

**SECTORAL PRESENTATION 2015-2016**

**Theme: Education - Adding Value to Lives**

**Presented by**

**HON. REV. RONALD THWAITES MP  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

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## Introductory Remarks

I speak highly of the acumen and dedication of the staff of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The board members, executive and staff of agencies of the Ministry deserve thanks and commendation. I salute every teacher and principal. It has been a good year of partnership with the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA). We are doing our best within the Education Budget, to find ways to improve the lot of teachers.

Who said volunteerism in Jamaica is waning? Witness the almost 1000 chairmen and members of school boards. I pay them due respect. To parents, yearning for better for your children, the Ministry wishes to be at your service. And I hail the myriad alumni groups here and far, the collaboration of increasing numbers of the Private Sector who give significantly to Education.

Teaching, learning and training demand everyone's input. Mr. Speaker, I liken our education system to a student whose report card I am completing. In the comments section on the report card I would write, "Improved performance, but more is expected." The first year we assessed; in 2013 we called for action; and in 2014 we sharpened that focus towards student achievement. This year, we report on the transformative initiatives underway and assess how we can intensify their impact –how we are **adding value to lives!**

Education is the primary ingredient of economic development. It is the kernel of the renaissance in our society. Barry Chevannes once sang,

“Revolution tek a year or two”. This year we are not announcing many new programmes; rather we are inviting this Parliament and the nation to hold us accountable for progress on what we said we would do. We are in the middle of a quantum shift as to how we educate, rethinking what the purposes of education are, how each dollar is spent and how each effort adds value.

So to sum up the performance of the education system during the past three years, I draw members’ attention to the document titled, ‘*Achievements in Education*’ that has been tabled today. It shows that during the period January 2012 to March 2015 Government intensified its efforts to deliver more opportunities and improve the quality of education and training for more of our people.

We have seen improved outcomes at all levels of the education system. In addition, there have been increased opportunities for persons in various demographic groups in the society to **add value to their lives**. The education enterprise is moving in the right direction, but we must intensify the pace of improvement.

## Early Childhood

Mr. Speaker, in the past we identified four areas and are now reporting progress in these areas:

- We have integrated more than 200 basic schools into infant departments in primary schools. The rationalization process will continue apace during 2015/2016. At least another 250 inadequate basic schools will be upgraded to infant status.
- We have met last year's targets of hiring 200 early-childhood trained teachers through JEEP and 40 permanently thereby providing 480 basic schools with access to trained teachers. An additional 400 basic schools are projected to be so supplied for the 2015-2016 school year. There are currently 2,263 trained teachers in the Early Childhood sector, representing 23% of the total complement.
- We are on track to meet the target of providing breakfast to 138,000 children. As at December 2014 we have been providing 126,000 children at the Early Childhood level with breakfast and lunch (See Ministry Paper).
- The provision of the breakfast and lunch programme is estimated to cost the Ministry of Education \$2.2 billion. This is money well spent. While we help those who really cannot help themselves, it is the responsibility of parents to feed their children properly not Government!

**Providing nutrition in schools is adding value to the lives of our young children and the brightening of their prospects.**

- Our target this year is to spread around 20% of the school-feeding budget of \$4.6 billion on locally grown fruits, vegetables, tubers, eggs and other proteins. We are coming from zero use of local produce. We aim to get 50% in three years.
- Following on the 15% raise last year we will further increase the allowance paid to Early Childhood practitioners by 15% in two tranches during the next calendar year. This will be done from the better spend of existing funds. We are keeping our promise.

## Special Education

Everybody remembers that recently the nation enacted a Disability Law. We must comply. Young people with special needs comprise 15% to 20% of our school population. Last month, we assisted 292 children with special needs to sit the Grade Six Achievement Test. One student, who was a patient in the Bustamante Hospital for Children, was allowed to write his papers there in the presence of an invigilator.

The Ministry also served students in a variety of other ways including the provision of braille, large print, readers, writers and prompters. This is the extent, Mr. Speaker, that the Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that students with special needs and learning challenges receive the opportunity to fulfil their potential. They, too, must get a chance to have **value added to their lives.**

- We will intensify our efforts this year to meet the special needs of children guided by the results of an assessment or *Child Find* completed in 2014 of more than 7628 referred students in 302 primary level schools across the Ministry's six Regions. (The last Child Find was done 36 years ago!). The results substantiate our worst fears.
- The latest findings indicate that 34% of the students assessed were evaluated to be at 'Borderline' level of functioning, while 60% were evaluated to be at 'extremely low intellectual functioning'. Members can reference the accompanying Ministry Paper.
- So what must be done? The fierce urgency of now requires positive responses, not the helplessness and resignation of the past.
- In this regard, we have established a diagnostic and therapy clinic for pre-school children at the VOUCH, in conjunction with the JTA, the Rotary Club and other partners. A similar diagnostic facility is being established this year in Savanna-la-Mar in partnership with Rockhouse Foundation, which has contributed more than \$300 million to Early Childhood Education in Western Jamaica over 10 years.
- Mico Care Centre has established a Unit in Port Antonio and we will soon open diagnostic centres at Sam Sharpe Teachers' College in St James and Church Teachers' College in Manchester.
- Having diagnosed the disabilities the response at the Regional level includes:
  - Establishment of 20 pull-out-centres to treat with some of these children; 30 new centres are to be established in 2015/16.

- Establishment of six mobile clinics to support other children in selected schools.
- Provision of additional training to 250 Special Education Teachers in the system in order to better equip them to support students in need.
- All trainee teachers now receive special education training, without which they must not be certified.
- Collaboration with the Child Guidance Clinics to treat with the more severe cases.

## Primary

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing improvement in education outcomes at the primary level.

- Jamaica moved up 41 places to 87 in 2014 in the Global Competitive Index for Primary Education Enrolment.
- We achieved improvement in student performance in the Grade Six Achievement Test, with 98% of students placed in high schools and approximately 75% placed in one of their preferred schools in 2014.
- The current literacy mastery level is 77.4%. This is 7.6% below the national target of 85% of Grade-four students mastering literacy by this year; 85% translates to 100% when we account for the 15% or more students who suffer from learning disabilities (See Ministry Paper).
- Primary school principals and teachers across the island, supported by the Ministry, are applying strategies to ensure that students

perform optimally in the Grade Four Literacy Test to be held in June this year.

- The USAID/MOE Literacy Project in selected schools reports improvements among students in Grades one to three. Particularly, the number of children reading at their grade levels has been significant, moving from 13.5% for boys and 21.9% for girls in 2013 to 37% for boys and 55% for girls in 2015. **This is value being added!**
- Under the USAID/MOE reading project, there has also been an increase in the number of schools implementing programmes to address gender disparities as well as utilising parenting initiatives to improve the reading of children.
- Similar intensity is being applied to achieving mastery of numeracy skills to 85% of the Grade-four age cohort by 2018. The current numeracy mastery level is 58%.
- We have removed 15 of 56 primary schools from the shift system resulting in improved conditions for teaching and learning. A further 15 primary schools are targeted for removal off shift in 2015/2016. There was little or no effort before.
- We were too accepting of things as they were. Give us two more years and by 2018 Jamaica should eliminate the shift system in primary schools
- Since 2012 we have replaced 137 pit latrines with flush toilets in targeted schools through partnerships with Food for the Poor, Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the CHASE Fund. All pit latrines will be replaced by the end of the 2015/2016 school year.

## Secondary

Mr. Speaker, we are adding more value at the secondary level.

- This year for the first time the Ministry will in August present examination results for not only Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) but for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ), National Vocational Qualification (NVQJ) and City and Guilds Examinations. These include 15,000 for City and Guilds, NVQJ – 5000 and CVQ – 620.
- These entries are for students who would not normally be entered for any examinations. The Ministry paid the fees.
- Student performance across this wider range of examinations will present a more complete picture to enable student assessment and the evaluation of school performance.
- More students have performed well in the CSEC for the period 2012 to 2014.
  - The pass rate for students who sat English Language increased by 14 percentage points from 52% in 2012 to 66% in 2014.
  - The pass rate for students who sat Mathematics moved from 38% to 56%, an increase of 18 percentage points for the same period.
  - Calculated on the basis of the entire Grade-eleven cohort, which is what we should always do from now on, there were 11 percentage points increase from 20% to 31% in Mathematics passes, while passes in English Language increased by nine percentage points moving from 33% to 42% for the review period.

Mr. Speaker, despite these improvements the Ministry is not satisfied with these outcomes.

- As it relates to the Grade-eleven cohort, the policy decision is that 100% must sit a minimum of three subjects in an external examination by 2017. The subjects should include English, Mathematics and a technical or vocational subject.
- As it relates to the outcomes in the teaching and learning of Mathematics, the Ministry has deployed 84 specialists to targeted secondary and primary schools. Our target was 146 but we just cannot find suitable persons. Our census data revealed that of the 1784 persons teaching Math at the secondary level 704 have no qualification in the area. We have also trained 911 school principals and heads of department to lead the Mathematics revolution in their schools.
- The Mathematics programme is costing taxpayers \$300 million extra, but it is necessary as we believe that competence in the subject accounts for significant advancement in a person's life. Indeed, Math Counts, as the theme of the National Mathematics Programme states.
- The Ministry pauses to recognise private sector support for our National Mathematics Programme – NCB Foundation, JN Foundation, the Insurance Association of Jamaica and other partners.
- We have removed six secondary schools from the shift system and we plan to remove at least 20 more schools offering

secondary education in 2015/2016. That will leave 18 more high schools on shift which we project to completely remove by 2018/19 (See Ministry Paper).

- Some measures under consideration to ameliorate overcrowding and the need for the shift system include placement of students in schools where there is excess capacity, engage in brownfield construction, and strengthen schools with limitations so as to encourage parents' choices in keeping students in schools where they are placed.
- We have provided additional classrooms to 16 secondary schools and refurbished 286 other schools to improve the quality of the infrastructure.
- We have upgraded two junior high to high schools – Aberdeen and Bellevue during the current academic year. Nain and New Forest Junior High are targeted for a similar upgrading in 2015-2016.
- In our quest to add value to people's lives, we have improved the Career Advancement Programme (CAP) to provide 6000 students per annum with job -related skills and upgrade their literacy and numeracy levels.
- We are adding to the traditional TVET offerings of 110 targeted high schools. Three subjects were introduced in 2014 and eight are to be introduced in 2015/16 as follows:
  - Small Ruminants;
  - Apiculture;
  - Renewable Energy;
  - Meat and Seafood Handling;

- Floral Arrangement;
- Computer Graphics;
- Visual Merchandizing; and
- Logistics Operations.

Mr. Speaker, the philosophy behind the move to popularise TVET subjects in the high schools is to make graduates more marketable for employment immediately after leaving high school or later on completing higher education.

- This is why the Ministry of Education has collaborated with Junior Achievement Jamaica to infuse entrepreneurship into the school curriculum. We have been enjoying progress at the primary level, and now we are about to expand to secondary and tertiary.
- The goal of this latest initiative is to develop the entrepreneurial capacities of students enrolled in Grade 10 (4<sup>th</sup> form) and tertiary institutions across Jamaica. Fifty high schools and 5000 students along with eight tertiary institutions and 200 students will commence the project in 2015/2016.
- By 2017, when a course in entrepreneurship will be compulsory in all secondary schools and offered in all tertiary institutions, 45,000 high school students and 1000 tertiary ones would have participated in the project.

**This is adding value to people's lives.**

## **Improvement in Student Attendance**

Mr. Speaker for the academic year 2013/2014, the national attendance rates were 79.4% for infant schools and departments, 86.3% at primary and 82.7% at the secondary level. Of the three levels, primary had the highest attendance rate (See Ministry Paper).

Among the recommendations to improve attendance are:

- Enforcing compulsory education and establish tracking mechanisms for identifying and reporting incidents of truancy.
- Increasing parental accountability through sensitisation, engagement in school activities and follow up by schools' personnel.
- Making classes more interesting to stimulate students' interest
- Expanding Breakfast Programme for students who are in need of nutritional support.
- Developing and implementing an incentive system for high attendance
- Ensuring that all students at Grade 11 are engaged in preparation for an exit examination.
- Creating options that will engage students' interest.

## **Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**

Mr. Speaker, we have put back the "E" for Employment into the HEART Trust/NTA. The agency has introduced several new initiatives linking training to employment that will provide Jamaicans with a range of

opportunities to advance themselves and add lasting value to their lives.

HEART has a new heart.

- Firstly, we have reintroduced the Registered Apprenticeship Programme (RAP) that is projected to train 2000 persons to become internationally certified and work-ready by the end of the 2015/2016 academic year. Already 500 persons have begun training.
- The target is that within two to three years 20,000 participants will be registered in the programme at any one time.
- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has endorsed RAP. The Ministry of Education acknowledges the support of several private sector firms -100 are now participating.
- HEART Trust/NTA has trained approximately 816 persons in Call/Contact Operations to fill jobs at Sutherland Global Services, a company in the Business Processing Operations (BPO) Sector. An additional 1,388 persons are targeted for training in 2015/2016. HEART Trust/NTA has already trained 65 persons at Vocational Training & Development Institute with 55 gaining employment during 2014.
- HEART Trust/NTA has begun the installation of 200 incubation work stations at its Gordon Town Road, St Andrew facility to accommodate 1500 employees in the BPO sector in 2015-2016, with the initial 500 to be engaged by Sutherland Global Services.
- I want to tell all investors, local and foreign that once we know their needs the Jamaican Education System will train the finest quality employees for their enterprise –quality in appropriate skills and work attitudes.

- HEART Trust/NTA has implemented a training and employment initiative targeting 15,000 unattached youth per year in several communities across the island. It has started in North East Manchester and Western St Andrew.
- The programme consists of three components: Apprenticeship for participants with CSEC qualification; full skill training for participants without CSEC but who have passed the HEART Trust/NTA entrance test; and the third component is academic, attitudinal and skill upgrading for participants without any qualification.
- Commencing during the 2015/2016 academic year, the HEART Trust/NTA will facilitate start-up of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by offering them grants to expand. The grants will be provided either through the provision of 'start-up' kits valuing J\$75,000 after training or up to J\$250,000 for qualified persons who are trained in aquaculture to enter the ornamental fish industry. This will generate self-employment and small businesses, targeting 120 beneficiaries per year.
- The Grant Funding Programme will feature three distinct components:
  - Technical assistance in branding, packaging and labelling
  - Capital for upgrading, retooling, technology development and
  - Enhancing the technical capacity of employees to a maximum spend of J\$3M per firm.

Please note that these new initiatives are in addition to the normal programmes offered by HEART at its workforce colleges and TVET institutes, as well as workforce certification. Mr. Speaker, **all these add**

**value.** Big up the new HEART, supporting and certifying more training in workplaces small and large, rural and urban.

## Adult Learning

Mr. Speaker, so far, we have reported on the expansion/improvement of opportunities for personal advancement at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. We turn now to the adult learner.

- We invite persons to enrol into any of the menu of continuing education programmes being offered by the Jamaican Foundation for Life-long Learning, the UWI Open Campus, HEART Trust/NTA, Jamaica Library Service, and the Community Colleges. In addition the Education Broadcasting Network (EBN) offers individuals a route to lifelong learning.
- There is something for everybody.
- For example, JFLL is offering the High School Diploma Equivalency (HSDE) programme that provides persons with a second chance to earn a high school certification at their own pace, then progress along the continuing education ladder.
- Currently, there are 4167 learners enrolled. By 2018, JFLL intends to impact the lives of at least 15,000 adult learners through partnerships with schools, churches and non-governmental organizations.
- The JFLL is also administering the programme to the CAP (General) learners in their pursuit of technical and vocational education. The CAP General learners, at the Basic and Intermediate Levels, will be exposed to a pre-vocational programme in Mathematics and English

Language and an Introduction to Skills Training which will prepare them to matriculate to the HEART Trust/NTA for further education and skills training.

Mr. Speaker, members of this Honourable House, here is the icing on the cake. The HSDE certification is recognised by the New York State Office of Adult and Continuing Education, the Ontario Ministry of Education, George Brown College and Woodsworth College at the University of Toronto, Canada.

This provides Jamaicans migrating to these areas with credentials that have international recognition which will lead to better job opportunities. This is how this Government provides opportunities for people to improve their lives and that of their families. The education you receive here can provide you with jobs anywhere in the world. Education is **value for life**. It is for you to access.

## Tertiary

- We have operationalised the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (JTEC) to oversee the development of the tertiary sector in accordance with national priorities and to reflect international standards and practices as well as the mandatory registration of tertiary level institutions.
- J-TEC has received approval from Cabinet to proceed with the registration of all tertiary institutions in Jamaica. A Qualification Framework for local tertiary institutions is also being refined.

- The MoE has brokered an agreement between the Teachers' Colleges of Jamaica (TCJ) and the University of the West Indies (UWI) for the latter to become the degree-granting body for programmes offered by teacher training institutions. The first cohort of students under this arrangement will graduate in 2015.
- The TCJ is spearheading a refocusing of the teachers' colleges towards becoming multi-disciplinary institutions, while recognizing the need for sound basic teacher education, and the importance of more specialisation.

Mr. Speaker, the island-wide network of eight Community Colleges provide opportunities for persons to qualify themselves in a wide range of disciplines at the Associate and Bachelor Degree levels – 3623 students are currently enrolled in these programmes.

- In addition to these tertiary level programmes, the community colleges also offer a wide range of continuing education courses that include technical and vocational courses, short practical skills-based courses, CSEC and CAPE classes, as well as leisure courses. Another 4,694 students are enrolled in these continuing education courses.
- As a means of expanding educational opportunities to all, the Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica will introduce the online delivery of some courses starting in September 2015.
- The Ministry of Education has collaborated with the Ministry of Finance and Planning to secure adequate funding for the Student Loan Bureau for the current and next academic years.

- In addition, the Ministry of Education has established a payment scheme with the UWI that will make it significantly easier for medical students to afford their tuition fees.
- We need to remind all Jamaicans that the State cannot be expected to fund tertiary education fully. Parents must commence saving plans for their children's tertiary education. **Education supports life.** We ask that you respect your bonding arrangements. We would prefer to have enthusiastic and dedicated service instead of the money.

## Teacher Development

Mr. Speaker, we wish to commend teachers who continue to develop their professional skills. Currently the majority (62%) of teachers in the public education system are graduate-trained, increasing by 10 percentage points during the last three years. While we encourage our teachers to upgrade their qualification we ask that they do so in the areas in which they teach, as presently significant numbers of them are qualified in subjects that they do not teach.

- We recognize in a special way the 235 teachers who have voluntarily accepted relocation in areas where their skills are needed.
- There is significant mismatch of qualification and subject taught. We have stated before the number of teachers qualified to teach math. Another example relates to Biology where 249 of 366 teachers are not qualified to teach the subject.
- Starting this Summer and over the next two to three years teachers particularly at the secondary level will be facilitated in accessing

specially designed courses to allow for attainment of the requisite qualification and certification.

- In addition, approximately 1200 teachers will receive training in areas for the continuing pilot of the National Standard Curriculum.

## **Virtual Learning**

- We have introduced a virtual education system, through the Education Broadcasting Network (EBN), to deliver curricula material in Mathematics, English Language and Sciences (See Ministry Paper).
- EBN programmes are currently being shown on weekdays and weekends on more than 20 channels across the island, which carry the Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica (PBCJ) programmes in addition to JETv and LOVE TV. Content will ultimately be transmitted via new media -internet, smartphones and tablets.
- The Jamaica Library Service is now procuring 805 computers that will enhance the ability of citizens to access the internet and to use the library services. This adds value at the click of a mouse. We have launched the Global Libraries Initiative project with grant funding provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## **Education Transformation**

Mr. Speaker, much of what is being done in education had its birth in the Education Task Force Report of 2004.

- In response to the comments by the Leader of Opposition about the Education System Transformation Programme (ESTP), I have tabled today a booklet titled 'Transforming Education'. This reflects an assessment of the ESTP for the World Bank, which was a major financier of the programme.
- I wish to highlight some of the achievement of the ESTP:
  - Six new agencies have been established to focus on accountability and to streamline the operations of the Ministry of Education. The agencies are the National Education Inspectorate (NEI), Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC), National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL), the National Education Trust, the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) and the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (JTEC).
  - We are giving principals and teachers the training and assessment tools with which to add value.
  - We are offering much better services from the Central Ministry. Cooperating with the Ministry of Finance, we are working now on modernising our financial accounting and personnel records management.
  - Public schools have been transformed into more accountable entities, with more than 95% now operating with School Improvement Plans; setting targets and measuring outcomes.
  - The NEI has completed the inspection of 954 public schools in Jamaica, providing for the first time in Jamaica's history a baseline of school performance from which to inform empirically

the Ministry of Education's support and initiatives. The NEI's latest full report will be tabled in June.

- The Ministry is now better able to provide targeted support to schools through the reports of the NEI. The schools are now responding positively and embracing the recommendations of the NEI report rather than being defensive. This is **adding value** to school leadership and management.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I attended the inaugural graduation ceremony for the Aspiring Principals' Programme offered jointly by the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) and the University of the West Indies (UWI). I congratulate the 35 graduates and commend NCEL, for the tremendous contribution it is making in developing leadership skills in the education system. Another 114 have registered for the second cohort.

- Since 2012, NCEL has trained 619 Principals and Education Officers under its Effective Principals' Training Programme.
- NCEL is about to introduce a new initiative to recognise outstanding principals. An announcement will be made soon.
- The Jamaica Teaching Council has been engaged in activities promoting the professional development of teachers. A total of 28,585 teachers has been registered on the database.
- The National Parenting Support Commission has been engaged in national efforts aimed at strengthening the home/school relationship, through coordination of parenting initiatives, advocacy and support to parents.

- It has now been positioned as the point of reference for discussions on parenting. It has embarked on a national Effective Parenting Campaign through school visits, media presentations and a series of community fora.

## **Legislative Update**

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has completed consultations on the JTC Bill and the Revision of the Code of Regulation. These will be brought to Parliament during this legislative year.

## **Re-socialisation Programmes**

There are behavioural and social issues and challenges affecting our children which cause a major cramp in the education system. Data from the Ministry of National Security's Safe School Programme indicated that during the 2012/2013 Academic Year, three thousand six hundred and seventy one (3,671) students were cited for anti-social behaviours of varying degrees. Therefore, we are concentrating on developing positive social attitudes and customs (See Ministry Paper).

In order to address the behavioural problems, the Ministry is using various strategies at all levels of the system under the School Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) framework. The components of the programme are:

## **Culture in Education Programme**

- The Culture in Education Programme is designed to promote civics education which includes citizenship, greater appreciation of self and others and respect for national symbols, national heroes and icons, all relevant to cultural integrity and nation-building.
- The Teachings of Garvey were introduced in the curriculum. A series of readers on the “Heroes of Jamaica” will be introduced in September 2015 to inspire our students to bring out the best within themselves and inculcate the positive values and attitudes demonstrated by the heroes.

## **Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)**

- The aim of the HFLE is to help young people understand that the choices they make in everyday life profoundly influence their health and personal development into adulthood as well as to help children and adolescents practice healthy choices. The programme which began in 2007 had a complete rollout in 2012 with approximately 1000 public and 200 independent schools, from early childhood to the secondary level.

## **Valuable Pathways**

- The Valuable Pathways, a programme that was developed and implemented in 2004 in all Technical High Schools, has been modified for full roll out in the system for September 2015. The programme is aimed at assisting students to develop, demonstrate and embrace core values that have been identified and to apply them to their daily lives. It provides a general overview of core values within

the Jamaican context and provides practical ways for these to be demonstrated. The programme comes with a teacher's guide and a student manual.

### **Dream-A-World Project**

- The Dream- A- World Project is being implemented by the University of the West Indies, Mona, through the Caribbean Institute of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (CARIMENSA). At present, the project targets the poorest academic performers and most disruptive students entering Grade 4 in 5 parishes, (Kingston, St. Andrew, St. Mary, Portland, St. Thomas) in 35 primary schools.
- After one year, the intervention is expected to transform annually 1000 academically failing and behaviourally dysfunctional Grade 4 primary students into confident, disciplined, high- achieving students for Grade 5.

### **Change from Within (CFW)**

- The Change from Within (CFW), a programme developed in 1992 by the University of the West Indies, Mona, is aimed at curbing the incidence of violence and anti-social behaviour in schools by taking a whole-school approach to the question, building self-esteem among the students in the schools and thereby improving overall performance and reducing violence. The interventions are not just for students, but include strategies to motivate teachers and build leadership.

## Uniformed Groups

- Schools across Jamaica have long maintained the tradition of uniformed groups, clubs and societies. It is a fact that students who are members of uniformed groups are more disciplined as they conform to rules, regulations and general law and order. Currently, there are more than 600 uniformed groups in schools which include an addition of 205 new groups to assist with character development among students. Plans are advanced to expand these groups in 2015/2016.
- To deepen the re-socialisation of our students as well as their competencies in literacy and numeracy, schools will be required to spend a significant amount of time on these areas at grade seven from this year.
- While we support the de-criminalisation of small quantities of ganja, the Ministry of Education is against the use of ganja and other narcotic substances by our students, academic and other staff in schools. Smoking anything is bad for your health. No smoking of any sort is allowed in schools.
- The school cannot do this re-socialisation alone. We need parents and members of the community on board.

## Challenges and Conclusion

It is going to take a big push in the right direction to ensure that this year our little boys won't any more lag behind our girls by 20% in number recognition and a similar effort to reach the mastery targets in Math by

2018. More parental involvement, better teaching and use of materials, good nutrition; these things will work; they add value to children's lives.

Let's stick to four basics for the primary level:

1. Take exceptional care of the children with special needs;
2. Mastery in English;
3. Mastery in Math; and
4. Behaviour, history and identity.

Imagine the progress in secondary education! In the 53 years of Independence we have moved from about 15% of the cohort having the chance of five years of secondary schooling to just short of 100% this coming September. Our students are not just passing through on a conveyor belt to disappointment.

We now have a rigorous Grade 7 remedial and re-socialisation programme wherever necessary; significant infrastructural and instructional uplift for weaker high schools; infusion of a much more relevant and practical curriculum; mandatory graduation requirements and as the shift system is eliminated, better opportunity for excelling in sports, uniformed groups, arts and culture. **All these are adding value!** They will take time to materialise but we must declare the process irreversible.

What we have done over the past three years and continuing is to grasp the nettle of shortcomings in the education sector, consult carefully and introduce transformational reforms which are beginning to bear fruits.

It can happen with maximum goodwill and for the time being, much the same money. Added value, achievement, productivity, more money, satisfaction are the lifelong personal and national dividends.

When it comes to the adults, each and every Jamaican must decide what value you want to add to your life through lifelong learning. JFLL, HEART, Community Colleges; renewed Inter-Disciplinary Teachers' Colleges, the Open Campus of the UWI are provided by the taxpayers through Government for your use. Start where you are on whatever course you like or need to be happier and more productive and take your time and go through. This was the essence of President Obama's life story and message to us last week.

Personal development and national growth are not things someone say about Government or your *special boops* can give you. Now that the opportunities for quality learning are being provided far more abundantly, Jamaica must take up the habit of lifelong learning. **This is adding value!**

Transformed education is Jamaica's winning ticket as it has been in Singapore – *not Bruk outa Brukness*, endless gyration or self-absorbed profiling. Educational advancement is the winner for any and every political administration. Members of Parliament should be assessed on the basis of their commitment to their constituents' education. A good education is the ultimate people's test. Education which adds value, balances people's lives even as we are balancing the books.

As always, it is a great privilege to play a part in **ADDING VALUE** to the human person, Jamaica's best asset and the finest creation of the Almighty.

