



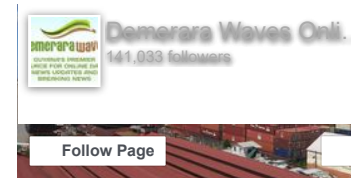
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# Education Minister opposes students writing numerous CXC subjects

Posted by: Denis Chabrol in Education, News Saturday, 2 April 2016, 18:43 21 Comments

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Minister of Education, Dr. Rupert Roopnaraine on Saturday said he is in strongly in favour of discouraging secondary school students from writing more than eight Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) subjects because those who sit more than that number of exams are not benefiting from a rounded education.

"I am strongly in favour of whatever mechanism we can find to discourage the taking of so many subjects. I think eight subjects are ample where people can do the fundamental subjects- Math, English,

Science and so on- that they need to do and have a better childhood," he told Demerara Waves Online News.

Roopnaraine said the Ministry of Education's decision-makers were yet to discuss how the matter should be addressed but he was not in favour of students being robbed of extra-curricula activities. "I do not believe that students should spend all of their time regurgitating information. Children should be given a chance to grow. They should do music, they should do sport. They should do a lot more things...theatre in schools. There is a lot that children can be doing and they won't be able to do that if their entire time is taken up preparing for examinations," he said.

The Minister of Education first raised the issue in remarks after a Republic Bank (Guyana) Limited-sponsored Autism Awareness Walk that began and ended at the Promenade Gardens in Georgetown. I must say that when I hear a child has passed twenty-two subjects at an examination, I have to ask myself what kind of childhood is that child having and this is why we in the ministry are placing great emphasis on what I think of as the non-academic aspects of education but which I think contribute to the making of a whole child," he said.

The Education Minister's concerns came even as Guyanese students are pushing to write much more than eight subjects. Demerara Waves Online News was told that a Queen's College student is slated to write 22 CXC subjects this year. Information is that another student is already preparing to write 25 subjects in 2017.

Sources at the school have confirmed that a female student is preparing to write 22 CXC subjects, the highest number to be written in the country and the Caribbean according to available information.

Additional information is that there may be an increased in the number of students writing a larger number of subjects at the school.

Each year, as students increase the number of subjects written, debates seem to intensify on what possible negative impacts the perceived "burden" of sitting these subjects may be having on students.

Last year was not the first time had student had written 29 subjects, but when the country's top performer passed with 20 ones, an examination of the matter was requested.

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In 2013, a CXC official had noted that the Council did not encourage students to write more than 20 subjects. The Council had supported Guyana nonetheless when the former Education Minister had noted that there would not be a limit on the number of subjects students are allowed to write.

**(by Denis Chabrol and Zena Henry)**

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PETER 8 years ago

When a nation is academically educated it is less prone to fall pray to political rhetoric, Guyanese have long been controlled and swayed by politicians like burnham, cheddie and now jagdeo who don't have the people's interest at heart, Guyanese need to look at the Chinese youth and adult working class who combine daily physical exercise and work, A Healthy Body Holds A Healthy Mind and Spirit. roopnarine speaks with a forked tongue, he talks about extra curricular activities for students yet the pppc government built a synthetic track and an Olympic size pool for Billions of Guyana dollars and only a selected few friends and family were allowed to use it.

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PETER 8 years ago

Roopnarine has his brain up his ass, he still thinks he is in the 1966-2015 era where the political masters dictate what a child should or should not learn, he sounds like a 3rd World dictator who wants the masses to be a bunch of uneducated morons so they can continue ruling them, burnham took away the English standard of education because he said it was adhering to colonial mentality yet he was educated under this same system which he used to enslave his people. This idiot roopnarine is trying to stagnate the growth of the educational standards in Guyana which we boasted about before the burnham and cheddie era, this is tantamount to treason against the people of Guyana. .

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Surujpaul Rampersaud → PETER 8 years ago

I think you have clearly misunderstood what the honorable minister is saying. He is in now way dictating what students should write. What he is saying is that by focusing on so many subjects, our children are missing childhood. Nowadays our children focus so much on school work , regular schooling then lesson classes that they do not have much time to enjoy childhood and life. The minister like me is reminiscing on the days when school days were fun. We played sports, and enjoyed all those extra and co curricular activities and still did well academically. These activities make well rounded people, willing to work with others for the general good. I do hope that you may now revisit what you have written

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Burch01 → Surujpaul Rampersaud 8 years ago

Well written and cogently expressed.....Words of an enlightened soul!

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malaika06 → PETER 8 years ago

Trylooking past at the messenger and look at the message!

0 0

Jagan Burnham → PETER 8 years ago

dumbo baaboo u missed his point u sound like a real mixed up confused riff raff lagu bagu ignar

0 0

**E** **Emile\_Mervin**  
8 years ago edited

How about getting teachers to discern early in students whether they are CXC candidates or vocational education candidates? There are students who will do well in technical trades and, to this end, there should be vocational classes for 15-year old students still in school but clearly not CXC candidates.

Barack Obama took heat a few years ago for advocating for vocational education: electricians, mechanics, plumbers, carpenters, welders/fabricators, draftsmen/women, electronic technicians, etc. It would surprise some folks that certain certified and licensed tradesmen and women are making more money (\$50 to \$75 hour) than those who have CXCs and first degrees.

And if Guyana is going to have balanced development, it will need a professional and technical workforce.

2 0

**Surujpaul Rampersaud** → Emile\_Mervin  
8 years ago

The education system in Guyana is tailored for this. The eleven plus exams do allocate children to schools based on scoring. However, eleven plus is too early to determine a child's future and there should be forward and backward movements from Community High Schools to general secondary schools. The CHS were all intended to be skill based schools. In addition to this the Multilateral schools had wonderful programs to cater for children according to their leanings. You have the humanities, science, agriculture, technology, business, home economics and even art and craft. I taught at one such school and saw many students move on to GSA, UG, GTI, Burrowes School of Art etc. I agree with you that vocational education is the way to go. Possibly Guyana is a step ahead of the USA. We have the infrastructure, all we need is to expand and build on it. Just to let you know, I have heard many Americans say that they do not need to train people, they will provide the motivation to come. If you study the graduates of the Port Mourant Apprentice School, you will notice that many of them have migrated to Canada.

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**E** **Emile\_Mervin** → Surujpaul Rampersaud  
8 years ago edited

Suruj,

First, a correction: I said 15-year old and not 11-year old.

Second, I left Guyana in 1988, so I can't say the educational system in Guyana is tailored for either 20 to 29 CXC's or vocational education, because according to an IDB 2015 report, Guyana has a 40% youth unemployment rate, which is the highest in the Caribbean. Unless our educational system is tailored to suit the developmental needs of Guyana, we are producing bright minds to develop other people's countries.

IMHO, vocational training is integral to infrastructural development, and since there will be those with an aptitude for trade-related jobs, it makes sense to identify these aptitudes early and start working on them.

I know of Guyanese who were not that bright in primary school so they never got past Common Entrance. Example, one became

[see more](#)

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**Surujpaul Rampersaud** → Emile\_Mervin  
8 years ago

Emile, I think you do not know how the education system operates. There is an eleven plus examination that allocates students to different schools. This is too early to determine a child's future and does not cater for the late developer. The high school system should provide the skills to move on in whatever field you go

provide the skills to move on in whatever field you so desire. Are you aware that within the secondary school system there is scope for technical drawing, metal work, wood work ( carpentry) etc. In addition to the TI in Georgetown and New Amsterdam there are others all over the country, the latest being at Park, Mahaicony. You migrated in 1988, I left ten years you later having spent a some thirty years in education. They way you put it is that the US should be the model for education. How do you account for so many young people especially Black youths to be employed. I am still concerned about education and Guyana. I visit Guyana every two years and check first hand on changes in education. You seem bent on restoring National Service. Yes this can play a small part if we take the military aspect out of it. Your argument on NS does not hold water. Some prisoners learn valuable trades in jail and are rehabilitated when they leave. How many?

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Avata This comment was deleted.

**E Emile\_Mervin** Guest

8 years ago edited

Agreement is duly noted, and this is why I blogged about five years ago that Guyana needs a vocational curriculum in high schools.

BTW, it won't hurt if education becomes integral to the prison system so that youths who fell through the cracks and ended up in prison could learn a trade while doing time. These could then be easily re-integrated into society by being gainfully employed after doing time.

It has to grab the attention of political leaders that something is radically wrong when you have a 40% youth unemployment rate, an economy not creating enough jobs for youths, and a prison population swelling with youths. Time is long past to think outside the box.

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Avata This comment was deleted.

**Jagan Burnham** Guest

8 years ago

baaboo shut d hell up wid ur crap  
d ministah is right  
what r the 22 subjects - name dem  
what r d 29 subjects - name dem  
how relevant r they

2 0

**Surujpaul Rampersaud** Jagan Burnham

8 years ago

Please read my response to Peter. Both of you need to focus on the issue and refrain from partisan politics

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**Jagan Burnham** Surujpaul Rampersaud

8 years ago

suru/duru - i am focused on the issue  
i never engage in partisan politics  
is dat all u gat

0 0

Avata This comment was deleted.



**Jagan Burnham** → Guest  
8 years ago

baaboo u have to read b4 u decipher crap  
ur last line = nansense - there are still many so called  
educated people/idiots dat r still in poverty

0 0

R

**rudeo** → Guest  
8 years ago

do a follow up and say where and what did the 8+ subject holders achieve over the normal 6 GCE subjects in my days.....oh in the 50s and 60s.....we went on with our rounded education to become top of our classes qualified professionals.....we had a chance to grow as children,,,,school from 8:30 to 3:00 Monday to Friday.....happy games and life skills played learnt on our weekends and vacations.....we did not have pull-alongs with a bookstore of texts....no lessons from 6:00 am to 8:30 am and from 3:30 pm to 9:00 pm including Saturdays and Sundays....we were given our God-given rights to enjoy our childhood....Minister Roopnarine is one who can openly condemn the vicious cycle of private lessons robbing children the best part of their lives...CHILDHOOD....and leaving schools with all head and no sense..bravo Min Roopnarine.....we need a public outcry.....yours truly did 6 GCE O-levels and 3 GCE A-levels and became a natural scientist who can sit with any of the top tier academicians of my time.....away with a meaningful shopping list and the boast.."I have SUBJECTS" ,,,shame on what is described as the premier school in Guyana registering a student for 22 CXC subjects...pray tell me what a medical student will do with all the wishy-washy subjects other than Math, English A, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and a relative foreign language and/or Information Tech?

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This comment was deleted.



**Jagan Burnham** → Guest  
8 years ago

col69 = nansense

0 0

R

**rudeo** → Guest  
8 years ago

why is the USA regarded as the benchmark for academic pursuits?...our students are now studying in China among other non-American universities....and are doing well and even better than a lot of their counterparts who flock to the USA.....we have to be practical and sensible....we want scientists for our badly needed speed up in manufacturing and creating new vistas for our economic take off and successes....why 20 - 22 subjects at a 5th Form level?...16-year olds?...the burn out at useless day and night lessons?...we have to bite the bullet and save our young people.....tell me....what would an employer do with a graduate from 5th form with 22 subjects against one with 6 core subjects in his manufacturing business? .. do you really think that a professor distinguishes between a Guyanese student with 22 CXC passes and a Asian student with 6 core subjects in his Math or Physics class?...I am 4-square behind any move to reduce this madness of taking a shopping list of CXC subjects.....core subjects....4 CAPE subjects in the relevant career pursuits....boom.....see the spurt in natural sciences graduates....some years ago as head of the Old Students Association suggested 8 CXC subjects and was loudly decried by parents, students and schools administrations....how sad

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disqus\_vD7Mb5kVmA

8 years ago

To over stress academics is doing a disservice to kids.

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R

rudeo disqus\_vD7Mb5kVmA

8 years ago

Thanks

0 0



Anthazia Kadir

rudeo

8 years ago

What is the purpose of education? Schools, during the fundamental years of a child's education, then during the years that follow, when they are searching for who they are, what their passions and pursuits are.. should be a time of exploration and discovery.(Secondary School) I have taught in Guyana and I am now teaching in N.A. There is a growing concern among educators that our students are going out into the work force and tertiary institutions not knowing how to think critically,creatively and how to respond to challenges that require them to think beyond knowledge acquisition. Having a lot of subjects is a good thing but have they acquired transferable skills to live a fulfilled life outside of a

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