high school in Jamaica could cost from $90,000 – $500,000 annually and this would give a school offering 170 places privately $15,300,000 – $85,000,000 extra funding in their annual budget.

This kind of extra cash in their budget would allow schools to improve their general infrastructure, build additional classrooms if needed, improve on their technology infrastructure, better fund their sporting and performing arts programme as well as improve teacher remuneration (all of the above will be funded based on priorities).

Many will argue against any private involvement in the education sector when it comes to schools and school places, however, when there is limited money supply to adequately fund education, then we must not ignore the opportunity for a public private partnership(PPP).

Such a move may require appropriate legislation to support it and the economic benefit of internationalizing our schools will have great economic benefit for the wider economy and the tourism market. It will be an excellent move for brand Jamaica and our universities as well.

Ainsworth Darby M.A. B.Ed. Dip. Ed
Founder & Chairman
EDUCATE JAMAICA

Dr. Andre Williams

Medical Doctor and Campion College Alumni

Writes on

Health & Education

As a medical doctor specializing in cancer care, I am only too aware of the disproportionate burden cancer places on our Jamaican healthcare system. I am also acutely aware of the well-documented connection between nutrition and cancer prevention. Please permit me to propose a possible solution to our problems.

Our History The history of Jamaica is strongly rooted in the agricultural resources of the land. As we grapple with the realities of our exploitation as a people, we must acknowledge that our soil continues to be rich in possibilities. Several of the world's medicinal plants proliferate effortlessly in the parish of Portland alone. Notwithstanding the potential of our flora, we continue to relegate the study of agriculture to the proverbial back burner, and we also limit the practice of agriculture to rural parishes. Even as the nations of the world fight prolonged wars for food production and supply, the next generation of Jamaicans is growing up ignorant about the most basic Jamaican plant life. Foods such as ginger, turmeric, moringa, soursop, cassava and breadfruit have been repeatedly shown to have significant health benefits. However, my wager is that the average Jamaican high-school student would be hard-pressed to identify these plants, let alone to cultivate them.

Our Farmers To make matters worse, we place unreasonable demands on our farmers to cultivate crops that are spotless and without blemish. The farmers often have no choice but to artificially accelerate their yields by using industrial fertilizers and harmful pesticides. The chemicals inevitably find their way into the produce we eat as consumers. The result is a population that is at greater risk of chronic disease. This premise is reinforced by research from our very own Ministry of Health, which shows a disproportionate rate of death from cancer in the parishes of Manchester and St. Elizabeth, our 'breadbaskets'. The statistics are sobering.

Our Education System Our formal education system comprises early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. Historically, primary school students enjoy occasional field trips, either as a learning opportunity or as an extracurricular experience.
In contrast, our secondary school students are often encouraged to emphasize 'traditional' subjects, with exposure to plant science being restricted to those who successfully enter the 'science' stream. These students then vie for coveted spaces at our universities and colleges, where they can further pursue the natural sciences. However, the focus at this point is usually product development and research, rather than actual food production.
Even within our 'non-traditional' secondary institutions, not all schools offer an opportunity to try one's hand at growing crops. Subjects such as home economics, clothing and textiles, and industrial trades still dominate the 'non-traditional' offerings.

The Solution I am proposing that we emulate the emerging agricultural trends in parts of Africa and Asia. There, farmers, both young and old, are (re)learning how to grow sustainable, organic crops. As new and innovative techniques are developed, these regions will undoubtedly have multiple advantages:

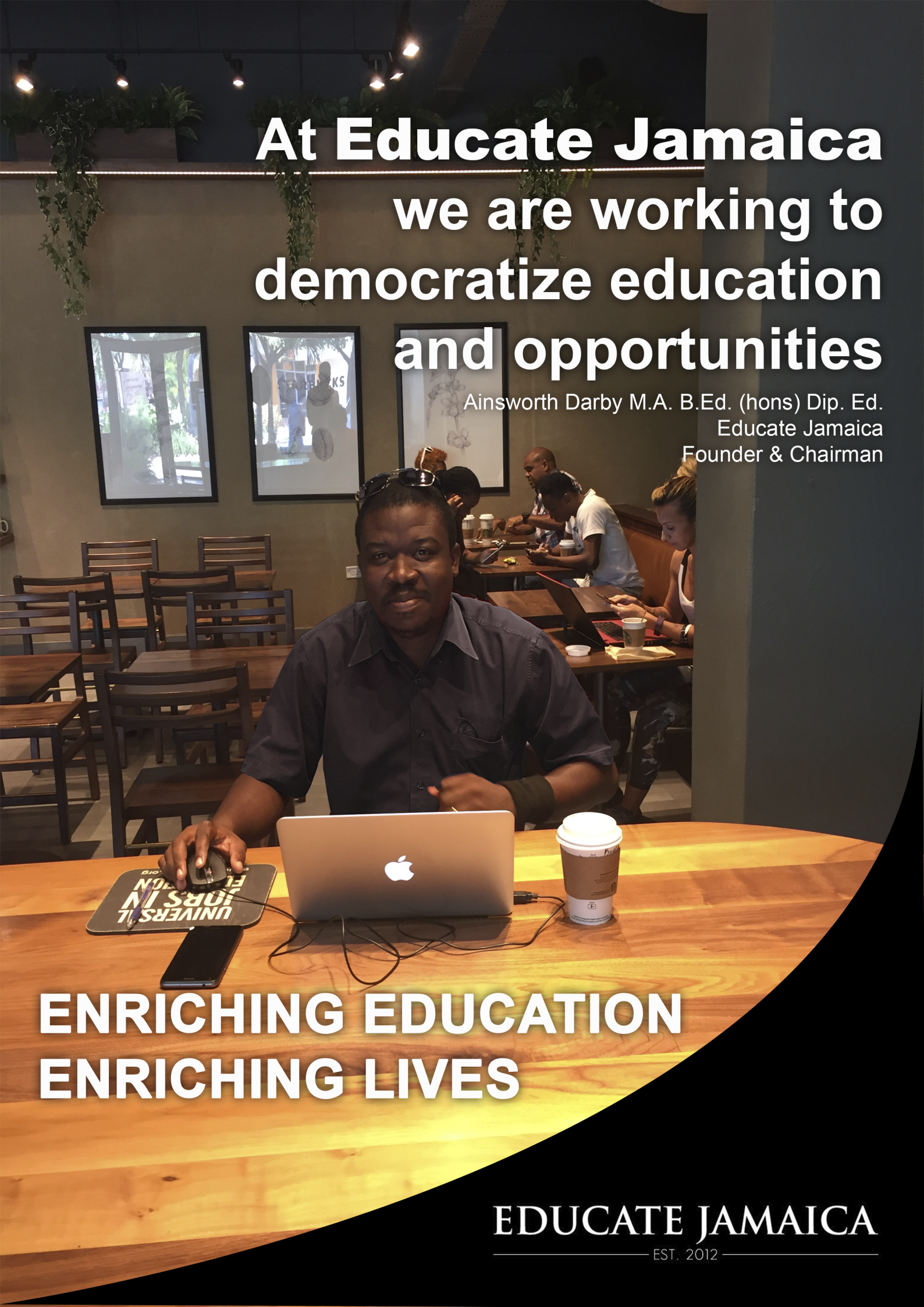
1. They will eventually have enough food to reliably serve their local markets.
2. They will have enough food to support consistent export, improving their respective gross domestic products (GDPs).
3. They will have the resources to encourage further innovation in agriculture.
4. The health of the population will improve, as consumers will find it easier to access fresh, affordable, organic food.

Our students need to be taught basic agricultural science throughout all primary and secondary schools.
I had noted that the Caribbean Examinations Council offered an Agricultural Science certificate, with a comprehensive syllabus, partially described below: "...These objectives, which provide the framework for this syllabus, are to achieve the goal of food and nutrition security; adopt sustainable agricultural approaches that are responsive to an uncertain physical and economic environment; contribute to economic diversification through transformation of communities and improvement of livelihoods; and ensure that the human resource capacity available to the sector is adequate in quantity and quality…" (excerpt from the Syllabus, Agricultural Science, CXC 07/G/SYLL 16, Caribbean Examinations Council)
However, In May 2024 we received the unfortunate news that this subject is one of four that the CXC will no longer certify because of inadequate enrollment. Jamaica's shortfall in enrollment for this subject is 93%. The Jamaica 4-H Clubs has also spearheaded several commendable initiatives, but the programmes largely exist outside of the formal education system, rather than being fully integrated into the school curricula.

I am aware that the rest of the world is gravitating towards information technology, and a focus on agricultural science may appear to be short-sighted. However, exposure to both subject areas can only benefit our students further, as artificial intelligence can help us to revolutionize our existing farming techniques. We cannot afford for Jamaica to be left behind in the coming agricultural revolution. We must equip our Jamaican students for the world they will inherit. Let us revisit our school curricula now!

Dr Andre Williams is a medical doctor and an internationally accredited integrative oncologist. He is a past student of Campion College and The University of the West Indies, Mona.

For more information visit www.teshuvawellnessja.com



At Educate Jamaica we are working to democratize education and opportunities

Ainsworth Darby M.A. B.Ed. (hons) Dip. Ed.
Educate Jamaica
Founder & Chairman

ENRICHING EDUCATION ENRICHING LIVES

EDUCATE JAMAICA
EST. 2012

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HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDEX 2024

INDEX MOTTO: *'What gets measured gets managed.'*

	NAME OF SCHOOL	GENDER	SCORE 2024	SCORE 2023	% CHANGE
1	Campion College	Co-Educational	100%	97.5%	2.6% ↑
2	Immaculate Conception High	Girls only	99.18%	98.8%	0.4% ↑
3	St. Andrew High School For Girls	Girls only	93%	93%	-
4	Ardenne High School	Co-Educational	91%	90.1%	1% ↑
5	Wolmer's Boys School	Boys only	90%	80%	12.5% ↑
6	Hampton School	Girls only	88.82%	76%	16.9% ↑
7	Montego Bay High School For Girls	Girls only	87%	91%	4.4% ↓
8	Glenmuir High School	Co-Educational	86.8%	75.7%	14.7% ↑
9	Mannings School	Co-Educational	85%	79%	7.6% ↑
10	St. Hilda's High School	Girls only	83.11%	71.6%	16% ↑
11	Wolmer's Girls School	Girls only	82%	92.4%	11.3% ↓
12	St. George's College	Boys only	80%	68%	17.6% ↑
13	Mount Alvernia High	Girls only	79.4%	72%	10.3% ↑
14	Munro College	Boys only	78.1%	79.1%	1.3% ↓
15	Westwood High School	Girls only	78%	79.44%	1.8% ↓
16	Jamaica College	Boys only	75.9%	65.06%	16.7% ↑
17	Convent of Mercy Alpha Academy	Girls only	75%	63.2%	18.7% ↑
18	St. Jago High School	Co-Educational	74%	61.7%	19.9% ↑
19	Holy Childhood High	Girls only	71.91%	67.4%	6.7% ↑
20	Herbert Morrison	Co-Educational	68%	-	-
21	Kingston College	Boys only	66.65%	64.4%	3.5% ↑
22	Merl Grove High	Girls only	66.5%	-	-
23	Bishop Gibson High for Girls	Girls only	65%	68%	4.4% ↓
24	Manchester High School	Co-Educational	64.6%	75%	14.1% ↓
25	Calabar High	Boys only	64.4%	58%	11% ↑
26	DeCarteret College	Co-Educational	61%	61%	-
27	The Queen's School	Girls only	61%	55%	10.9% ↑
28	St. Hugh's High School	Girls only	60%	55%	9.1% ↑

Each school was measured using the percentage of their total grade 11 cohort that achieved 5 or more subjects (inclusive of BOTH Mathematics and English at CSEC). It must be noted that all subjects sat prior to grade 11 (7,8,9 and 10) were taken into account.

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The necessity of adapting in education: incorporating artificial intelligence for a more secure and promising future

The Importance of Adaptation in Education

Schools and businesses, although different, have some structural features such as financial resources, personnel, and the requirement to effectively allocate resources. Schools deliver education, which may be seen as a service, to students, similar to how businesses serve consumers. There is a current dispute on the extent to which schools should adopt a business-oriented approach. Advocates emphasize the advantages of efficiency and innovation, while critics express concerns that profit incentives could overwhelm educational objectives. Nevertheless, adaptation is essential for the continuation of businesses. Examine the case of Kodak. Kodak, while being the pioneer of the first digital camera, failed to completely adopt digital photography, resulting in its bankruptcy in January 2012 as digital cameras and smartphones gained dominance in the market. Our traditional educational institutions are also at risk of a similar fate without adaptation.

Modifying educational institutions to suit the current circumstances

The successful use of technology in educational institutions has already resulted in heightened student involvement and enhanced academic achievements. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, digital learning platforms played a crucial role in ensuring continuous education despite the closure of physical schools. Nevertheless, this is only the initial stage. Subsequently, the forthcoming measure involves the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into the field of education. Artificial intelligence (AI) has the capacity to transform education through the provision of tailored learning experiences, automation of administrative duties, and improvement of student support services. AI-powered platforms can customize educational content according to the specific needs of each student, hence enhancing the effectiveness of learning. This shift necessitates educators to transition into facilitators, adeptly directing students through their individualized learning expeditions.

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Education

Artificial intelligence offers a revolutionary change for the education industry. It can customize learning experiences, offer valuable information about student performance, track attentiveness in both online and in-person settings, and simplify administrative duties, enabling educators to concentrate on assisting learning. Integrating AI goes beyond enhancing efficiency; it involves equipping students for a future where AI is pervasive. This integration guarantees that our education system stays up-to-date and provides students with the necessary abilities to navigate a world influenced by artificial intelligence.

The failure to adapt to artificial intelligence (AI) in education carries significant repercussions. Individuals lacking proficiency in artificial intelligence (AI) may encounter difficulties in securing employment opportunities and face obstacles in making substantial contributions to society. On the other hand, educational institutions that actively incorporate AI into their curricula will give students the ability to effectively utilize AI's capabilities, allowing them to succeed in a constantly evolving environment.

Ethical Integration of AI in Research

The ethical incorporation of AI in research is crucial as AI becomes increasingly integrated into educational processes. Students should acquire the skills to properly utilize AI technologies, comprehend the importance of data protection, mitigate biases in AI algorithms, and uphold transparency in AI-driven decision-making. Providing ethical training to students will enable them to effectively utilize AI in a manner that is fair and just, thereby cultivating a future workforce that places equal importance on integrity and creativity. The emphasis on ethics is essential for the appropriate integration of AI, guaranteeing that the benefits of AI are accessible to all individuals.

Using artificial intelligence to combat school violence

Artificial intelligence can serve as a potent instrument in tackling urgent problems such as school violence. Cameras equipped with AI-driven analytics and machine learning algorithms can detect early indicators of possible disputes, allowing for focused interventions. Furthermore, artificial intelligence can enable customized educational experiences, assisting kids who are facing difficulties with social or emotional issues that could potentially lead to aggressive conduct.

In Conclusion

Throughout history, successful entities have adapted to their environment. Businesses that embraced digital transformation thrived. Similarly, species that adapted to changing ecosystems survived. Education must follow suit. Just as businesses and species adapt, so too must education. By embracing AI and integrating it ethically and effectively, we can create a learning environment that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. Our commitment to this adaptation will determine not only the survival but the success of future generations.

About the author
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