



**St. Andrew High School for Girls
Academic Year 2012 -2013**

**Focus- Strengthening Learning Skills and Life Skills
Theme: Children Live What They Learn - Children Learn What They Live**

Our Focus for the Academic Year 2012-2013 will be on Learning Skills and Life Skills. Hence we will be using the theme “Children Live What They Learn (Learning Skills), Children Learn What They Live (Life Skills). Through the experience gained over the past three years as we focused on “Understanding and Responding Positively to the 21st Century Learner” we have come to appreciate the need for a more interactive and integrated approach to the teaching/learning process in order to actively engage our students.

Several discussions have been held among staff members and there is consensus that deliberate attempts must be made to adjust the curriculum if we are to achieve a greater measure of success in our attempts to strengthen the learning skills of our students. It is agreed that for maximum impact, these adjustments to the curriculum and the delivery of instruction should begin at Grade 7 and Departments were asked to submit their recommendations. Unfortunately, several interruptions during the year did not allow time for the conduct of the Consultations required before any such major change to the curriculum could be implemented. In light of this I would like to thank the departments that persisted and submitted their recommendations outside of the Consultations as these recommendations/ ideas have contributed significantly in providing the framework for the initial adjustments to the Grade 7 curriculum that will take place in this academic year.

The approach for this year therefore will be largely experimental with those departments that have taken the initiative to plan for change being given the permission to pursue these adjustments in their curriculum. All departments however will be affected as there are some changes that require a holistic approach and we therefore ask for cooperation and understanding.

Please see attached the analysis done by the Information Technology Department which provides I believe a very comprehensive summary of our numerous discussions held on the challenges facing the learner and the skills required for the learner to successfully

master these challenges. An examination of this analysis will reveal how closely intertwined life skills are with learning skills. **In other words the profile of the successful learner is far more likely to be one that reflects a balanced individual than a dysfunctional one.**

At all levels therefore, efforts must be made to ensure that critical life skills are effectively taught so as to ensure that our students develop into balanced adults who are able to cope with life's challenges and thus "contribute positively to the strengthening of the nation". It is worthy of note that Life Skills are better "caught" than "taught". Hence the Teachers' function as a role model for his/her students is a very important one.

As our nation celebrates its fiftieth Anniversary of Independence I would like to encourage all of us to reflect on the words of our National Anthem. This amazing prayer that stirred the hearts of all Jamaicans fifty years ago is still valid today. The same Eternal God who has blessed us as a people with so much talent and creativity is still willing and able to **send us knowledge and to grant the true wisdom from above** that we need to steer our course through the uncharted waters of this new approach to the curriculum.

Change is never easy, but change we must or we stand the chance of being rendered obsolete. There is the need for all of us to "buy in" to the vision of this more interactive and integrated approach, for the scripture informs us and our anthem reminds us, that 'without a vision the people perish" (Prov. 29 vs. 18).

As we read, research, discuss and debate during the course of this year let us remember God's promise in Jeremiah 33 vs. 3. "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know". Imagination and Innovation are required if we are to achieve our goals. It is good to know that our God is willing and able to provide this.

Sharon Reid
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