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ENGLISH

WHAT'S NEW ...

IN CARIBBEAN NETHERLANDS EDUCATION



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Number 12

WHAT'S NEW ...

IN FULL SWING

As you'll notice when reading this edition, things are changing in What's New.

First of all, as of now we'll write more in depth about two or more main themes. In this issue, for example, we've initiated a series on education-related initiatives that the four countries, the Netherlands, Curaçao, Aruba and St. Maarten, have been working on jointly since the Four Countries Conference in February 2019. A series on monitoring and testing will also kick-off in this edition, as we look into the experiences of two schools with student information systems.

Secondly, the magazine will only be issued digitally from now on. This has the following advantages:

- While reading, you can click to immediately access web pages for more information and in the near future to also access video and audio clips;
- We're contributing to a better environment by reducing the use of paper and ink for printing and by eliminating the need to transport this publication by plane;
- We're saving on printing and transportation costs;
- Because we've eliminated the time-consuming printing and transport aspects, we can produce the magazine quicker, which may result in issuing What's New more often.

In order to continue to reach the readers not on our mailing list, we're still going to place a small number of printed copies of the magazine at certain locations, such as ZVK's waiting rooms and libraries.

There is a lot of movement in the education field on our islands and this newsletter is one of the media through which we will be following and shedding light on all developments.

We look forward to receiving your reactions on the new format of the "What's New ..." and wish you pleasant reading!

On behalf of the editors,

Elaine Marchena

Sr. Communication Advisor OCW in the Caribbean Netherlands.

CONTENTS

3

Colophon

COLOPHON

This digital newsletter is a publication of OCW in the Caribbean Netherlands and it aims to:

- provide education professionals and other interested parties with information about the relevant developments in education in the Caribbean Netherlands;
- stimulate the exchange of education-related knowledge and best practices between the islands.

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Do you want to be on the mailing list for this digital newsletter or do you want to contribute to it?
Then contact Elaine Marchena: elaine.marchena@rijksdienstcn.com

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Nolly Oleana
Head of the OCW in
the Caribbean Netherlands



PREFACE

After the traditional bustle surrounding the end of a school year, we're now just ahead of the beginning of the summer holidays; a well-deserved period of rest that you're undoubtedly ready for. It's a good time to reflect on some of the highlights of the past school year.

First of all, the Gwendoline van Putten (GvP) School achieved the basic quality level, which means that all educational institutes in the Caribbean Netherlands have now achieved this level. The fact that the GvP was at the last school to achieve this has everything to do with the fact that the school had to combine improving their educational processes with the radical transition to English as their language of instruction and the corresponding switch to the Caribbean Examination Council's (CXC) school system.

This is without a doubt a special achievement. What also stands out during the past school year is the exceptionally high passing rate achieved by the Scholengemeenschap Bonaire (SGB) during the first period¹.

In the field of sports, it was a first; the successful organisation of the Inter Island Sports Competition on Saba. This sports tournament, which will now be held annually, is a fine example of cooperation between the windward islands of St. Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius. You can read more about this event in [the Short News Items section](#).

Another milestone was the launch of the BESt4kids programme: a multi-year programme intended to

strengthen childcare and pre-school and after-school facilities on the three Caribbean Netherlands islands and to make care for 0 - 12 year old children more affordable for parents. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science works closely together with the ministries of SZW² and VWS³ and with the island governments, including childcare organisations, schools and organisations in the chain of youth care.

Another significant positive development is that a large group of primary education (PO) schools participated in [the Youth Evaluation](#) in May to assess the language skills of group 8 students for Dutch as a Foreign Language.

Finally, I want to focus on the agreements that the education ministers of the countries of Curaçao, Aruba, St. Maarten and the Netherlands signed during the Four Countries Conference last February. In this and subsequent editions of What's New, you can read more about the different education-related projects and initiatives that the four countries are working on together.

But the best achievement is and always will be the process that takes place every day in the classroom and that culminates annually in handing out the diplomas/certificates.

On behalf of the OCW Ministry, I would like to thank everyone who, directly or indirectly, has contributed to education in the Caribbean Netherlands during the past school year.

On behalf of the rest of the OCW team in the Caribbean Netherlands and our colleagues in The Hague, I wish you a very nice summer vacation.

1 When this article was written, the results of the second period were not yet known.
2 Social Affairs and Employment
3 Public Health, Welfare and Sport

NEW SERIES

Cooperation between four countries progresses in the field of education

Photo: Ministry of OCWS on Curaçao



The Education Ministers of the four countries during the press conference:
F.l.t.r.: Minister Wycliffe Smith of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports (St. Maarten),
 Minister Ingrid van Engelshoven of Education, Culture and Science (The Netherlands),
 Minister Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé of Education, Science, Culture & Sports (Curaçao),
 Minister Xiomara Ruiz Maduro of Finance, Economic Affairs and Culture (Aruba)
 and Minister Armando Lampe of Education, Science, and Sustainable Development (Aruba).

During the ministerial four-country meeting on February 8, 2019 in Curaçao, the education ministers of the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten signed a number of agreements to cooperate with each other in the areas of teacher training, the civil effect of legal studies, student financial aid, advancement and successful studies, vocational education, language policy, implementation of the CXC education system and underwater heritage.

In the coming period, in each edition of What's New, developments in one or more of these areas of cooperation will be discussed.

Cooperation four countries



Brief explanation of the agreements made

Teacher training

The five ministers signed a protocol of cooperation for establishing a training school for teachers.

Eliminating civil effects

A working group consisting of Education and Justice ministry civil servants is conducting research into the feasibility of changing regulations to eliminate the existing civil effects between the various legal studies (in the Netherlands, Curaçao, Aruba and St. Maarten).

Student financial aid

- There will be one information campaign for measuring the ability of debtors to repay that will be applied equally
- The countries will share with each other the MOUs that are signed with educational institutions in the region
- All four education ministers will ensure that there's an exemption from the foreign exchange commission for debtors repaying locally.

Advancement and successful studies

For students who have completed their secondary and vocational education on the islands, a joint workgroup will perform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the transition challenges and will formulate objectives to improve students' ability to continue their studies successfully.

Vocational education

A joint working group will develop proposals for internship exchange and cooperation between the islands for certain training courses.

Language policy

The countries want to work together on ensuring good quality education in order to achieve optimal language development for students. To achieve this, the Dutch as a Foreign Language (NVT) Network has been established.

Implementing the CXC education system

<https://www.cxc.org/>

A platform, with representatives from the different islands, is working on:

- jointly realising a level of costs for this examination system;
- developing Dutch exams at the desired level;
- the future development of all the final Papiamentu courses for the ABC islands;
- offering English exams at schools with bilingual education.

Underwater cultural heritage

The ministers will make a joint effort to make the Underwater Heritage Convention applicable.

<https://www.unesco.nl/nl/artikel/nederland-start-ratificatie-van-unesco-verdrag-ter-bescherming-van-erfgoed-onder-water>

More information?
Recommended websites
about training schools:

www.partnerschapopleidenindeschool.nl

www.platformsamenoopleiden.nl



Cooperation four countries

“You learn the most from teachers who are learning”

TOWARDS A TRAINING SCHOOL FOR THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

On February 8, 2019, a cooperation protocol was signed to stimulate teacher training and school boards in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands by establishing a training school. The education ministers of the four countries; Aruba, Curaçao, St. Maarten and the Netherlands, signed this protocol. In this article we'll discuss the first steps to establish this partnership for teacher training and we'll examine the concept of a training school.

In March 2019, due to her expertise in the field of training in schools, Brigit van Rossum was delegated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) as part of a workgroup to work on the first version of an action plan to establish a training school. In addition to Brigit van Rossum, the workgroup consisted of Nolly Oleana, the OCW department head in the Caribbean Netherlands, and Frans van Efferink, managing director of the Scholengemeenschap Bonaire (SGB).

The proposed teacher training partnership will initially be limited to schools on the leeward islands, involving the following educational institutions: the teacher training programme at the University of Curaçao (UoC), together with the LOFO (ed.: Lerarenopleiding Fundierend Onderwijs), the University of Aruba

(UvA) and the IPA (Instituto Pedagógico Arubano). St. Maarten is also involved, in anticipation of possibly becoming involved with this initiative at a later date.

Training school

But what exactly does the concept of a training school entail? Brigit emphasises that a training school is not a physical training institution, so it shouldn't be confused with a teacher training course that is located in one or more buildings. “A training school is a form of cooperation or a partnership formed between the teacher training programmes and the school boards with their schools, to train future teachers in a practical way in their future workplaces.” She explains that training schools have been created to close the gap between the theory taught in a training institution and the daily work at a school, where the prospective teacher eventually ends up.

Within the concept of a training school, the future workplace is a good place to train a prospective teacher. During the first year of their education, the teachers in training spend 40% of their time at the school. “Being in the workplace strongly influences what a teacher learns and is much more intensive than the traditional teacher training model. After all, you learn the most from teachers who are learning”, says Brigit.

Give and take

For participating schools, on the one hand participation in a training school means investing in training their new teachers. For example, free time must be scheduled for current teachers to supervise the teachers in training. “But,” Brigit says emphatically: “in this case, giving and taking go hand-in-hand very nicely. Participating in a training school also creates a wave of professionalisation in the participating schools. Current and prospective teachers work together on the quality of education and they formally and informally experience the concept of lifelong learning and learning from each other with an inquisitive mind set.”

Another advantage of training within schools is that it becomes clear at a very early stage of the programme whether a student is really suited for the job. According to Brigit, this way you not only prevent a lot of potential frustration and disappointment for the less suitable candidates, but there's also a natural selection of people who are suited for the job, which has a positive effect on the quality of the teaching staff. “It's a positive development for both the students and the schools”, concludes Brigit.

“... PARTICIPATING IN A TRAINING SCHOOL ALSO CREATES A WAVE OF PROFESSIONALISATION IN THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS ...”

NEW SERIES

Cooperation four countries



About Brigit van Rossum



Photo: Angeline Zwinkels

<https://www.dair.academy/>

Brigit van Rossum is the owner-director of the Dair Academy for learning organizations.

Via **Dair Academy** she offers training, coaching and advice to organisations and professionals in the field of education.

She started her career as a teacher, then worked as a principal at various schools and developed herself to become a master teacher in leadership, innovation and organisation. In 2016 she completed her Master of Management in Education with research into informal learning.

Dair's unique tools and associated training opportunities are aimed at helping education professionals bring out the best in themselves, their teams and their organisation during the journey to becoming a learning organisation.

BASIC QUALITY LEVEL FOR THE GWENDOLINE VAN PUTTEN SCHOOL



CONGRATULATIONS!

The department OCW in the Caribbean Netherlands congratulates the **Gwendoline van Putten** (GvP) School upon achieving the basic quality standards.

You met major educational changes, including the transition to English as the language of instruction and the implementation of the Caribbean Examination school system (CXC). And on top of that you managed to work successfully on quality improvement. This is a remarkable achievement.

Teachers, management, board and parents: we thank you for your dedication and hope that you will keep up the good work for the youth and the future of Sint Eustatius!

Reynolds (Nolly) Oleana

Head of the department OCW Caribbean Netherlands



Cooperation four countries

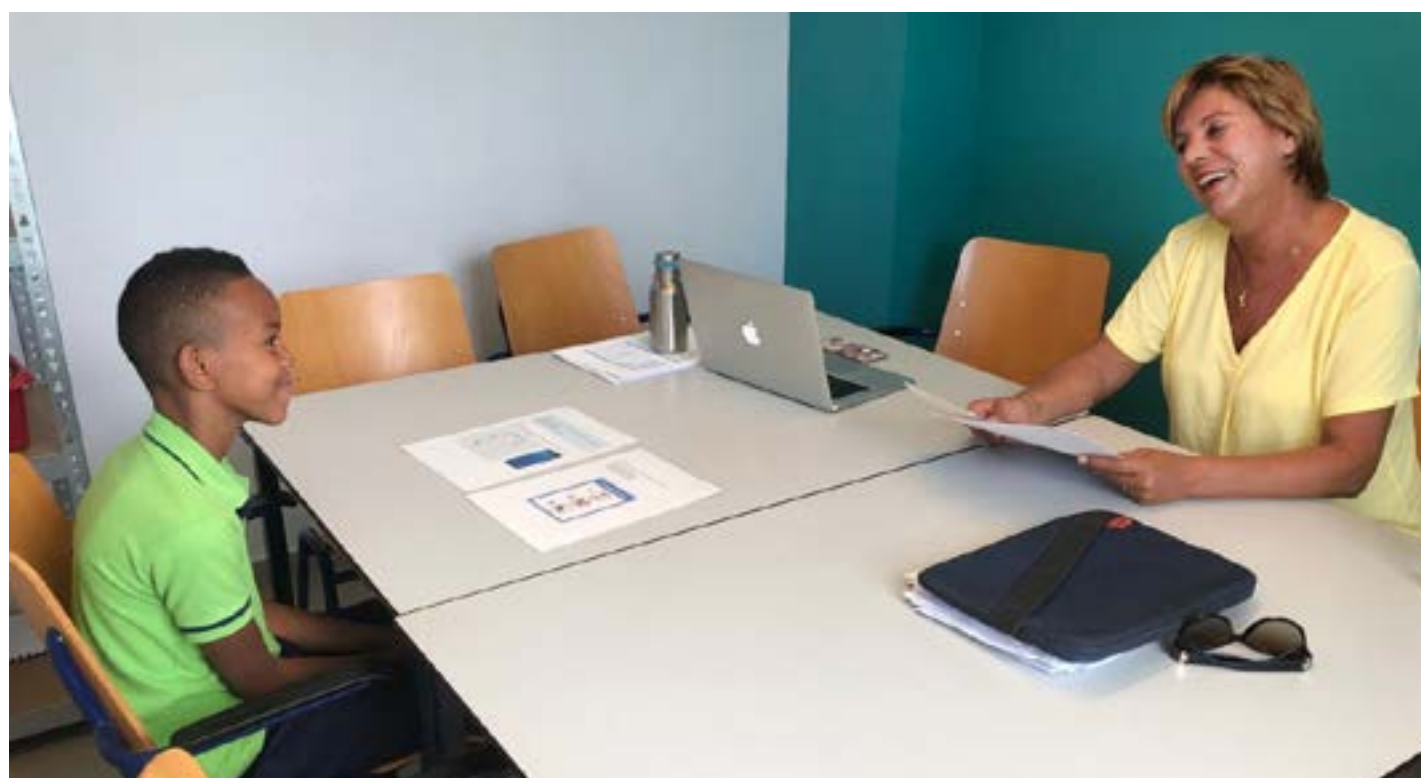
YOUTH EVALUATION USING NVT¹ LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN GROUP 8

¹ Dutch as a foreign language

Teachers of Dutch as a Foreign Language (NVT) on the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius were busy in May. Supported by the Language Union, they conducted the NVT Youth Evaluation for nearly 700 group 8 students. The purpose of this exercise was to assess the language proficiency of each student in Dutch as a foreign language.

The participating students each received a certificate for participating in the evaluation. Most students appear to be functioning between levels A1 and A2 of [the European Frame of Reference](#). This means that they're able to speak and write in simple, concrete situations. They're also able to understand short texts and messages and respond to them. The teachers can use the results from the assessment to prepare a plan for individuals or for a class to achieve the desired improvements.

The teachers are satisfied with the progression of the evaluations.



Marjan de Visser-Lemstra measures the fluency of Jeiel Winklaar from Kolegio San Bernardo on Bonaire

As the local representative of the Language Union, Marjan de Visser-Lemstra supervised the evaluations on the islands. She emphasises that it was not a test: "students did not pass or fail", but it was intended to get a picture of their command of the four skills in Dutch: speaking, listening, writing and reading. "In this way, teachers receive additional information about the level of their students' language skills and the students are motivated even more to learn Dutch."

Amazed

Rhea Courtar and her colleague Lucinda from the Golden Rock School on Sint Eustatius would like to do it again. The oral part in particular was surprising, according to Rhea. "The testing method really entices the students to communicate in Dutch. We were amazed at the way some students could express themselves in Dutch."



Photo: Mark van Abcoude

COOPERATION BETWEEN FOUR THE COUNTRIES IN THE NVT NETWORK

On all six islands of the former Netherlands Antilles, linguistically Dutch is a foreign language because it's generally not the colloquial language, used in everyday life. Based on this, the Ministers of Education of the four countries (the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten) and the Dutch Language Union signed [the Dutch as a Foreign Language \(NVT\) letter](#) of intent last February during the Four Countries Conference in Curaçao.

The purpose of this letter of intent is to ensure optimum language development for students by working together to provide high quality education. This cooperation has led to establishing the NVT network, in which educational stakeholders from all six islands exchange knowledge, information and learning resources, support research projects and work together on professionalizing NVT teachers.

One of NVT Network's first collaborative activities was conducting the Youth Evaluation. This evaluation method was developed by the CNaVT ([the Dutch as a Foreign Language Certificate](#)) on behalf of the Language Union. It differs from other evaluation methods used so far in its approach which follows NVT didactics, which fits in better with the language development and perceptions of the youth on the Caribbean islands.

On behalf of the Language Union, Marjan de Visser-Lemstra thanks everyone who participated in any way during the Youth Evaluation. "We're grateful for the confidence that the schools and the education professionals have placed in the evaluation".

" WE'RE GRATEFUL FOR THE CONFIDENCE THAT THE SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS HAVE PLACED IN THE EVALUATION"



NVT-teachers Denise Pijnaker-Hordijk (left) and Tamara Richardson (right) during the evaluation at the Bethel Methodist School on St. Eustatius

LEVEL-BASED NVT

Photography: **Elaine Marchena**

Today at the Saba Comprehensive School (SCS), the NVT (Dutch as a foreign language) students in group 4 receive lessons from "teachers" Anja, Shania and Tara. They prepared the Dutch lesson together.

The students enter slowly, laughing and talking. It's clear that they're in different grades, ranging from Form 1 to 3. After a couple of minutes, everyone is sitting in their place. The class is divided into three groups from the different grades. These are the teams that will compete against each other during the quiz at the end of the lesson. Today's lesson is about [modal verbs](#) what they are and how you should use them. Each of the three "teachers" participates in the lesson. The class is also participating well; nobody is afraid to say or ask something and everyone is listening to each other well.

Kahoot

NVT head teacher, Petra Roël, is in the classroom and, when necessary, gives a clue or adds something. Following an explanation, the students do exercises using sentences containing modal verbs. The highlight of the lesson is the quiz. It will show which group understood the subject material the best. The quiz is conducted using [Kahoot](#)





LEVEL-BASED NVT

Shania (left) and Anja (right) in discussion with NVT-teacher Petra Roël

Unfortunately, the use of mobile phones has recently been banned at the SCS, but the students can follow everything via the projections on the whiteboard. Per group they write their answers on small whiteboards. After this exciting competition, the winners receive their reward: a pack of Oreo cookies that they still share with the rest of the class. Afterwards the three “teachers” agreed: “It was cool to do this.”

Organised differently

“This practical lesson, including the quiz, was devised, prepared and given entirely by Anja, Shania and Tara,” says Petra Roël afterwards. “This is NVT group 4, which for Dutch is already at around **CEFR comprehension level B1** which is the highest level in the school’s lower grades. You can see from the variety of ages that per student, their command of Dutch differs widely. And this is precisely one of the reasons why the SCS switched to a level-based approach to Dutch as a foreign language since the 2018-2019 school year.” All students in the lower grades at the SCS now receive Dutch lessons four times a

week. The classes for this course are not put together based on age, but based on the four different command levels of Dutch, between A1 and B1.

Implementing level-based education was one of the aspects that emerged from the 2017-2018 school year as something to be improved on for Dutch education at the SCS. Using the old approach, the teacher had to differentiate a lot due to the great differences in the levels among the students. In that situation, the stronger students weren’t being challenged enough, while the weaker students lagged behind because the pace was too fast. So, now all the students at the same level are placed together.

Another thing that needed improvement was the content of and approach to the lessons. The teachers wanted more leeway for repetition, and the students were asking for more responsibility and a more practical interpretation of the lessons.

Week Nederlands				
Docent 1+2: NVT-docent / hoofddocent Docent 3 en 4: begeleidend, uitvoerend				
	maandag 6e uur	Woensdag 3e uur	Donderdag 8e uur	Vrijdag 7e uur
groep 1	RL (docent 1)	TL (docent 1)	IT (docent 3)	PL (docent 4)
groep 2	TL (docent 2)	IT (docent 3)	PL (docent 4)	RL (docent 2)
groep 3	PL (docent 4)	RL (docent 2)	TL (docent 2)	IT (docent 3)
groep 4	IT (docent 3)	PL (docent 4)	RL (docent 1)	TL (docent 1)

“NOBODY IS AFRAID TO SAY OR ASK SOMETHING AND EVERYONE IS LISTENING TO EACH OTHER WELL”

LEVEL-BASED NVT

Four types of lessons

As such, there are four types of lessons in the new structure:

1. **Theoretical lessons**, in which a new topic is explained according to the following framework: What will you learn? What can you already do? What do you need? What do you think about this? What should you be able to do at the end?
2. **IT lessons**, for which the NVT teacher prepares an assignment (for example, by getting information from a YouTube video), and which is co-guided by the IT teacher. The aim of this type of lesson is to have the students learn and/or practice the same subject in a different way.
3. **Practical lessons**, for which the NVT teacher prepares an assignment, are also guided by an executive teacher. This lesson is about repeating and practicing the material to be learned.
4. **Results lessons**, during which the student demonstrates what he/she can do. Possible methods for this lesson include: an interview with the teacher, a presentation, a written test, a fashion show, giving a lesson yourself, making a poster, etc. These lessons are about testing the knowledge, but in **a formative way**, in order to give the student insight into their own learning process and into what can be improved

Task-focused teaching

"Instead of simply ploughing through a method, you can also develop task-focused lessons", says Petra. As an example, she mentions language tasks such as: "Describe your house" or "give a fashion show". "You can have these tasks performed by all the

students, but then the requirements and the assessment must differ per level." She looks back on a year during which the students attended the Dutch lessons with increasing pleasure.

"You feel the energy in the classroom, because everyone can be good at Dutch at their own level and they gain more and more confidence. Students also given more responsibility, for example, by giving lessons themselves. The great thing about this new approach is that students can 'move up' to a higher group without any logistical hassle. In short, learning Dutch is fun, so the students go for it", says Petra.

"YOU FEEL THE ENERGY IN THE CLASSROOM, BECAUSE EVERYONE CAN BE GOOD AT DUTCH AT THEIR OWN LEVEL AND THEY GAIN MORE AND MORE CONFIDENCE"

SHORT NEWS

MORE THAN 100 PARTICIPANTS IN FIRST EDITION OF INTER ISLAND SPORTS COMPETITION

More than 100 students from Sint Maarten, Saba and Sint Eustatius competed against each other during the long Ascension weekend during the first edition of the Inter Island Sports Competition on Saba, organized by the Saba Comprehensive School, the Saba Sports Federation and the Saba government.

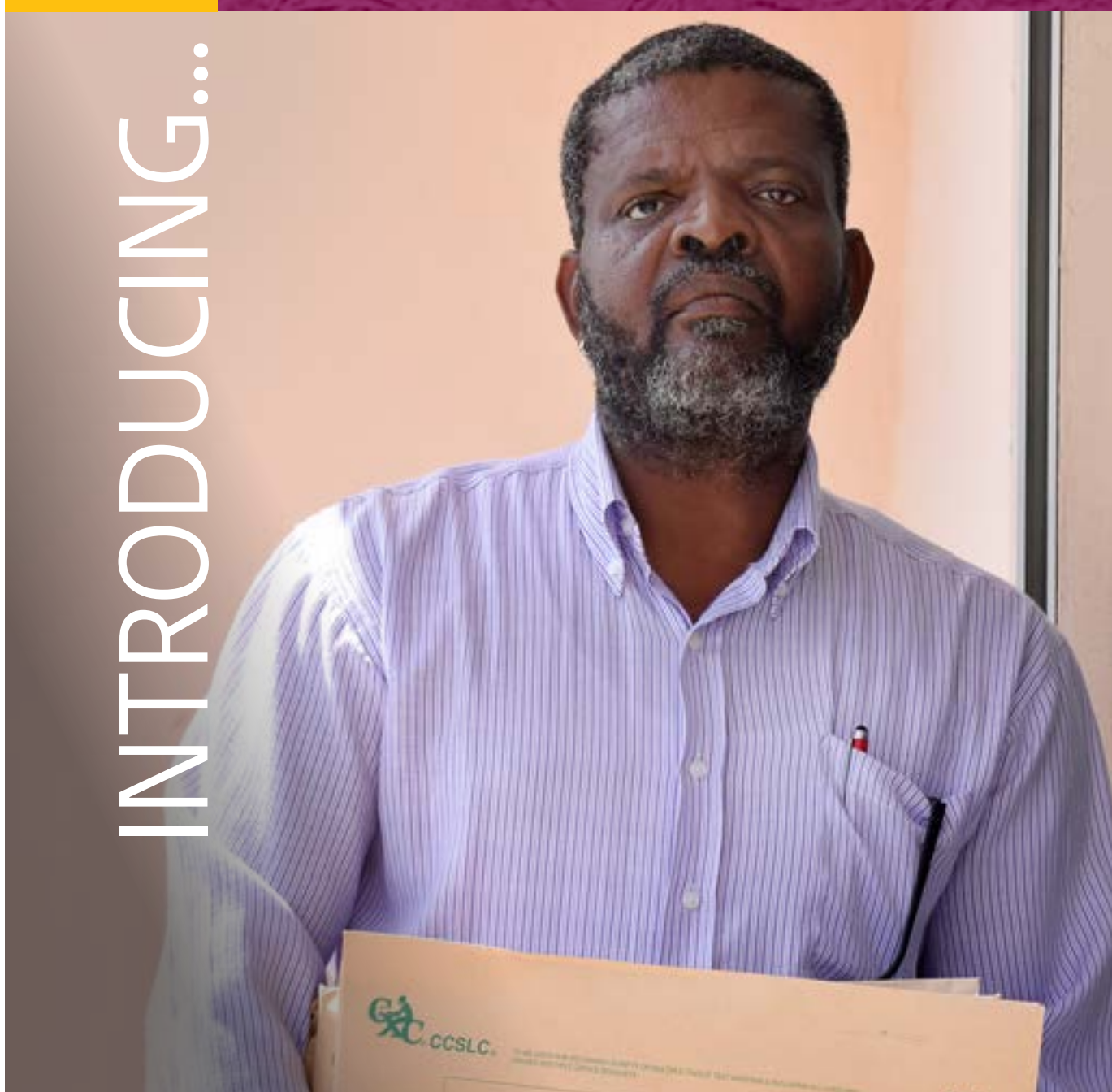


Participants from Saba. Photo: Saba Comprehensive School

The overall winners in athletics, winning the 60, 100, 200 and 400 meters sprints, were the Saba Comprehensive School students. The Caribbean International Academy (St. Maarten) had the biggest successes in the open water swimming competitions and the St. Maarten Academy PSVE performed best in men's football. The St. Eustatius team was the main winner of the basketball games and the Sabans were the strongest in women's football and volleyball.

Thanks to the efforts of the athletes, the many volunteers and the sponsors, the organisers can look back on successful competitions. The plan is to organize this sporting event annually, rotating it between the three windward islands.

INTRODUCING...



ELVIN HENRIQUEZ
LOCAL REGISTRAR

It's well known that the high schools on St. Eustatius and Saba use the school and exam system of the **Caribbean Examination Council (CXC)**. For the Saba Comprehensive School this has been the case for several decades and for the Gwendoline van Putten School on St. Eustatius, since 2016. The CXC system requires that every island has its own "Local Registrar" or exam coordinator from the Ministry of Education. Sharon Hassell has this function on Saba and on St. Eustatius, it's Elvin Henriquez. He does this in addition to his regular job as a policy officer for OCW in the Caribbean Netherlands. But what exactly does the work of a Local Registrar entail?

WHAT KIND OF WORK DOES A LOCAL REGISTRAR DO?

"Because there are many islands/countries worldwide where CXC exams are given, the CXC organization works with Local Registrars", says Elvin. "My main task as the Local Registrar is to ensure that the exam process on the island follows the CXC organization's rules". The process starts in the fall, when CXC informs the Local Registrar (LR) of the deadlines for registering the exam candidates. His task is then to communicate these dates to the school and to ensure that the exam candidates are registered before the set deadlines. The school will then examine whether or not there are adequate facilities to take the exams online. "We need to determine if there's a computer room with sufficient computers and a reliable Internet connection", explains Elvin. "The LR works closely with the IT coordinator at the school. If the facilities are inadequate, for example if there aren't enough computers, then the exams are done on paper".

CXC sends the examination assignments to the LR between March and May. The LR is responsible for keeping the printed exams secure inside a safe. The exam packets are sent in sealed envelopes by courier. If the exams are taken digitally, then log-in passwords are used, which the LR receives digitally and he then provides them via GvP School's IT coordinator shortly before the exams are taken.

The LR receives a list of invigilators per exam subject from the school. In consultation with the school's management, he must approve the list and forward it to the CXC organization. Elvin explains: "For example, an invigilating teacher cannot be the same teacher who taught that particular exam subject".

The LR then organizes a meeting during which the invigilators receive all the necessary instructions.

The LR is present at the school at least half an hour before each exam. For the exams that are done on paper, he's the person who hands over the assignments to the invigilator just before the start of the exam, after he has sorted them per course, per student the day before. At the end of the exams, the LR checks if the students have filled in all the necessary information on the answer forms and arranges shipment of the exams to CXC, again by courier.

After two months or longer, the LR receives the preliminary results from the CXC organization. He passes these on to the school to be checked. Any questions or comments from the school are discussed with CXC via the LR, after which the final results are then announced between the end of September and the beginning of October. The resits for CSEC (ed.: the equivalent of HAVO) exams are in January.

Elvin finds his LR task a pleasant one. "The process is well organized and it's detailed clearly in protocols and manuals. For questions, there's always someone available at CXC whom I can ask right away. Last year the CXC exams were given at the GvP School for the first time, for CCSLC (ed.: the lower grades). This school year, CSEC was added. That way the school and I gradually got used to everything that's involved. Starting next school year, the Dutch exam system at the GvP School will be completely phased out and as such, even more exams will be included. But by then we'll be well prepared".

NEW SERIES

Monitoring and testing



EXPERIENCES WITH STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE CN

A good student information system can be of great value to a school. Not only because it makes a lot of cumbersome paperwork unnecessary, but above all, by offering an overview of the development of students and the processes at a school. In the upcoming editions of "What's New ..." we'll discuss the experiences of various schools in the Caribbean Netherlands (CN) with their student information or school management systems. For this edition, we spoke with the SDA School and the Golden Rock School on St. Eustatius regarding the systems they use.

HAPPY WITH QUICKSCHOOLS

The SDA School on Sint Eustatius has been working with the QuickSchools school management system for almost three years. This system, developed by the Maestro Planning Solutions software company, is now used by schools worldwide.

It was via the SDA school in St. Maarten that principal LaVerne David Duggins was introduced to [QuickSchools](#). "They did a pilot project with the system and advised us to also try it out." The SDA school on Sint Eustatius followed the advice. "We were immediately charmed by the possibilities, but it took some getting used to in the beginning," says LaVerne. "The system offers quite a lot of possibilities for each functionality, so you have to fine tune it to the needs of your school. Fortunately, here at school and among the parents, we have some people who are adept with IT systems. They helped set up the system properly for our school. But we also benefit a lot from the 24-hour support provided. Via an online chat you can ask for help at any time if you get stuck. I myself also use it regularly."

Report card generator

One of the first wishes of the school was to be able to create and save school report cards electronically. Sighing... "We were always searching a long time for those printed report cards and then yet another parent would come asking for a new report card because the old one was lost ..." Keeping track of the students' grades was also a hassle, according to the principal, involving an enormous amount of paperwork and copying. The school can now generate and save report cards electronically. The teachers enter all the grades in the

"Gradebook". QuickSchools' "report card generator" extracts information from the interactive database that contains all the students' information, including the "Gradebook". The system calculates the marks for the report card and generates the report cards, if desired. These can be converted and printed in PDF format at the click of a mouse. "Once installed, this system works super easy", says LaVerne.

Price tag

QuickSchools offers three different packages. The price is the number of students (97 at this school) times the price of the chosen package. The most basic package, the "Gaia plan", only includes the Student Tracking and Teacher Tracking functionalities that are relevant for the SDA school. The "Apollo plan" is slightly more expensive: because you can do more when using it. Apollo's additional features include the ability to create announcements for parents and to calculate the marks for the report cards.

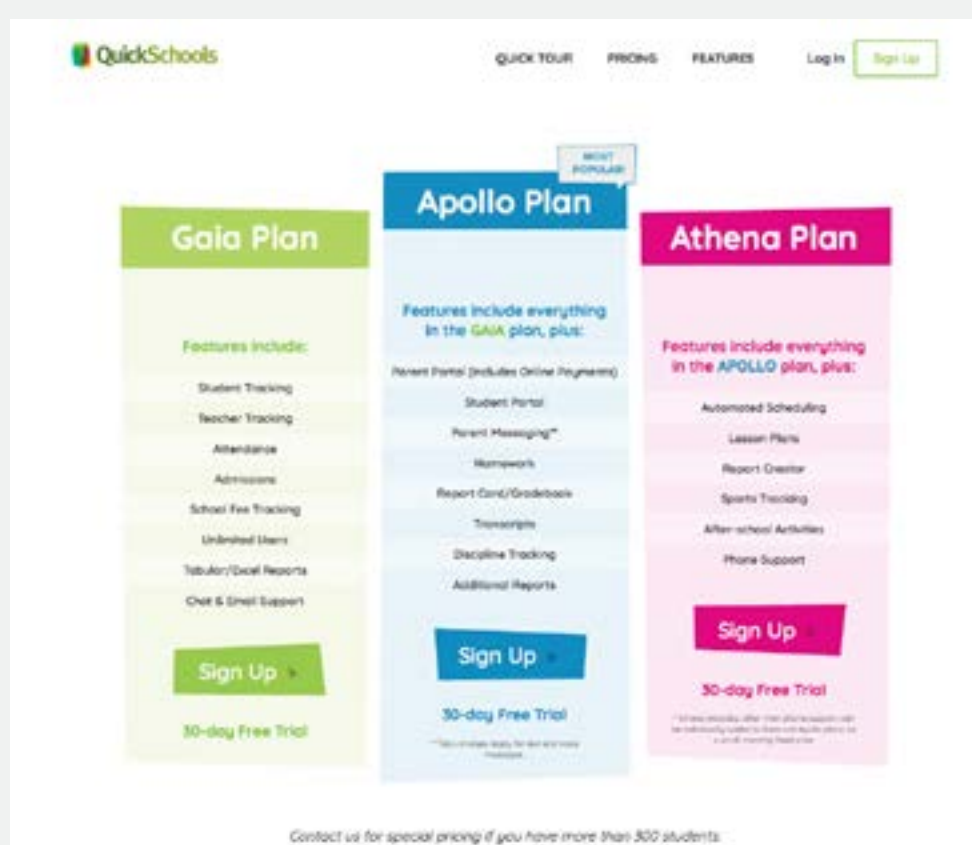
The Athena plan is the most comprehensive package. This package's extra functionalities include one where schools can make apps from processes that work well at their institution. For example, an app of a test methodology or how grades are calculated. You can then also offer these apps online to other schools.

Another interesting additional functionality of the Apollo system is the ability to create lesson plans and make them available online. Because of these functionalities, the school chose the most advanced package, but in practice, they only use the options that are also included in the second package, Apollo.

LaVerne is therefore considering downgrading to the Apollo package. In the future, the school may want to revert back to the Athena package, but for now, it is actually a bit too



Monitoring and testing



ambitious. The school is still saving a lot using QuickSchools compared to [the Dutch School Fit program](#), which they used initially. That programme cost more but it was not being used because it did not sufficiently meet their needs.

Authorisations

It's up to the school to determine who may view and input/edit certain information. The "administrators" are the people who can input and edit information. The school can assign different powers to, for example, the parents, teachers and other parties, such as the ECE, the attendance officer and the Education Inspectorate.

Parents can view letters or other written messages or listen to recorded announcements via a bulletin board in the "Parents Portal". Via this portal they also have access to their children's absenteeism data, any medical information, any information from the ECE (ed.: Sint Eustatius Expertise Centre Education Care), their behaviour, the homework assignments, their grades and all report cards. In principle the system works with the English/American A, B, C, etc. grading system, but the grades can then be converted into a numerical system or other format. Teachers can add comments to the report cards about the progress or behaviour of a student, for example.

Because the system is online, teachers can also add information when they're at home or somewhere else.

Overviews

In principle, after information about a student or the school has been entered, all the desired overviews can be produced in various ways, for example, in graphs and diagrams. You can compare grades per student or per a selected group of students and see patterns in the results achieved or in other areas, such as attendance."



Director LaVerne David-Duggins:

"In principle, after information about a student or the school has been entered, all the desired overviews can be produced in various ways, for example, in graphs and diagrams. You can compare grades per student or per a selected group of students and see patterns in the results achieved or in other areas, such as attendance."

What LaVerne feels is currently missing, is displaying the situations where a student is functioning below their level. For example for Dutch, when a Group 5 student is functioning at a Group 4 level, this is not displayed in the graphs. She will soon contact QuickSchools again to find out how such an alert could be included in the system.

"ONCE INSTALLED, THIS SYSTEM WORKS SUPER EASY"

Satisfied

In the system students automatically move on to the next year and all the entered courses are also carried over, but the current information is voided. A student who meets the criteria for success, is automatically considered by the system to have "graduated".

Also losing information is no longer a concern. The system regularly requests permission to make a backup and you can retrieve the latest backup at any time.

"We still have a way to go to fully use all the system's options", concludes LaVerne. "We're going through a learning process. But QuickSchools still reduces your workload a lot. And it helps us oversee everything and to work well together. To summarise, I'm satisfied."

NEW SERIES

Monitoring and testing



REDUCED WORKLOAD AT GOLDEN ROCK SCHOOL THANKS TO TORTO



At the Golden Rock School on St. Eustatius, since the beginning of this school year, the workload has been reduced thanks to the Torto registration and tracking system. The editors of "What's New ..." spoke with the school and to Mathieu de Ruiter, this system's developer, about Torto's possibilities.

It all started with a request from the Golden Rock School to think about how to reduce the workload of management and the teachers. At the school, a lot of time was spent making the weekly schedule by hand. "That's how I developed the first version. The teachers only had to enter the subjects into the system once. Now, with a few clicks, they can make their weekly schedule", says Mathieu.

One thing led to another: the school's next wish was to keep track of and to process absentee data and the students' grades more efficiently. Mathieu: "In consultation with the school, the functionality to keep track of students' grades was built in. And monitoring. The latter is done using certain built-in filters, which allow you to edit the information. For example, if you need the results from a specific class. Or the grades of one or more students for a certain course, during a particular timeframe (e.g. semester, year, etc.). Teachers now only have to enter students' grades per test, per course. You can now view or analyse the data with a few clicks of a mouse."

Everything is possible

"It's up to the school to indicate what's needed", says Mathieu. "We work together to define the need, then translate it into the system and then program the code to make things possible in Torto." Privacy is an important issue here. After all, it's about the students' data and not everyone is allowed to access them.

"...THE SYSTEM IS SET UP IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU CAN BUILD IN ALL KINDS OF NEW COMPONENTS AND HAVE THEM 'TALK' TO EACH OTHER...."

The school can choose to provide certain information to third parties via an Excel sheet. Or to give them access to certain information in Torto. For example, the Education Inspectorate or ECE (ed.: Expertise Centre Education Care on Sint Eustatius). For example, it can be useful for parents to be able to view their child's grades on their report card and their absentee information. Or to know if their child has homework. In addition, the latter can also be interesting for after-school care."



Monitoring and testing

Principal Irene Ortega is satisfied with Torto.

“This system is definitely effective: it helps reduce the workload at our school. As the principal, I can now oversee everything better: from weekly schedules to students who were late, to the students’ grades. The parent portal will also be available soon, where parents will be able to access information about their child, such as grades and comments and questions from the teacher.”



More information?
Read more about Torto
and request a demo:

<https://www.tortoportal.com>

Mathieu is enthusiastic about the potential for Torto: “Much more is possible: in principle, anything is possible. I provide customized solutions. The system is set up in such a way that you can build in all kinds of new components and have them “talk” to each other.

But the client decides. I deliver what a client needs using Torto to oversee the processes in the school.”



Mathieu de Ruiter’s company, Fellicht
<https://fellicht.nl> developed the Torto
registration and tracking system.

Pilot project with a new Dutch as a foreign language (NVT) teaching method for the lower grades in primary education (PO)



F.l.t.r. the workgroup members: Marisca Weekers (back), Front: Maruska Simmons, Helen Peroti, Kaisha Lindo, Maisha Simmons and Christina Timber-Glover. In the background a projection of the website

In September of the new school year, a pilot project with a new Dutch as a Foreign Language (NVT) teaching method will start at the primary education (PO) schools on St. Eustatius. The method is called 'Play along with John & Joonie', named after the two main characters in the stories.

During the pilot project, which runs until the fall break, teachers of groups 1 and 2 on St. Eustatius will try out the first five themes during their daily Dutch lessons (45 minutes). The materials for this new method can be downloaded from a website using a login code. The material is available digitally and consists of traditional and interactive pictures for discussion, flash cards and various small group assignments.

The new NVT teaching method is inspired by the existing TPR method Dutch of Course! (Natuurlijk Nederlands!) developed on St. Eustatius. The teaching materials for groups 1 and 2 will be ready during the 2019-2020 school year, followed by the materials for groups 3 and 4.

A group of Dutch teachers from Statian primary schools, led by Christina Timber-Glover from the St. Eustatius Expertise Centre Education Care (ECE), is working on this method, guided by [the Dutch Language Union \(Taalunie\)](#).



Photography: Staysly Goilo



IRIS TUINMAN-CLOOSTERMAN

I started as an education policy officer at RCN/OCW in May 2019. One of the first projects I was allowed to work on as part of the OCW was implementing CVQ on St. Eustatius and Saba. A complex process, but it's very interesting for me as an educational professional. For this I'm using the work experience I gained between 2010 and 2012 in St. Maarten, where I worked on developing MBO courses. The work experience I gained as an educational policy advisor at the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, where I worked from 2013 to 2017, is also very useful.

After a two-year break, during which I took care of our three children full-time, I can now focus on education again and I really like it. I've only been working here for a short time, but I'm already getting a lot of energy from the passion and dedication that the colleagues around me have for education. And the positive way in which they deal with the dynamics of working on all the islands. I admire this and I like being part of it.



NATHALY CALMES-SALEH

I've been working as a Management Assistant at RCN/OCW since March 18, 2019. My last position was with ENNIA insurance in Bonaire, as a Back-up Assistant. Before that, I worked in the Netherlands as a secretary at the Taminiau Business Service company and in Curaçao as an Office Manager at the Nieuw Pietermaai company. In that position I guided students from the Netherlands who came to Curaçao to do an internship.

It gives me great satisfaction to work at RCN/OCW, in an environment where everyone's working with their heart and soul towards a common goal: better education for the children on our islands. Because children are and will always be the future. Every child is unique and has the right to a good education in order to face the future full of self-confidence.

TEACHERS' GRANT

Are you a licensed teacher and do you want to get a Bachelor's or Master's degree? You may be eligible to receive a Teachers' grant. You can use it to pay for the cost of your education. The Teachers' grant is also available for internal supervisors, care coordinators and remedial teachers.

You can request a Teachers' grant for:

- A bachelor's or master's degree
- A post initial master's degree
- A pre-master's program or a transition program that precedes a university master's programme

Take note: You cannot receive a Teachers' grant for a post higher professional (HBO) education.

