

# Education Agenda

for the Caribbean Netherlands

Saba

Towards a higher quality  
of our education



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# Introduction

School is such an important place for every pupil, and that begins at such a young age. School is where we learn literacy and numeracy, where we learn to interact with classmates and fulfill our potential. As a teacher, you get to see the potential that your pupils have and help them to achieve that potential. This is the beauty of teaching: helping every pupil in your class to prepare for the future. Day in, day out every teacher helps their pupils to learn all kinds of different things – doing a new kind of sum, learning to write new words or learning a new language. Teachers watch their pupils grow and develop, both literally and figuratively. That is the power of education.

And that power is universal. You will find it at every primary school, secondary school and college for further education, whether in The Hague, Rotterdam, Kralendijk, Oranjestad or St. Johns. Education can take us so far in life – pupils and students, of course, but also teachers. And school directors and members of school governing boards also have an important role to play. They ensure that you, as a teacher, can do your job properly and that there is a place in our education system for every pupil. And of course, they also make sure that the school's finances are in order and that

school buildings are maintained properly. Together we do so much work for our education system. This is also true of the Public Entity Saba. They ensure that the system of compulsory education functions properly and, together with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, they take action to expand, renovate and maintain school buildings.

We all do everything we can for our education system every day. And yet there is still room for improvement. That applies both to the European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands. I see teachers who are having to juggle too many responsibilities because of staff shortages and who, as a result, simply have too much to do. This is putting the quality of our education under pressure, despite all the hard work being done by teachers. I want to change this. And I have already started working to make that change happen. By tackling the teacher shortage, for instance, or ensuring that schools in the Caribbean Netherlands are also getting support to help them improve the basic skills of pupils. We are working to improve equality of opportunities in education by organizing extra after-school activities for all children. This School and Environment program, which is an initiative of schools, the Public Entity, local parties and my ministry, will also enable all pupils to broaden their horizons.

Making ongoing improvements to our education system may require a different approach in different locations. Because even though there are similarities between the European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands, there are also many differences. I saw this with my own eyes during a working visit to Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. That diversity sometimes requires a tailored approach, and that means looking at what really works and not simply applying 'copy-paste' solutions from the European Netherlands to the Caribbean Netherlands. It will require an open attitude



“School is such an important place  
for every student. That starts  
at an early age.”

from me, too, and I will continue to listen to and learn from everybody involved in education on Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. Because they are the people who see first-hand what works in education and what does not work. I value all the input they have given me, both during and after my visit. Because together we want every child to achieve their full potential, irrespective of where they live, how much their parents earn or where they grow up.

This is a challenge that we must take up together – across primary, secondary and vocational (CVQ) education, from the Expertise Centers Education Care (EOZ) to the Council of Education and Labor Market Caribbean Netherlands, from the Public Entity to my ministry. Together we must look at how we can continue improving our education, how we can learn from one another and how we can continue growing. This agenda will advance the quality of education on Saba still further. It will also enhance the strength of educational leadership in schools. I see this as the next step in the development of education on Saba. This Education Agenda will help us to take that next step by setting out our goals clearly.

This Education Agenda includes all the main themes for the partners. These are the themes that they want to see prioritized in the years to come, so that our education system can continue to improve. In many cases, this will require extra work on the part of schools, Expertise Center Education Care, public entity and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. There are some themes that various parties are working on, but which have not been included in this Education Agenda. A good example is Citizen Service<sup>1</sup> and the agreements made at the Ministry of Education Culture and Science's Four-Country Consultative Meeting on boosting the academic success of students from the Caribbean, following the recommendation of the Steering Group for the Strategic Education Alliance (SEA) partnership. Another example is the agenda for culture, which every Public Entity will draw up together with my ministry. This will include areas that are adjacent to education, such as cultural education and the ongoing development of libraries.

I would like to mention one final example: special needs care. This is a crucial theme, because if a child needs extra support to achieve their potential at school, it is essential that this support is available. Many different actors are working to make sure that is the case – not just in education, but also parents at home and youth care workers. I will therefore continue to focus on strengthening special needs care and building on the inclusive character of education on Saba. To this end, in recent years a specialist facility has been set up on all three islands for pupils who need more support than is available at school. I will continue to support the work of these facilities. When it comes to children who need extra support, I will do what works and I would like us to learn

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<sup>1</sup> [Maatschappelijke Diensttijd](#)

together about what does not work or is less effective. This is why these specialist facilities will continue to be evaluated in the years to come. Together with my fellow ministers from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, I will continue working to achieve this. We are determined to ensure that all children receive the education, support and care that they need. And I see that the Expertise Centers Education Care, the schools, parents and pupils are all working hard for this too.

We will keep our eyes and our ears open, find out what pupils and teachers need and look at what works best in the classroom. Everybody has a role to play in this. Because it is only together that we can achieve the goals that are set out in this Education Agenda. So let's work on achieving them and take our education to the next level.

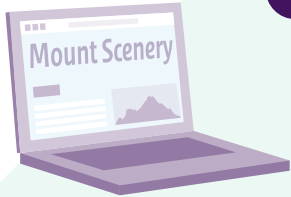
### **Robbert Dijkgraaf**

Minister of Education, Culture and Science





# Priorities Education Agenda Saba



## 6 Preconditions for quality

We are working on achieving necessary preconditions for good quality of education, including educational materials and digitization.

School year  
**2026-2027**

## 5 Transition to further education

We support students to choose suitable forms of further education, to better prepare for their further education and to successfully complete their studies.

## 4 Buildings for education

We work on sufficient available and well-maintained schools that contribute to the quality of and accessible education.

## 3 Multilingualism

multilingualism, which is a strength of the teaching staff and students on Saba.

## 1 Teaching staff

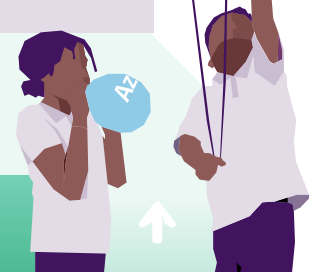
We are working on the teacher shortage, professionalization of teachers and teaching assistants, improvement of working conditions and employee participation.

## 2 Administrative power and educational leadership

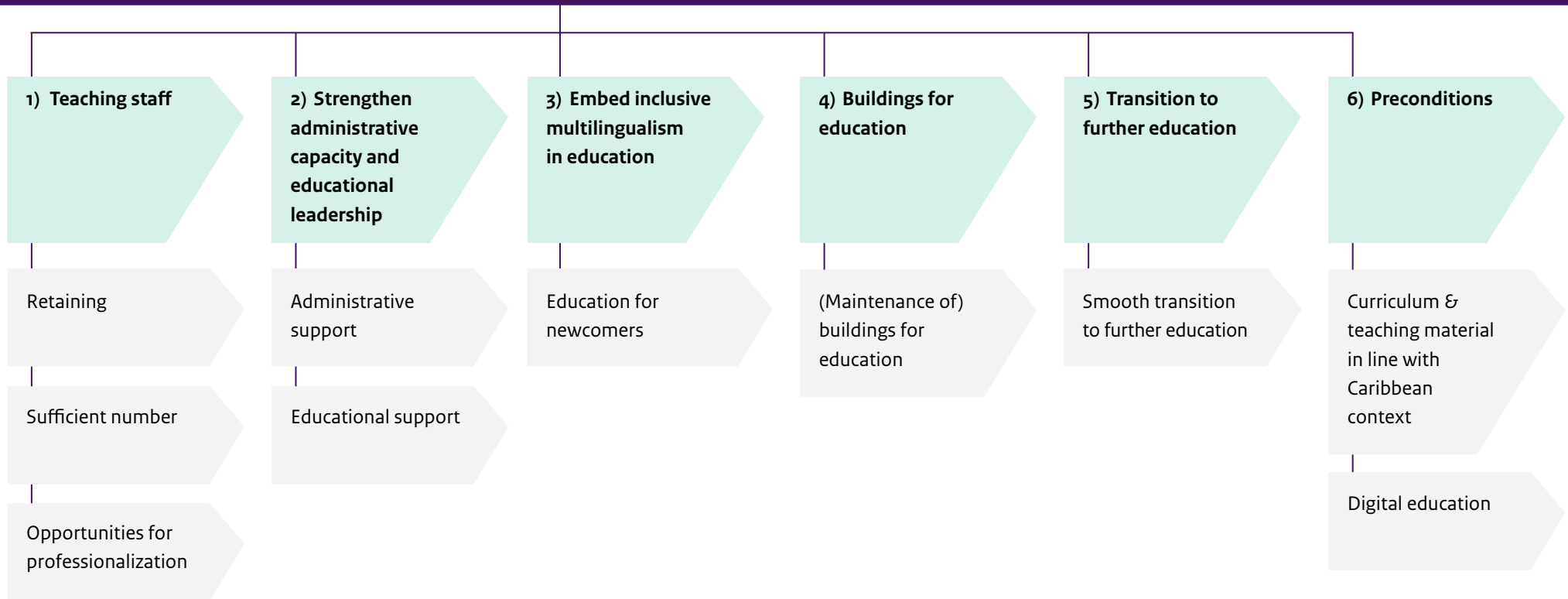
We aim to improve educational leadership of teaching staff and administrative power of school boards. This requires sustainable and long-term support.

2023-2024

**Towards  
a higher quality  
of our education**



# Overview of priorities and ambitions Education Agenda Saba



# Priorities

## 1) Teaching staff

When it comes to the quality of education on Saba, teachers are the key. They are directly responsible for pupils' enjoyment and success in the classroom. We know that they face challenges and one objective of this Education Agenda is to support every partner wherever we can. Teaching staff need a pleasant working environment and opportunities for professional development. In addition, various schools are facing a teacher shortage, which is leading to additional stress. This agenda includes steps in these areas. We will focus on recruiting more teachers. We can only do this with the help of existing teaching staff and others on Saba.

### Our ambitions:

- Retain teaching staff
- Ensure sufficient teaching staff
- Professionalization

## 2) Administrative capacity and educational leadership

School boards on Saba do a great deal of valuable work. But unlike school boards in the European Netherlands, they often have to do that work without a network of support staff and experts to help them face complex problems or challenges that require specialist knowledge. We want to make this support possible through all the partners in this Education Agenda. By ensuring that school boards are operating at the top of their game, we can make great strides in developing and improving the education that we provide. Effective school boards can contribute to better cooperation between schools, creating a safe climate at schools and attracting qualified teachers. They can also lay the groundwork for innovative education, in which pupils are encouraged to develop their talents as fully as possible. With strong school boards, we can take education on Saba to a higher level and ensure that our children have the best possible opportunities for their future.

### Our ambitions:

- Strengthen educational leadership and availability of long-term administrative support





### 3) Multilingualism

An essential factor in the linguistic development of our pupils is good didactic practice in language education. Specifically, this means taking account of the multilingual background of many students in the Caribbean Netherlands. Teachers who are aware of the linguistic and cultural background of their students and adjust their lessons accordingly, can help develop the right classroom strategies and ensure that all students feel understood and are learning as effectively as possible. Good teaching strategies also contribute to a positive learning experience for pupils, better cooperation between pupils and greater involvement in the learning process. This will require specialist knowledge from all teaching staff in the Caribbean Netherlands, in addition to the knowledge and expertise that they already possess. Acquiring that specialist expertise will not happen overnight and will require long-term training and coaching by professionals who have both knowledge of what works scientifically and of educational practice. In addition, teaching staff will need to be given the opportunity to study this specialization, alongside the responsibilities they already have in education.

We have also seen an increase in the number of newcomers in education in recent years. These are children who come from abroad and join the education system on Saba at a later age. Often, they do not speak the language in which teaching takes place, and so schools on Saba need additional expertise to teach these pupils those languages so that they can make the most of their education. The government must ensure that schools have the space to do this.

#### Our ambitions:

- Sustainable multilingualism in education
- Education for newcomers

## 4) Buildings for education

Good school buildings are part of an accessible, good-quality education system. Teachers and pupils have the right to a learning environment that is clean, safe and functional. A healthy indoor climate and pleasant environment contribute to better learning outcomes and lower rates of absenteeism.

Ongoing maintenance is necessary to keep school buildings and installations in good working order. Maintenance is the responsibility of school boards and requires an up-to-date maintenance plan, a system of organization and adequate funding. In order to handle maintenance sensibly, clarity about policy on school buildings is also important. The school board needs to know when to expect renovation work or an extension. It is therefore important that the government also meets its responsibilities with respect to school buildings.

### Our ambitions:

- Good, well-maintained school buildings

## 5) Transition to further education

The transition of children from Saba to suitable forms of further education is crucial for their future development as well as that of the region. Ensuring that this transition is a smooth one means helping students to choose a study program that meets their needs and expectations and which they will enjoy and complete with success. This gives them the opportunity to develop, contribute to economic growth and, in turn, create employment opportunities for others. Obtaining a diploma in further education is essential to the continuing development and self-confidence of the child. Investing in the transition to further education is therefore a priority.

### Our ambitions:

- A smooth transition to further education



## 6) Preconditions

School boards on Saba are responsible for the quality of the education provided in their schools. And it is the education professionals in those schools who are best-placed to fulfill that responsibility. However, the government must also ensure that the right preconditions are in place for them to do this. In other words, schools need access to the right tools to shape the education that they provide. While in the European Netherlands market forces often provide the necessary tools for this, this is not always the case on Saba due to its smaller scale. In cases where markets fail to provide solutions, national government will step in to provide the necessary tools. This includes making the right teaching materials available (methods and testing).

### Our ambitions:

- Educational materials which are appropriate to the Caribbean context
- Digital education

# Implementation and monitoring

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the primary and secondary school boards, the Expertise Center Education Care, and the Public Entity will all play an important role in the implementation of this Education Agenda. They have all made a contribution to it and are responsible for several of the milestones identified. They will work together as partners on implementing the Education Agenda.

The details of the Education Agenda will be finalized by an education platform, in which all the partners from Saba are represented. Three times a year, the education platform will focus its attention on the implementation of the Education Agenda. Sometimes the platform will be chaired by the secretariat of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and in other cases by the secretariat of the Public Entity. The chair will review the milestones and ask the results manager what progress has been made towards that milestone. Once a year, the education platform will meet all partners to discuss whether progress towards the milestones that should have been made that year has actually been made and what additional action is needed to reach those milestones. A decision may also be made to postpone the work required to reach a milestone.

## **Responsibility for each milestone**

The person responsible for achieving progress with respect to a particular milestone takes personal responsibility for progress towards that milestone. This may be done by

setting up a separate implementation group on the relevant theme or by coordinating the activities with the parties involved on a one-on-one basis. The individual who is responsible for the results will choose a form that suits the implementing party and the nature of the milestone. That individual may consult the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Public Entity regarding this.

## **Monitoring by the partners of the Education Agenda and by an independent agency**

In addition to monitoring by the partners of the Education Agenda via the education platforms, as outlined above, progress towards certain milestones will be monitored by an independent agency. This will be the case for milestones with a strong research component or where it is important for all partners that an independent body makes a statement about the milestone. The appendix shows in which cases this will apply for each priority and each milestone. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science finances this research agency, which has the task of minimizing the administrative burden of monitoring for the partners.

## **Completion of the Education Agenda**

In the last year of the Education Agenda, the partners will jointly discuss what is required to complete the implementation of the third Education Agenda successfully and how they will jointly shape the education priorities on the island following the completion of this Education Agenda.

# 1) Teaching staff

## 1.1 Retaining teaching staff

### What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

#### 1) Induction program for teaching staff from outside the island

Set up an induction program for new teachers to give them more information about the island and the school where they will be working, including the socio-economic circumstances, specific issues which teachers may encounter and the culture and customs on the island. The schools will share the induction program they have already created with other schools.

#### 2) Introduction/induction day at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for teaching staff from the European Netherlands

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will provide a venue to organize a meeting for teachers who are interested in working at schools on the island of Saba. The schools and Public Entities can give the teachers information (online) about working at schools on the island.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	The primary and secondary school boards on Saba jointly develop an induction program for teaching staff who are from outside Saba. The school boards can make use of the induction program of Bonaire for this.	Induction program for teaching staff	Public Entity Saba	Saba primary and secondary school boards	2023-2024
2	In accordance with the wishes of schools on Saba, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science facilitates an annual introduction/induction day at the Ministry for teaching staff from the European Netherlands who intend to work in schools on Saba.	Introduction/induction day at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for teaching staff from the European Netherlands	Primary and secondary school boards and Public Entity Saba	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2024-2025

## 1.2 Sufficient qualified teaching staff

In recent years, the partners for the Education Agenda have been focusing on increasing the number of teaching staff on Saba. In this context, we will briefly discuss two recently launched projects that are relevant to the further development of the Education Agenda:

On 4 November 2022, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the University of St. Martin (USM) and the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Teacher Training for Saba and St. Eustatius. The three signatories thereby confirmed their partnership for offering the Bachelor of Education (BAE) on

Saba and St. Eustatius. The Bachelor's program prepares students to teach at primary school level. The program is provided by the USM in partnership with the UVI and is internationally recognized. The USM has been contracted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to provide the program for teaching assistants on Saba and St. Eustatius. This is a response to the need for locally trained primary teachers on the islands.

### What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

#### 1) *Use of teaching assistants in schools to strengthen supervision in the classroom*

Establish a clear picture of people on the island who could begin work as teaching assistants at schools straight away and those who could be trained as teaching assistants.

#### 2) *Tackle shortage of teachers.*

When tackling the teacher shortage in the European Netherlands, consideration will also be given to the extent to which Saba can be included in this approach and whether alternatives are needed.

#### a. *Supervision for new teachers*

Look into whether and how supervision can be provided for new teachers (and their families) who are/will be working on the island.

#### b. *Recruitment of new teachers*

Make use of grants for jobseekers in order to attract teachers from the Netherlands (or the Caribbean region) for Saba.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	More staff available in the classroom through the use of teaching assistants. Schools look at whether teaching assistants are available on Saba or whether they can be trained.	Use of teaching assistants in schools to strengthen supervision in the classroom	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and EOZ	School boards	2023-2024
2	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a study carried out to assess the teacher shortage on Saba and arranges monitoring (identify bottlenecks and formulate solutions).	Insight into teacher shortage	School boards and EOZ	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024
3	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science begins working on a tailored approach to tackling the teacher shortage on Saba. Steps taken in the European Netherlands are assessed to determine whether Saba can be included or whether alternatives are needed ('comply or explain' principle).	Tackle shortage of teachers	School boards and EOZ	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024
4	The Public Entity investigates the possibility of whether and how it can provide supervision for new teachers (and their families) who will be working on the island and whether, if possible, they can support teachers with study costs or accommodation.	Tackle shortage of teachers	School boards and EOZ	Public Entity Saba	2024-2025
5	The Public Entity Saba uses the FRED Fair (Flinx Recruitment Expo Dutch Caribbean), an annual recruitment event where jobseekers in the European Netherlands and employers in the Caribbean Netherlands can meet, with the primary goal of promoting the emigration/re-emigration of students and professionals in the European Netherlands to the Caribbean Netherlands. This can include the recruitment of teachers.	Tackle shortage of teachers	School boards and EOZ	Public Entity Saba	2024-2025

### 1.3 Opportunities for professionalization for teaching staff

In preparation for the Education Agenda, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has developed legislation that will provide professional development opportunities for teaching staff. As of 2024, statutory requirements will apply with regard to strategic staffing policy for the Caribbean Netherlands. These specify that, for instance,

staffing policy must be geared to external developments and educational goals and that the sustainable employability and professional development of staff must be addressed.

#### What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

- 1) **Training program to become school principal**  
Review of training courses/programs that train experienced teachers to become school principal.
- 2) **Review available supply at training institutes in the Caribbean region and in the European Netherlands to respond to professionalization needs in continuing education and training**  
Review the opportunities for professionalization that are available at training institutes in the Caribbean region and in the European Netherlands, and what is required in the field of continuing education and training.
- 3) **Opportunities for continuing education and training**  
Establish action plan for providing continuing education and training in the region or the European Netherlands.
- 4) **Professionalization of teaching staff**  
Establish strategic staffing policy including the professionalization of teaching staff.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science reviews which courses/ programs are available for training experienced teachers to become school principals. <sup>1</sup>	Training program to become school principal	School boards and teachers	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024

<sup>1</sup> [New primary school principals from outside education | Grant | Subsidy Executive Agency for Institutions \(dus-i.nl\)](#)



2	The primary and secondary school boards on Saba review what is required from continuing education and training in terms of professionalization opportunities and explore which existing training institutes in the Caribbean region and in the European Netherlands could meet those needs.	Picture of the opportunities available for professionalization needs in continuing education and training at training institutes in the Caribbean region and in the European Netherlands	Teaching staff	School boards	2023-2024
3	Based on schools' professionalization needs in areas that are currently unmet by existing training institutes in the Caribbean region and the European Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science looks at whether these can be catered to in the region or in the European Netherlands.	Opportunities for professionalization through continuing education and training	School boards	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2024-2025
4	School boards have a strategic staffing policy that indicates how they will implement this in a planned manner (monitoring, evaluation) for all teaching staff. This means using the PDCA cycle in a planned manner.	Professionalization of teaching staff	Teaching staff	School boards	2024-2025

|  
*“When it comes to  
 the quality of education on Saba,  
 teachers are the key.”*  
 |

## 2) Administrative capacity and educational leadership

For several years, the partners for the Education Agenda have been working together to strengthen the administrative capacity and educational leadership in schools on Saba. During a working visit at the end of 2022, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science asked all partners which conditions are important when it comes to strengthening

administrative capacity and educational leadership in the Caribbean Netherlands. The responses to that question form the basis for the further development of this theme.

### What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

#### 1) Strengthen educational leadership

Teaching staff can call on the support of coaching advisors and sparring partners for specialist questions to improve the teaching-learning process.

#### 2) Availability of long-term administrative support

The support for school boards and teaching staff is organized such that it is permanently available to the schools (e.g. through train-the-trainer principles), enabling school boards and teaching staff to strengthen their administrative capacity and educational leadership on a sustained, long-term basis.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	The use of coaching advisors and sparring partners for teaching staff, in order to improve the primary process.	Strengthen educational leadership	Primary, secondary school boards and school principals	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024
2	Creation of broad, sustained and accessible support, provided by a central support center or a mobile team.	Availability of long-term administrative support	Primary, secondary school boards and school principals	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2024-2025

# 3) Multilingualism

## 3.1 Sustainable multilingualism in education

Ever since the First Education Agenda<sup>1</sup>, the work of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and of schools with respect to language has been an important theme. For example, in the First Education Agenda it was agreed that the school boards on each island would make agreements on language policy and continuous learning pathways to ensure that pupils achieved the required language level (in English and Dutch). It was also agreed that the ministry would provide standardized tests for the pupil monitoring system, which is geared to the local context. In the Second Education Agenda<sup>2</sup>, it was agreed that all schools would develop a school language policy in their school plan and implement this policy. It was also agreed that teachers would teach all educational activities in a way that promotes the language proficiency of pupils and that schools would provide specific supervision for pupils with language skills that are either above or below average, corresponding to the individual learning needs of those pupils. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science agreed that they would support the language improvement programs already initiated and, where necessary, amend legislation or regulations to enable schools to implement their language teaching.

The outcome of the First Education Agenda was that there was no means of bringing together the stakeholders to reach a common understanding. Additionally, the fact that several languages are important on the islands also needs to be taken into account. In the Windward Islands, this concerns English and Dutch. In addition, Dutch is less widely spoken among younger people, who may hardly come into contact with it at all in their daily lives. This is a complicating factor when it comes to being taught Dutch, which is a compulsory part of the curriculum of both primary and secondary education.

<sup>1</sup> [The first education agenda | Leaflet | Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The second Education Agenda | Leaflet | Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland](#)

The outcome of the Second Education Agenda was that steps have been taken, but the goal had not yet been achieved. Almost all institutions indicated that they have invested a great deal of time and energy in their language policy with variable results. There is still a lack of a shared vision around language policy.

*“An essential factor  
in the linguistic development  
of our pupils is good didactic practice  
in language education.  
Specifically, this means taking account  
of the multilingual background  
of many students on Saba.”*

## What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

### 1) *An organization (to acquire expertise from outside) that can support schools in implementing multilingualism in a sustainable manner*

The school boards, the Public Entity and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will choose an organization jointly to reinforce multilingualism in the schools in a sustainable manner.

### 2) *The Public Entity has adopted their island language policy and implementation plan*

Periodic consultation with the Public Entity to monitor and possibly speed up progress on island language policy plan.

### 3) *The school boards / schools have a school language policy plan based on multilingualism*

Verify that all schools have a school language policy plan based on 'multilingualism'. The organization established to strengthen multilingualism can help the schools adjust their school language policy plan and monitor coherence with the island language policy plan.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science draws up a concept tender for an external organization to support the implementation of a didactics for multilingualism in education.	Read along with the assignment description	OCW, Public Entity Saba, external agency, schools and EOZ	OCW	2024-2025
2	Public Entity Saba establishes an island language policy plan.	The Public Entity adopts island language policy and implementation plan	Public Entity Saba	Public Entity Saba	2024-2025
3	Island language policy plan is adopted by Public Entity Saba.	The Public Entity adopts island language policy and implementation plan	Public Entity Saba	Public Entity Saba	2024-2025
4	The schools adapt their school language policy plans to the principle of 'multilingualism'.	Support from external agency	School boards, external agency and EOZ	Public Entity Saba	2025-2026

5	The teachers are trained to handle multilingualism among pupils.	Support from external agency	School boards, school principals, external agency and EOZ	Primary and secondary school boards	2025-2026
6	The schools are able to implement their school language policy plan based on multilingualism.	Support from external agency	School boards in primary and secondary education, external agency and EOZ	Primary and secondary school boards	2026-2027

### 3.2 Education for newcomers

In anticipation of the Education Agenda, the partners for the Education Agenda have already taken steps to arrange education for newcomers on Saba.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has begun an analysis of whether additional funding for newcomers can be applied at schools in the Caribbean Netherlands. The simplified system of funding applied in the Caribbean Netherlands means that additional funding is not used, so the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is examining whether it is necessary to provide additional financial resources to provide education for newcomers in the Caribbean Netherlands and, if so, what the most appropriate financial instrument for this would be.

“We focus on strengthening multilingualism, which is a strength of the teaching staff and students on Saba.”

## What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

### 1) *Additional funding for education for newcomers.*

The Ministry of Education Culture and Science is investigating the need for and possibility of additional funding for education for newcomers in primary and secondary education on Saba.

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Contributes to</b>	<b>Persons involved</b>	<b>Responsibility for results</b>	<b>Start of school year</b>
<b>1</b>	Ministry of Education Culture and Science investigates the need for and possibility of additional funding for education for newcomers in primary and secondary education.	Additional funding for education for newcomers	Primary and secondary school boards	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024

# 4) Buildings for education

In recent years, all parties involved have made efforts to sustainably strengthen buildings for education. The division of roles of schools, Public Entity and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science with regard to educational housing is clearly regulated by law. The school boards are responsible for the small and large maintenance of the

schools and the Public Entity and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science are currently jointly responsible for providing buildings for education, including expansions and renovations.

## What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

### 1) Good long-term maintenance for schools

Clarity regarding the financial consequences of proper maintenance and whether sufficient funding is available. Drawing up the annual budget.

### 2) Clear policy on buildings

Formulation of a clear assessment framework for new investments (buildings for education policy).

### 3) Expansion of gymnasiums and multifunctional spaces

Clarity regarding who is responsible for renovation work, major and minor maintenance of school buildings.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	In consultation with the school boards, the Public Entity draws up multi-annual maintenance plans for all schools in 2023.	Maintenance of school buildings	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Public Entity Saba and school boards	Public Entity Saba and school boards together	2023-2024
2	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and Public Entity Saba examine the options for expanding gymnasiums and multifunctional spaces.	Expansion of gymnasiums and multifunctional spaces	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and Public Entity Saba	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and Public Entity Saba	2023-2024
3	The Public Entity formulates policy and regulations regarding school buildings.	Clear policy on buildings	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Public Entity Saba	2024-2025

# 5) Transition to further education

In anticipation of the Education Agenda, the partners have already been working on promoting a smooth transition from secondary education to further education.

First of all, since 2011, the Ministry has been offering free guidance and support to students from the Caribbean Netherlands who continue their education in the European Netherlands. This includes support prior to departure, upon arrival in the European Netherlands and during the first year of study. Free guidance and support are also available for students who choose to continue their further education on one of the islands of the former Netherlands Antilles.

In addition, in the Ministerial Four-Country Consultative Meeting of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (M4LO), the education ministers of the Kingdom

have made agreements regarding increasing the academic success of Caribbean students. The Strategic Education Alliance Steering Group (SEA) has been asked by the four education ministers of the Kingdom to optimize the transition to further education for Caribbean students (of the six islands of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom), and the Steering Group has put forward proposals to this end. At the M4LO meeting in April 2023, the ministers of the four countries agreed to begin work on implementing three priorities: 1) a labor market survey of the Caribbean islands in relation to education; 2) a Kingdom mobility program to promote exchange; 3) a Caribbean Academic Foundation Year (CAFY), developed by the universities of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten to improve the transition to further education. In that context, they will also address the connection with the Caribbean Netherlands in this area.

*“We support students to choose suitable forms of further education, to better prepare for their further education and to successfully complete their studies.”*



## What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

### 1. Pupils need information about further education and support as they make choices about their future

Schools provide support for their pupils so that they can make the best choices when it comes to further education. This is done in the context of career guidance, by informing pupils about further education in good time and helping them to choose the most appropriate further education. They also do this by giving pupils good study skills.

### 2) Increasing academic success in secondary education

Implementation of the three priorities agreed by the education ministers to increase the academic success of Caribbean students based on the proposals of the Strategic Education Alliance Steering Group (SEA): 1) conduct a labor market survey in the Caribbean Netherlands to understand the developments and forecasts in various fields and vacancy rates in the Caribbean region, the size and composition of the labor market, labor mobility and the connection of education to the labor market; 2) a scholarship program to facilitate mobility within the Kingdom on a structural basis; and 3) the development of a coordinated and diversified CAFY program for the Caribbean Netherlands by the universities in Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, which is affordable and accessible to all students in the Caribbean region, to help them prepare better for the next phase of their studies.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	Inform pupils in good time regarding further education: what choices they have, what further education entails and what is needed to improve pupils' skills. This will help them to choose the right type of education for them. Schools provide pupils with the skills they will need in further education.	Informing pupils about what further education is available and ensuring that they choose the education that is right for them	School board and institutions that provide further education	School board	Ongoing
2	Increase the academic success of students from the Caribbean Netherlands by implementing the three priorities agreed upon by the four education ministers in the M4LO: 1) labor market research in relation to education, 2) Kingdom Mobility Program and 3) Caribbean Academic Foundation Year.	Better preparation for and links with further education, in order to help improve academic success	School board, institutions that provide further education and SEA Steering Group	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Public Entity Saba through SEA Steering Group	2023-2024

# 6) Preconditions

## **6.1 Curriculum and educational materials must be appropriate to the Caribbean context**

In recent years, the partners for the Education Agenda have taken various steps to work on a curriculum and educational materials that are appropriate to the Caribbean education context, as well as relevant for the further implementation of the Education Agenda.

In the 2021-2022 school year, the learning pathways for Dutch and English (and numeracy) were evaluated by the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) together with schools on Saba and St. Eustatius. These learning pathways were completed by the end of 2022. They will enable schools to provide better tailored education for pupils with different learning needs. In parallel with the evaluation of learning pathways on Saba and St. Eustatius, the primary school on Saba has also received support from Curriculum Coaches for the use of learning pathways.

Secondly, at the end of 2022, using resources made available by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the schools on Saba and St. Eustatius, the Taalunie/ Bureau NVT has developed additional teaching materials for Dutch language teaching (John and Jooniee, Sam and Saar).

At the end of 2020, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science also awarded Bureau ICE and the Rolf Group a contract to develop standardized tests in Dutch, and English for use in primary and core phase secondary education on Saba. The Rolf Group will arrange the implementation of these tests at all primary and secondary schools in the Caribbean Netherlands. This project will be completed in 2025.

Additionally, in February 2022, the Senate passed legislation on primary school tests. This ensures that the same quality frameworks used for testing in primary education in the European Netherlands will apply in the Caribbean Netherlands, and ensures that schools use robust, high-quality tests to monitor the progress of their students.

Finally, at the beginning of 2023, at the request of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and schools on Saba and St. Eustatius, the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) assessed whether a translation and contextualization of the standardized progress tests in numeracy-mathematics used in the European Netherlands are consistent with learning pathways in numeracy on Saba and St. Eustatius. This was found to be not entirely the case. In 2023, discussions between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and schools on Saba and St. Eustatius will continue regarding which requirements need to be met for standardized progress tests in numeracy in the English language.

## What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

### 1) *Standardized English-language progress tests for numeracy and mathematics*

Investigate whether Dutch-language progress tests in numeracy and mathematics are consistent with education on Saba and St. Eustatius, and if not, what options there are for adapting these. Subsequently, contextualize and translate into English and implement.

### 2) *Standardized progress tests in English and Dutch*

Develop standardized progress tests in English and Dutch and implement these appropriately.

### 3) *Materials for education in citizenship*

Cooperation between schools on developing curriculum materials for education in citizenship.

### 4) *Take account of the wishes of the education sector when adapting key objectives*

Additional investigation focusing on the Caribbean Netherlands when revising the core objectives.

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Contributes to</b>	<b>Persons involved</b>	<b>Responsibility for results</b>	<b>Start of school year</b>
<b>1</b>	If the lump sum funding for primary and secondary school boards on Saba is insufficient, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will contribute financially to providing English-language progress tests for numeracy and mathematics.	Standardized English-language progress tests for numeracy and mathematics	Primary and secondary school boards	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024
<b>2</b>	Revision of the core objectives for primary and secondary schools on Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius based on the principle of 'comply or explain'.	Take account of the wishes of the education sector when adapting key objectives	Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO), Primary and secondary schools boards	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024
<b>3</b>	Develop educational material that is in line with the core objectives for citizenship and focuses specifically on the context of the various islands. Make use of the regional teaching methods available for education in citizenship to do this.	Materials for education in citizenship	Primary and secondary school boards	Primary and secondary school boards	2023-2024

4	Standardized progress tests available in English and Dutch for primary and core phase secondary education on Saba.	Standardized progress tests in English and Dutch	Primary and secondary school boards and Bureau ICE	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2024-2025 (end date)
5	Introduce standardized progress tests for English and Dutch at primary and secondary schools. This will benefit the development of all pupils. The schools show how they use these tests in their school plans.	Standardized progress tests in English and Dutch	Primary and secondary school boards, Bureau ICE and The Rolf Group	Primary and secondary school boards	2024-2025
6	Teaching materials (including digital) are available which reflect the curriculum for education and correspond to the experiences of children in the Caribbean region.	Knowledge of available digital teaching material	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, School boards and ICT expert	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2025-2026

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*“Schools need access to the right tools to shape the education that they provide.”*

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## 6.2 Sustainable quality of education: vision for digital literacy and internet infrastructure (Digital education)

### What exactly is required and how can this be arranged?

#### 1) Knowledge of ICT available on Saba

In partnership with the school boards, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is appointing an ICT expert group to support the school boards in drawing up ICT policy, setting up an ICT infrastructure and developing a definition for digital literacy. Schools can draw on the knowledge and expertise on ICT that is available on the island through an ICT expert or Expert Group. They can then use this knowledge for their own education.

#### 2) Vision for digitization and schools ICT policy

Schools will include their vision for a smart ICT policy in their school plans.

#### 3) Knowledge sharing between schools on ICT

School boards will design an ICT platform where they can share knowledge on ICT and learn from each other. School boards will organize regular meetings on a structural basis, which function as a learning network. The ICT expert will act as a facilitator for these meetings.

	Milestones	Contributes to	Persons involved	Responsibility for results	Start of school year
1	In partnership with the school boards on Saba, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science appoints an ICT expert group to support the school boards in drawing up ICT policy, setting up ICT infrastructure and developing a definition of digital literacy.	ICT knowledge available on Saba	School boards and Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	School boards and Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2023-2024
2	Schools on Saba have the resources and knowledge to use ICT resources in education where this is useful. They use their ICT infrastructure, ICT expert or expert group for this.	ICT knowledge available on Saba	School boards and ICT expert	School boards	2024-2025
3	All schools on Saba formulate their own smart ICT policy and include this in their school plans.	Vision for digitization and schools ICT policy	School boards and ICT expert	School boards	2024-2025

4	School boards on Saba design and set up an ICT platform where they can share knowledge on ICT and learn from each other. School boards organize structural meetings that function as a learning network. The ICT expert acts as a facilitator for these meetings.	Knowledge sharing on ICT between schools through ICT platform	School boards	School boards	2024-2025
5	The ministry of Education, Culture and Science conducts research into the efficiency and adequacy of the lump sum of primary and secondary schools in the Caribbean Netherlands.	Sufficient resources	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and school boards	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	2024-2025

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*“Preconditions such as  
 educational material and digitization  
 are necessary for good quality of education.”*  
 |

# Appendix

## 1 Overview of monitoring for milestones



# 1) Overview of monitoring for milestones

## 1. Teaching staff

1.1 Retention of teaching staff: monitoring by partners Education Agenda

1.2 Sufficient teaching staff: split monitoring

More staff available in the classroom through the use of teaching assistants. Schools look at whether teaching assistants are available on their own island or whether they can be trained.	Independent
The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a study carried out to assess the teacher shortage on Saba and arranges monitoring (identify bottlenecks and formulate solutions).	Independent
The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science begins working on a tailored approach to tackling the teacher shortage on Saba. Steps taken in the European Netherlands are assessed to determine whether Saba can be included or whether alternatives are needed ('comply or explain' principle).	Independent
The Public Entity Saba investigates the possibility of whether and how it can provide supervision for new teachers (and their families) who will be working on the island and whether, if possible, they can support teachers with study costs or accommodation.	Independent
The Public Entity Saba uses the FRED Fair (Flinx Recruitment Expo Dutch Caribbean), an annual recruitment event where jobseekers in the European Netherlands and employers in the Caribbean Netherlands can meet, with the primary goal of promoting the emigration/re-emigration of students and professionals in the European Netherlands to the Caribbean Netherlands. This can include the recruitment of teachers.	Partners Education Agenda



1.3 professionalization opportunities for teaching staff:

*independent monitoring*

**2. Administrative capacity and educational leadership:**

*monitoring by partners Education Agenda*

**3. Multilingualism**

3.1 Sustainable multilingualism in education:

*independent monitoring*

3.2 Education for newcomers:

*monitoring by partners Education Agenda*

**4. Buildings for education**

4.1 Maintenance of schools buildings:

*independent monitoring*

**5. Transition to further education**

5.1 Smooth progression from education to further education:

*monitoring by partners Education Agenda*

5.2 Increase academic success in secondary education:

*monitoring by partners Education Agenda*

**6. Preconditions**

6.1 Curriculum and educational materials are appropriate to the Caribbean context

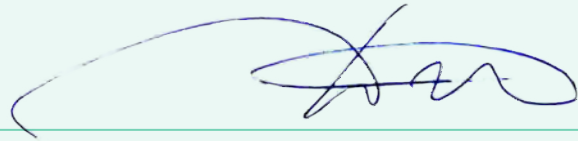
*monitoring by partners Education Agenda*

6.2 Sustainable quality of education: vision for digital literacy and internet infrastructure (Digital education)

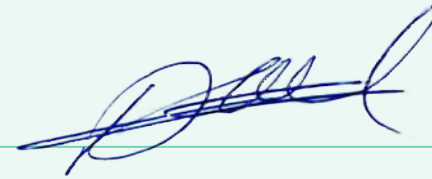
*monitoring by partners Education Agenda*

# Signature Education Agenda Saba

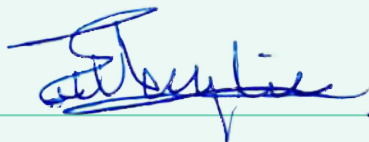
The parties below are committed to the agreements made in this education agenda. They confirm their joint intention to take the next step towards further improving education in Saba. This document is signed digitally on July 5th 2023 in The Hague and on Saba.



**The minister of Education, Culture and Science**



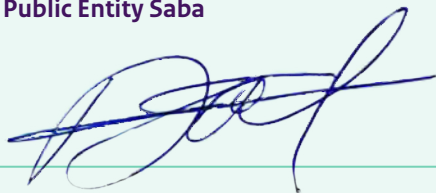
**On behalf of the Saba Educational Foundation  
(Saba Comprehensive School)**



**On behalf of the Executive Council of the  
Public Entity Saba**



**On behalf of the Foundation Expertise Center  
Education Care Saba (EC2)**



**On behalf of the Stichting Katholiek Onderwijs Saba  
(Sacred Heart School)**

# Parties



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Saba Educational Foundation (*Saba Comprehensive School*)

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