

Education Agenda for the Dutch Caribbean: working together on quality

1. Introduction

Since October 10, 2010, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba have been island governments functioning as "special municipalities" [*bijzondere gemeenten*] within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is responsible for the Islands' education policy. The schools in the Caribbean Netherlands therefore form part of the Dutch education system. Pupils will have the opportunity to gain a diploma that is of equivalent value to a diploma awarded in the European Netherlands.

The objective is that by 2016 the quality of education at schools in the Dutch Caribbean should meet Dutch and Caribbean standards. In attempting to achieve this goal, it must be realized that the initial situation is very different. The three islands differ from one another and from the European Netherlands. Each island has its own culture, history, and identity. Many pupils, in all three islands, do not have Dutch as their mother tongue. Scale and distance also mean that it is not possible to organize the education system in precisely the same way as in the European Netherlands. A separate Education Agenda will therefore apply to education in the Dutch Caribbean in the period ahead. In that Agenda, we do not make any concessions as regards the aims for the quality of education. This will demand the necessary efforts on the part of school boards, school managements and teachers, but it will also require commitment on the part of parents and pupils. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the island governments will support them as much as possible.

The Education Agenda at the macro and micro levels

This Education Agenda is an agenda for the future. It indicates the broad outlines and expresses the aims that we have for education. The purpose of the Education Agenda is to set out arrangements for improving the quality of education in all of the Islands' schools (the Education Agenda at the macro level).

Setting out the aims is important, but it is only the first step. We now have to tackle implementation. That is of course primarily a matter for each school itself, but where possible and desirable, implementation will be carried out in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the island governments, and the other parties concerned. The latter naturally include in any case teachers, pupils, and their parents.

The school boards and the school managers will elaborate on the agreements set out in the Education Agenda and arrived at during the education conference (March 25–26, 2011) in the educational improvement plans for their schools. In its plan – continuing the process of improving the quality of education that has already commenced – each school will set its own Education Agenda based on its own specific situation (the Education Agenda at the micro level). Each school will decide how the Education Agenda will be implemented.

Every pupil counts!

Pupils in the Dutch Caribbean deserve the same quality of education as their counterparts in the European Netherlands. It is also extremely important in this regard to take account of the Caribbean context. In order to convince pupils and their parents of the importance of education, we need to link up with pupils' lifestyle. Doing so will require cooperation with all the local institutions concerned, for example those whose work involves young people and families. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will support them, including by facilitating a study to clarify the attitudes of parents and pupils to changes in the education system.

Focus on the school

It is a feature of the Dutch education system that schools shoulder their own responsibility. School boards are responsible for the quality of the education that their schools provide. Educators will need to deliver that quality, but school boards and staff cannot do so on their own. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science will therefore create the necessary conditions and offer the

necessary support. The island governments also have a task and responsibility with regard to making high-quality education possible.

Progress on the Education Agenda

This Education Agenda has been discussed with the school boards, the school managements, and the island governments. As far as possible, comments raised during those discussions have been taken into account in drawing up the Education Agenda. Implementing it will require regular consultation between all the parties involved. Each year, the various parties will discuss the progress of action based on the Education Agenda and will make any necessary changes. The Education Inspectorate will supervise the quality of the education system; its reports on its findings will be taken into account in evaluating progress. The Senate and the House of Representatives will be kept informed of the broad outlines.

Courtesy Translation

2. The priorities in brief

We have set a number of main priorities that will be important in the years ahead for improving the basic quality of education. The main focus in the next few years will be on these priorities. After all, improving the quality of education requires realistic aims and demands that one make choices. It is not possible to do everything all at once. The various priorities are worked out in greater detail in Section 3.

Improving quality

- ◆ Each school will implement its educational improvement plan. The assistance of a school coach can be provided if so desired.
- ◆ Schools will pay special attention to language (and language policy) and math.
- ◆ The obligations regarding compulsory school attendance and qualification will be top priorities for the schools and the island government. The intention is that every young person should gain at least a basic qualification and that the number who drop out of education should be reduced.

Strengthen the quality of teachers, school managers, and school boards

- ◆ Teachers must be qualified and able, and have sufficient pedagogical and didactic skills. Relevant support activities will be included in an action plan for teacher policy for the Dutch Caribbean.
- ◆ School managers and school boards must be aware of their new role and new responsibilities. They will be assisted in this regard by the school coach and the Administration Office.

Tailor-made special needs expertise

- ◆ School boards and the management of the body responsible for "Sociale Kanstraject Jongeren"(SKJ) will work together and with experts to ensure that every pupil who needs it receives special needs care.
- ◆ Each school will enable its teachers to take a course on learning and behavior problems.
- ◆ Pupils with a need for extra support will be identified. Their teacher will determine their requirement for special needs care, setting it out in an action plan with the aid of the internal supervisor or care coordinator.
- ◆ Each secondary school will draw up an action plan for introducing practical education.
- ◆ The island government will convert the "Sociale Vormingsplicht (SVP)" into "Sociale Kanstrajecten Jongeren(SKJ)".

Attractive vocational education

- ◆ Schools will make efforts to improve the quality of vocational education and the image that it has; this will apply both to preparatory secondary vocational schools (VMBO) and senior secondary vocational schools (MBO).
- ◆ MBO level 1 programs will be provided in St. Eustatius and Saba and consideration will be given to the options for enabling pupils in these islands to take MBO 2 level programs.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will promote collaboration within the Kingdom with the countries of Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten in order to provide a greater range of choices for pupils.

Proper preconditions

- ◆ All the parties concerned will receive the right information in good time regarding the consequences of the transition to an education system on the same lines as that in the European Netherlands.
- ◆ The island governments, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the school boards will cooperate to implement a school buildings plan.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the island governments, and the school boards will make clear agreements as to how policy development and legislative amendments within the European Netherlands will affect the Dutch Caribbean. The basic principle is that there should be a simple and stable system, and sufficient time for introduction, bearing in mind the different initial situation of the Dutch Caribbean.

- ◆ The school boards will be responsible for the lawful and efficient use of funds. In 2011 and 2012, they will be given support in this regard by the Administration Office.

3. The priorities in greater detail

The various priorities listed in Section 2 are dealt with here in greater detail. This section deals with who does what, what support can be expected, when this will be given, and what the result is intended to be.

The school boards and the school managers will elaborate the agreements set out in the Education Agenda and arrived at during the education conference in the educational improvement plans for their schools. Teachers, parents and, where possible, pupils will also be involved.

Each year, the various parties concerned will discuss the progress of action based on the Education Agenda and will make any necessary changes. The Senate and the House of Representatives will be kept informed of the broad outlines.

3.1. Improving quality

Schools have worked hard in recent years to improve the quality of the education that they provide. Pupils have been tested a number of times. Pupil performance has improved overall, certainly in elementary education. A lot of schools are taking deliberate steps to make changes and improvements. Various preconditions at schools have been improved with the assistance of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, for example furniture and educational resources. A start has been made on improving school buildings. Internal supervisors and care coordinators have been trained to survey the special needs requirements at schools. Starting with the 2011–2012 school year, the intention is to work towards the use of the Dutch examinations at secondary schools in Bonaire and St. Eustatius. In Saba, pupils will take not only the Caribbean CXC and TVET examinations, but also a supplementary school examination.

3.1.1. Each school will implement its educational improvement plan. The assistance of a school coach can be provided if so desired.

School boards will be responsible for bringing about improvements in the quality of the education provided. In their educational improvement plans for each school, they will set out how this can be brought up to an acceptable level within the next five years.

Intended results and timeframe:

- ◆ Within five years (by no later than August 1, 2016), education in the Dutch Caribbean will comply with basic quality requirements.
- ◆ By the end of the 2011–2012 school year, each school will have made demonstrable advances with regard to educational results, curriculum, teaching time, school climate, pedagogical and didactic action, special needs, and supervision.
- ◆ By the end of the 2011–2012 school year, all the schools concerned will have introduced specific measures to set up a proper system of quality assurance.
- ◆ School boards will receive support such that by the end of 2013 they are independently able to work to bring about the necessary improvement in quality.

Responsible party:

- ◆ The school board.

Available support:

- ◆ In the period from March 2011 to December 2012, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will make possible the appointment of two school coaches for primary schools and one for secondary schools and senior secondary vocational schools.
- ◆ The school coaches will help school boards to draw up an educational improvement plan for each school, to introduce it, and if necessary to amend it.

- ◆ Schools can join the Primary Education Council, the Secondary Education Council, or the Senior Secondary Vocational Education Council and receive support from it.

3.1.2. Schools will pay special attention to language (and language policy) and math

Language and math skills are essential if young people are to be successful at school and in their careers. Improving those skills in all sectors of education is therefore a priority. Improvements also need to be made in this context with regard to the transition from one education sector to another.

The current government's coalition agreement emphasizes that the core task of primary schools concerns math and language (Papiamentu, English, and Dutch). An additional challenge for the Dutch Caribbean is the fact that the language of instruction at secondary school in Bonaire and St. Eustatius is Dutch and that the final examinations are administered in Dutch. In Saba, the language of instruction is English but Dutch is a compulsory final examination subject, and pupils must be able to take the Dutch state examination if they so wish. Primary and secondary schools will therefore be encouraged to devote extra teaching time to language and math. Senior secondary vocational schools will also need to ensure that pupils have a good command of these subjects.

Intended results and timeframe:

- ◆ Language (Papiamentu, English, and Dutch) and math up to standard. The school boards in each island will make arrangements regarding language policy and the necessary continuous learning pathways. This will ensure that the transition to Dutch-language secondary education in Bonaire and St. Eustatius and the transition to senior secondary vocational education or higher education does not form a stumbling block for pupils in Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba.
- ◆ Starting with the 2011–2012 school year, teachers will utilize a pupil information management system to keep track of pupils' results and to take action in good time to deal with pupils who are falling behind in language and math. Pupils will be tested regularly.
- ◆ School boards will encourage the provision of extra lessons in language and math within the curriculum. In the case of secondary education, such lessons can take the form of an "elective course", where possible in combination, for example, with practice-oriented subjects that are also given as elective courses.
- ◆ Before 2013, teachers who need it will have had in-service training in Dutch and math.
- ◆ From 2014 on, secondary schools and senior secondary vocational schools will make use of reference levels for language and math. They will receive support to help them do so.
- ◆ The math test will be introduced in secondary education by no later than 2016.

Responsible party:

- ◆ School boards, school managers, teachers.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will determine core objectives and final attainment targets.

Available support:

- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will commission a study to determine whether the educational resources available in the Dutch Caribbean are in line with the core objectives.
- ◆ The Ministry will have tests translated and adapted to the local context, and will ensure that schools can be assisted in interpreting the test results.
- ◆ The Ministry will invest in 2011 and 2012 in the development of a pupil information management system that is adapted to the language situation in the Dutch Caribbean and the local context.
- ◆ The Ministry will enable teachers to undergo additional training in pedagogical and didactic skills and in Dutch. The Ministry will assist schools in working with reference levels.

- ◆ The island governments will support the setting up a language working party for each island; this will concern itself with collaboration and coordination as regards language policy between the schools and institutions in the island concerned.

3.1.3. The obligations regarding compulsory school attendance and qualification will be top priorities for the schools and the island government. The intention is that every young person should gain at least a basic qualification and that the number who drop out of education should be reduced.

The main aim of education is to get the best out of the pupils. Pupils must achieve the qualification level that is appropriate to them. They should be prevented from dropping out of education prematurely, and they must in principle gain at least a basic qualification.

Intended results and timeframe:

- ◆ By the end of the 2011–2012 school year, the school attendance officer will have produced an analysis of school absenteeism. He/she will have full information regarding pupils subject to the school attendance and qualification obligations and pupils who drop out of education prematurely.
- ◆ By no later than the end of the 2012–2013 school year, on the basis of a better understanding of the information, the school attendance officer will be able to check and enforce school attendance more stringently.
- ◆ By the end of 2011–2012, there will be effective transfer of information between the various educational sectors. The transition between primary and secondary schools will be going well.
- ◆ Schools will tackle parents regarding truancy.

Responsible party:

- ◆ Schools must have their records in order and will report to the school attendance officer.
- ◆ The relevant island government is responsible for appointing the school attendance officer and for registering dropouts.
- ◆ The island government will also ensure that the school attendance officer enforces the provisions of the Compulsory Education Act [*Leerplichtwet*].

Available support:

- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (together with the island government) will communicate the regulations regarding compulsory school attendance and qualification, and the role and responsibility of all parties concerned.
- ◆ The school attendance officer can call on the (paid) assistance of Ingrado, the national sector organization dealing with school attendance and school drop-outs (School Drop-out Registration and Coordination Function).
- ◆ The island government can call on the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) for support with its role in this regard.

3.2. Strengthen the quality of teachers, school managers, and school boards

High-quality education demands that there be sufficient qualified teachers. An additional challenge in the Dutch Caribbean is that, at a number of schools, the make-up of the teaching staff is changing much faster than in the European Netherlands.

Teachers who held a qualification under the law of the Netherlands Antilles prior to October 10, 2010 will continue to be so qualified. Teachers who do not hold a qualification under the law of the Netherlands Antilles will have five years in which to gain a qualification.

Except for the Bonaire branch of the University of Curaçao's teacher training program, there are no training facilities for teachers within the Dutch Caribbean. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is therefore drawing up an action plan for teacher policy.

Good school management is essential to allow teachers to do their work and to boost the quality of education. In short, high-quality education depends entirely on the quality of the teachers, school managers, and school boards.

3.2.1. Teachers must be qualified and able, and have sufficient pedagogical and didactic skills. Relevant support activities will be included in an action plan for teacher policy for the Dutch Caribbean.

Intended results:

- ◆ An integrated action plan for teacher policy:
 - ◆ which focuses on training unqualified teachers and enabling them to gain a qualification;
 - ◆ which offers teachers training specifically in pedagogical and didactic skills (including for their specific subject);
 - ◆ which offers teachers training specifically in recognizing and dealing with learning and behavior problems.
 - ◆ Above all, the intention is for those providing the training to determine, in consultation with the party requesting it, just what the actual content of the training should be. The action plan envisions efforts being made, especially in the first six months, to formulate the demand for education and to build up productive collaboration with teachers, school managers, and school boards.

In 2011, the action plan will focus on:

- ◆ a specific program plan with clearly defined products for the whole period from 2011 to 2015;
- ◆ conclusion of collaboration agreements with local partners (for example with training institutions within the Kingdom);
- ◆ setting up a local liaison group for each island, made up of representatives of school boards, school managements, and teachers so that they can contribute to setting up the necessary training programs and determining the training needed by teachers;
- ◆ collection of training plans from all schools;
- ◆ a survey of training requirements (from supply-driven to demand-driven and covering both qualifications and skills), partly encouraged by the school board and the school management;
- ◆ start of training of unqualified teachers;
- ◆ start of training for teachers in recognizing learning and behavior problems;
- ◆ training will commence no later than the start of the 2011–2012 school year; and
- ◆ a baseline survey of the current situation regarding skills in the Dutch Caribbean.

Responsible party:

- ◆ As regards delivering the action plan, providers will be approached by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
- ◆ The chosen providers will be responsible for introducing the plan. School managers and school boards will also be responsible. They can contribute to discussion and collaboration if they so desire, assisted by the school coaches.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will supervise the progress of introduction.

Available support:

- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will provide support for those charged with implementing the action plan and will make funding available.

Timeframe:

- ◆ A proposal for the action plan will be presented in the second quarter of 2011 (after the basic principles have been discussed at the education conference).

3.2.2. School managers and school boards must be aware of their new role and new responsibilities. They will be assisted in this regard by the school coach and the Administration Office.

Intended results and timeframe:

- ◆ By the end of the 2011–2012 school year, all schools will have introduced specific measures regarding the quality of the school management and the school board. They will be aware of their new task, role and function, and be able to fulfill these effectively.
- ◆ School managements and school boards will support and reinforce one another. They will be aware of their various roles and will act accordingly.
- ◆ Each school management and school board will draw up a plan for an effective schooling and training policy and for quality and diversity in their personnel policy.
- ◆ School boards and school managements will give teachers the scope to decide for themselves how they will actually teach.

Responsible party:

- ◆ School managements and school boards.

Available support:

- ◆ In the period from March 2011 to December 2012, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will make possible the appointment of two school coaches for primary schools and one for secondary schools and senior secondary vocational schools (see "Improving quality" on page 4).
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will make funds available for training school boards and school managements in the field of finances, funding, responsibility, and administration.

3.3. Tailor-made special needs expertise

At all the schools in the Dutch Caribbean, the care provided for pupils with learning and behavior problems is insufficient. There are also insufficient facilities and specialist expertise to provide proper care for such pupils.

A great deal of effort is currently going into setting up an internal and external structure of special needs provision so as ultimately to provide all pupils with the help and facilities they need and deserve. Practical education is also being developed (or developed further) for a specific group of pupils in each island.

The first step towards setting up an internal special educational needs structure at schools has involved training at least two members of staff as internal guidance officers. Since August 1, 2010, a process manager education care has been helping school boards set up the collaboration of schoolboards governing Education Care and the Expertise Center for Education Care, and with writing the special needs plan for the island.

3.3.1. School boards and the management of the body responsible for "Sociale Kantraject Jongeren (SKJ)" will work together and with experts to ensure that every pupil who needs it receives special needs care.

3.3.2. Each school will enable its teachers to take a course on learning and behavior problems.

3.3.3. Pupils with a need for extra support will be identified. Their teacher will determine their requirement for special needs care, setting it out in an action plan with the aid of the internal guidance officer.

3.3.4. Each secondary school will draw up an action plan for introducing practical education.

Intended results and timeframe:

- ◆ May 1, 2011: partnership functioning.

- ◆ May 1, 2011: school boards jointly determine the special needs plan for their island.
- ◆ August 1, 2011: the internal special needs structure is operational for each school.
- ◆ August 1, 2011: Expertise Center for Education Care [*Expertise Centrum Onderwijszorg, EOZ*] set up and operational.
- ◆ August 1, 2011: each secondary school has an action plan for introducing practical education.
- ◆ December 31, 2011: a start has been made on training all teachers to recognize and deal with learning and behavior problems.

Responsible party:

- ◆ The school boards are responsible for setting up the collaboration of schoolboards governing Education Care, establishing the island special needs plan, and setting up the Expertise Center for Education Care.
- ◆ The school management is responsible for setting up the internal special needs structure.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for making training available for all teachers in recognizing and dealing with learning and behavior problems.
- ◆ School managements ensure that all teachers have the opportunity to undergo training in recognizing and dealing with learning and behavior problems.

Available support:

- ◆ Since August 1, 2010, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has made possible the appointment of a process manager education care for each island. The task of the process manager education care is to carry out the necessary preparation and support work up to August 1, 2011 for setting up the partnership between the schools and the Expertise Center for Education Care.
- ◆ The Ministry has provided PROBES Netherlands with a grant to help three secondary schools in the Dutch Caribbean to draw up an action plan for introducing practical education. The Ministry has also provided a grant for each school board to allow two members of each school's staff to pay a working visit to the European Netherlands, for example to visit a number of schools for practical education.
- ◆ The Ministry is keeping close track of whether the approach is in fact effective.

3.3.5. The island government will convert the "Sociale Vormingsplicht(SVP)" into "Sociale Kanstraject Jongeren(SKJ)".

Intended results:

- ◆ Young people aged 18 to 24 to whom this applies have been encouraged to take part in a social opportunity program in order to improve their chances of belatedly gaining a basic qualification or of finding work.
- ◆ The implementing organizations have ensured that there is a smooth transition from the SVP program to the SKJ program and have made it clear which young people will finish off an "old" program and which will commence a new program.
- ◆ The project office will ensure SKJ registration of young people:
 - ◆ aged 18 to 24 without a basic qualification;
 - ◆ who have commenced a social opportunity program;
 - ◆ who have successfully completed this program or who have dropped out.
- ◆ Collaboration has been arranged with senior secondary vocational schools.
- ◆ The Education Inspectorate reports on the outcomes in the Dutch Caribbean section of its annual Education Report.

Responsible party:

- ◆ Implementation: project office and SKJ implementation organization.

Available support:

- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science informs the parties involved about the content of the relevant legislation and regulations.

- ◆ The Ministry provides support, via its Rijksdienst [National Office] Dutch Caribbean (RCN), with the transition from the SVP to the SKJ.

Timeframe:

- ◆ Introduction as of January 1, 2011. Young people who commenced an SVP program before that date can complete with their program under the "old" conditions.

3.4. Attractive vocational education

The vocational education sector plays an important role in supplying specialists for the labor market and it is therefore essential for the sector to key into the needs and wishes of that market. Vocational education therefore needs to be an attractive option. The transition from preparatory secondary vocational school to senior secondary vocational school is an important moment for many students. The different sectors therefore need to collaborate effectively, including with businesses and island governments in order to prepare pupils at vocational schools for their place in the labor market.

3.4.1. Schools will make efforts to improve the quality of vocational education and the image that it has; this will apply both to preparatory secondary vocational schools (VMBO) and senior secondary vocational schools (MBO).

3.4.2. MBO level 1 programs will be provided in St. Eustatius and Saba and consideration will be given to the options for enabling pupils in these islands to take MBO 2 level programs.

3.4.3. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will promote collaboration within the Kingdom with the countries of Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten in order to provide a greater range of choices for pupils.

Intended results:

- ◆ The new structure of vocational education will take effect on August 1, 2011. It will in any case involve the existing programs (at the Saba Comprehensive School (SGB), now perhaps also offering MBO level 1) and new ones. The new programs must, however, be accredited by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science.
- ◆ The Education-Labor Market Council [*Raad Onderwijs Arbeidsmarkt, ROA*] began work on August 1, 2011.
- ◆ MBO level 1 programs will be provided in St. Eustatius and Saba and, before the start of the 2011–2012 school year, consideration will be given to the options for enabling pupils in these islands to take MBO 2 level programs.
- ◆ Collaboration between Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba in the area of senior secondary vocational education (for example sharing expertise).
- ◆ Collaboration within the Kingdom with the countries of Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten in order to provide a greater range of programs.

Responsible party:

- ◆ School boards (and school managements where implementation is concerned)
- ◆ Education-Labor Market Council (ROA)
- ◆ Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Available support:

- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science informs the parties involved about the content of the relevant legislation and regulations.
- ◆ The Ministry provides support, via its Rijksdienst Dutch Caribbean (RCN), for implementation of the policy.
- ◆ ROA consultants (from August 1, 2011).
- ◆ School coaches (if requested by the school management and school board).

Timeframe:

- ◆ A growth model will be pursued. The details of that model will be discussed before the end of the present school year with the parties concerned in the Islands.
- ◆ In 2011, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science will conclude collaboration agreements (protocols) within the Kingdom with the countries of Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten.

3.5. Proper preconditions

3.5.1. All the parties concerned will receive the right information in good time regarding the consequences of the transition to an education system on the same lines as that in the European Netherlands.

- ◆ The school boards, school managements, and teachers will be informed about the changes brought about by the legislation taking effect for the Dutch Caribbean. This will involve leaflets and other means of communication providing information about the structure of the legislation, the requirements that the legislation imposes regarding educational objectives (core objectives and final attainment targets), and such matters as exams, employee representation, school vacations, and terms and conditions of employment.
- ◆ In March 2011, the Education Inspectorate will inform the schools about the supervision and standards framework aimed at achieving basic quality.
- ◆ In the second quarter of 2011, a front desk will become operational at the RCN for inquiries regarding education.

3.5.2. The island governments, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the school boards will cooperate to implement a school buildings plan.

- ◆ The plans will be carried out in the period from 2011 to 2015.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will provide a special allowance for school buildings. The island governments will also invest in school buildings.
- ◆ The island governments will be responsible for school buildings and for major maintenance.

3.5.3. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the island governments, and the school boards will make clear agreements as to how policy development and legislative amendments within the European Netherlands will affect the Dutch Caribbean. The basic principle is that there should be a simple and stable system, and sufficient time for introduction, bearing in mind the different initial situation of the Dutch Caribbean.

- ◆ In the event of policy developments and proposed legislation for the European Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will decide in each case whether the changes should also apply to the Dutch Caribbean. If necessary and possible, there will be consultation beforehand with the island governments or the school boards. In this context, consideration will also be given to when the changes can reasonably be implemented in the Dutch Caribbean. The basic principle is that there should be a simple and stable system, and sufficient time for introducing it.
- ◆ The island governments will arrange for educational consultation for the Islands in order to pool experience and coordinate joint activities.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will inform the Islands regarding amendments that affect the legislation applying to education in the Dutch Caribbean.

3.5.4. The school boards will be responsible for the lawful and efficient use of funds. In 2011 and 2012, they will be given support in this regard by the Administration Office.

- ◆ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will provide extra funds for running the Administration Office (operational as of January 1, 2011).
- ◆ The Ministry will have a study carried out in 2011 into the level of funding.

- ◆ The school boards will acquire a pupil information management system before August 1, 2011. The Ministry will provide financial assistance for acquisition.

Courtesy Translation