

EDUCATION FOCUS

Newsletter issue 02-24

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Permanent Secretary Dr Franco Rodie presenting a gift to outgoing Deputy Secretary Strategic Support Service Division James Bosamata during a farewell ceremony held on Tuesday 20th, February 2024.

WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the second edition of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) Newsletter!

This second edition include articles that detail the preparations and journey of MEHRD in successfully implementing the Education Act 2023. Over the coming year, MEHRD will embark on new and exciting projects and programs, including implementing the Education Act 2023 and its subordinate documents.

We are delighted to provide insightful information on the progress, preparation for implementation, and socialization of the Education Act 2023.

We are committed to providing you with first-hand information and avenues where you can access information concerning our education system.

We encourage you to submit your thoughts, suggestions, and contributions for future editions through the link provided. Your feedback is crucial for ongoing collaboration and our journey together.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Franco Rodie
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

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EDUCATION ACT 2023 ENFORCED

The new Education Act 2023 came into effect on 1 January 2024, following the documents assent by Governor General Sir David Vunagi and signed by Caretaker Minister of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) Hon. Lanelle Olandrea Tanangada on 14 December 2023.

On 15 December 2023, the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (OPMC) published a legal notice in the Gazette, announcing the commencement of the Education Act 2023, which replaced the Education Act 1978.

The commencement of the Act is a significant achievement for Solomon Islands, catering for the administration and regulation of Early Childhood, Primary, and Secondary Education. This includes registration for teachers, education providers, schools, and early childhood education centres, repealing the Education Act (CAP.69).

The Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement (DCGA), through MEHRD, achieved a historic milestone by initiating the Education Bill project in 2014. The process involved reviewing and consulting with education stakeholders around the country on the Education Act 1978.



Front from left: Opposition Leader and BLC Committee member Hon. Mathew Wale, Permanent Secretary Dr. Franco Rodie, Chair of BLC Hon. John Maneniaru, Committee member Hon. Rick Hou. Standing from left: Deputy Secretary (DS) Cooperate Service Coldrine Kolae, representatives from Attorney General Chambers and Outgoing DS Strategic Services James Bosamata.



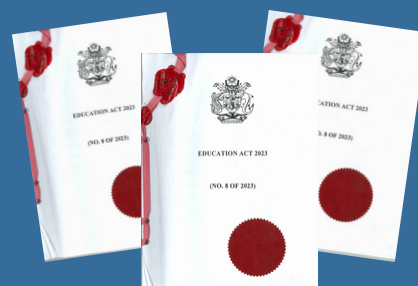
Outgoing Minister of Education Lanelle Tanangada, PS Dr Rodie, Senior Management Team and senior staff during the Education Act celebration on October 25th, 2023.

The Education Bill drafting process, guided by the Education White Paper passed by Parliament in August 2015, outlined the policies for the new Education Act 2023.

The new Act gives the minister and officials the authority to oversee the implementation of the Act and related documents, including Education Regulations, Funding Code, Education Learning Framework, and Administrative Instructions. This covers areas such as the Provincial Education Coordination, Education Providers, School Boards, School Communities, Schools, Early Childhood Education Centres, Teachers, Leaders, and Forms.

Although MEHRD acknowledges the commencement of the Act, the commencement dates will vary for each component of the law.

The ELF TWG has developed a plan to assist the Ministry in implementing the laws in an orderly manner.



PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT UNDERWAY

The Education Legislative Inception Plan 2023-2025 has been developed and incorporated into the Ministry's 2024 Annual Work Plan.

The ELF Inception plan was approved on Monday, 12 February 2024, by the MEHRD Senior Management Team.

This is the result of thorough planning by the ELF-Technical Working Group (ELF-TWG) to make sure the Education Act 2023 is enforced in line with the new law.

The new law took effect on January 1, 2024.

According to the ELF-Inception Plan, there are 25 fundamental action plans identified for each division within the ministry to implement the mandated provisions.

Out of these 25 action plans, there are six priorities that the responsible divisions will implement in the first phase of the implementation plan.

The six priorities are:

- Formation of the Solomon Islands Education Board
- Socialization of ELF – Internally to MEHRD and the Provinces
- Organizing MEHRD's Structure and modifying division role
- Registration of Education Providers, Schools and Teachers
- Agency Agreement
- Teacher Management.

MEHRD is following the Education Act 2023 Section 11 (1) by setting up the SIEB. This board will advise the Minister or Permanent Secretary upon request or on its own initiatives. The advice covers various aspects of early childhood, primary, or secondary education, including:

- (i)Funding principles and processes
- (ii)Registration of teachers, education providers, schools, and ECE centres
- (iii)Approval of learning frameworks and a scheme of secondary education certificate
- (iv)The financial management of schools and ECE centres.

To prepare for the implementation plan rollout, MEHRD conducted a series of ELF Tok Storis with the Senior Management Team, Heads of

Department, and Assistants on 13 - 22 December 2023 to discuss and fully understand their roles under the new Act.

The Human Resource Department of the Ministry is adjusting MEHRD's structure and division roles to ensure that staff members understand their responsibilities, aiding the implementation of the ELF according to the Annual Work Plan 2024.

The Ministry reviewed and provided feedback on the Education Provider, School, and Teacher registration forms.

The Ministry and Provinces extensively discussed and received feedback on an Agency Agreement. This agreement outlines the functions of the Provincial Executive as per Schedule 5 (Provincial Services) of the Provincial Government Act 1997, specifically for managing ECEs, primary schools, and provincial secondary schools. Improving teacher management is another priority for MEHRD. Teachers must understand their roles, responsibilities, and tasks and be managed effectively and professionally.

The current Teacher Service Handbook has numerous instructions, but some are outdated or unclear. The management guidelines must be implemented at all levels, including schools, education providers, and MEHRD, to be effective.

The rules of conduct for managing teachers and leaders are outlined in the Education Act 2023-Administrative Instruction 6 (Teachers and Leaders).

The Ministry expects to carry out these main priorities by April this year.



Manager Policy Strategic Support Division Christina Bakolo, Deputy Secretary Cooperate Service Coldrine Kolae and Director Finance, Merrylyn Kodoleke during ELF meeting.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SOLOMON ISLAND EDUCATION BOARD IN PROGRESS

MEHRD is in the process of creating the Solomon Islands Education Board (SIEB). This board, previously known as the National Education Board, is mandated by section 11 (1) of the Education Act 2023.

The functions of the SIEB according to the Act are:

(a) To provide advice to the Minister or Permanent Secretary, at the request of the Minister or Permanent Secretary or on its own initiative, on any matter concerning early childhood, primary, or secondary education, including matters of policy relating to the following:

- (i) Funding principles and processes
- (ii) Registration of teachers, education providers, schools, and ECE centres

(iii) Approval of learning frameworks and a scheme of secondary education certificates

(a) To provide advice to the Minister or Permanent Secretary, at the request of the Minister or Permanent Secretary or on its own initiative, on potential amendments of this Act or the Regulation; and

(b) To perform other functions assigned to the Board under the Act or the Regulations.

The SIEB membership includes the Permanent Secretary and, at most, six members appointed by the Minister. The ministry has already received applications from individuals interested in joining the SIEB.

2024 ANNUAL WORK PLAN FINALISED

MEHRD is preparing to roll out the implementation of the 2024 Annual Work Plan (AWP) under the framework of the new Education Act 2023.

The 2024 AWP outlines key priority areas, activities, and related budgets. The AWP includes activity and financial planning processes to ensure efficient and effective use of resources. Under the guidance of its Deputy Secretary, each division developed detailed plans aligning with the Act to implement in the first year of commencement.

The key priorities set out in the 2024 AWP are:

- Setting up the Solomon Island Education Board,
- Socialization of the Education Act 2023 and its subordinate documents, emphasizing clarification of roles and functions,
- Review the organizational structure in alignment with the new act to effectively perform its key expectations,
- Conduct awareness training on the new roles and processes

- of conducting business with key education players, Issuing registration to teachers, EPs, schools, and centers,
- Collect and verify school and EP level data, especially against minimum standards such as for infrastructures, teachers, schools, and center operations,
- Continue infrastructure provisions for EPs and schools,
- Conduct capacity assessments within MEHRD and EPs to identify the needs and provide appropriate support.

The 2024 Annual Work Plan (AWP) has been developed based on inputs from workshops held by the Ministry in collaboration with education partners in 2023 and 2024. The AWP includes 70 activities related to MEHRD.

Although the upcoming tasks pose challenges, the Ministry, with the support of education partners and donors, is committed to completing them by the end of the year.

Progress reporting will occur every quarter or upon the completion of significant projects.

Governance of Education Act 2023

In 2023, a significant achievement occurred in improving the Legislative Frameworks governing early childhood, primary, and secondary education. On October 12, 2023, Parliament passed the Education Act 2023, effective from January 1, 2024.

This Act defines relationships between the Ministry and key partners, such as provincial executives, churches, and non-government bodies. It specifies responsibilities for various education levels, including early childhood (3-4 years), pre-primary (pre-primary for 5 years old), primary (years 1 to 6), and secondary education (years 7 to 12).

The Act grants powers to the Minister to approve the Education Regulation 2024, Education Funding Code, and Education Learning Frameworks. The Permanent Secretary has power to approve the Administrative Instructions including Provincial Education Coordination (AI-1), Education Providers (AI-2), School Boards (AI-3), School Communities (AI-3), Schools (AI-4), Early Childhood Education Centres (AI-5), Teachers and Leaders (AI-6), and Forms (AI-7).

The Act mandates the establishment of the Solomon Islands Education Board (SIEB) and Provincial Education Boards to assist in provincial-level administration.

To ensure community involvement, the Act requires the establishment of school boards supporting principals in school management. It allows the Permanent Secretary to issue instructions regarding early childhood, primary, or secondary education, including teacher registration and ongoing professional development.

The Act clarifies the responsibilities of Government, provincial, and non-government education providers for staff employment and management. It emphasizes compulsory education in specific areas to ensure access to early childhood, primary, and secondary education, as determined by the Minister of Education.



Education Providers during a week-long Bi-Annual Education Authority (now Education Provider) Forum held in Honiara from 13th- 17th November, 2023.



Outgoing Minister of Education Honourable Lanelle Tanangada.

KEY MESSAGES

Teacher Registration Compliance

In compliance to the Education Act 2023, Education Regulation 2024 and Education Transitional Regulations 2024 all Education Providers and Schools are informed of the following mandatory requirements on Registration of Teachers

1. Qualification in Subject Taught:

- Complying with the provisions of the Education 2024, it is imperative that all teachers are qualified in the subjects they teach.

2. Eligibility Requirements for Full Registration:

- Subject to Section 37 of the Education Act 2023, all teachers must meet the eligibility requirements for full registration.
- Teachers will be unable to commence employment until registered with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.

3. Full Registration or Provisional Registration:

- *Teachers must meet the eligibility requirements for full registration or be granted provisional registration.*

4. Conditions of Registration:

- Teachers are required to comply with the conditions of registration.
- It is essential to ensure that information on the register is kept up-to-date.
- Teachers must remain a fit and proper person to be registered as a teacher.

5. Authority to Impose Registration Conditions:

- The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development may impose registration conditions, suspend or cancel registration, or disqualify a teacher from being registered for unsatisfactory performance, incapacity, misconduct, or if no longer a fit and proper person to be registered as a teacher.

Mandatory teacher registration compliance took effect on January 1st, 2024.

School Fees Limit Compliance

As you may be aware, the new Education Act 2023 (referred to as the "Act") and the Education Regulations 2024 (referred to as the "Regulation") have been gazetted and became effective on 1 January 2024 and 15 February 2024 respectively.

Therefore, the Ministry advises all Education Providers (EPs) and Schools that, in accordance to section 53 (2) of the Regulations, the maximum allowable school fees for a student in a year are as follows:

Education Level	Maximum fee for day student		Maximum fee for boarding students	
	Urban School	Non-Urban school	Urban school	Non-urban school
Primary Education	\$1,200	\$250		
Junior Secondary Education	\$2,000	\$800	\$4,500	\$2,800
Senior Secondary School	\$4,000	\$3,000	\$9,000	\$7,200

All EPs and Schools are advised, that subject to section 53 (3) of the Regulation, no other fees or levies of any kind may be charged for the enrolment or attendance of a student at school for:

- Enrolling a student in a school; or
- Placing a student on a waiting list for enrolment; or transferring a student from one school to another or
- Sitting an examination or participation in schools-based assessment.

It has come to the Ministry's attention that some EPs and schools are charging students registration fees.

It is an offence of EPs and school leaders to charge fees without the approval of the Ministry through the Education Board of each EP and School Board.

EARLY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

At the beginning of this year on 26 January 2024 and 22 February 2024, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) celebrated two significant events the International Education Day and the International Mother Language Day.

To mark the two significant events the Outgoing Minister of Education Hon. Lanelle Tanangada re-emphasized the international call to prioritise education as a tool for promoting societal development, which value human dignity and peace while on the International Mother Language Day, Permanent Secretary Dr Franco Rodie has highlighted the ministry's direction to support early learners using vernacular language as medium of instruction.

Adding to the highlights was the farewell of five senior officers who have tendered their resignation to contest in the upcoming National General Election set for 17 April, 2024.



Outgoing Minister Hon. Lanelle Tanangada, official guests and student representatives cutting the International and Education Day cake.



World Vision Solomon Islands officer providing education awareness to students during the International Education Day.



Guests visiting the information booth on displayed during International Mother Language Day



MEHRD staff bid farewell to the outgoing senior staff.



Students interact with organizers to find more information about languages.



Strategic Support Service Division team pose for photograph with outgoing Deputy Secretary James Bosamata.