

SECTORAL PRESENTATION

2014-2015

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

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1. PREAMBLE

- Mr Speaker, the tone and content of this annual contribution on education has to be special. The subject is far too important for partisan bickering or point-scoring across the aisle or between special interests within the sector. Our heads and our hearts have to be in different and higher places when we are discussing student achievement. So I open by expressing sincere thanks to all my colleagues for their critical support, especially members of the Opposition; to the teachers and their associations for a year spent building bridges, recognizing strengths and weaknesses and reaching accommodations; appreciation to the Churches and the public commentators who have played such a vital role in guiding policy.
- Thanks to the parents, farmers, and teachers, for example those in North West St Elizabeth who prepared breakfast for their own and other people's little children. Thanks to people like Mr Isaacs in New York who has such a yearning and appreciation for the Pratville Primary School which he attended over 40 years ago, that he continues to send supplies and an annual donation even in these challenging times.
- Thanks to the members of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica Education Policy Advisory Committee, Honourable Oliver Clarke, Honourable Danny Williams, Honourable Douglas Orane, Mrs Esther Tyson and Mr Cliff Hughes, who, along with the almost 10,000 school board members, offer voluntary service to the cause of education.
- Mr Speaker, over the last two years, we have called the Jamaican nation to action over the state of education. We know the problems only too well. This presentation will focus on the solutions. What we are doing this year, what we must do to improve STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

- Mr Speaker, the future of this country rests on effective education. By that we mean passing subjects, acquiring skills, and developing character. Always all three. The best way to balance people's lives is to give everyone the opportunity for a sound education. Jamaica must stop denying reality. It is idleness, ignorance and weak family life that is fuelling our crime wave; our declining levels of labour productivity, and high levels of unemployability.
- It is educational accomplishment and the personal discipline, which is part of it, that made our scientists, our inventors, our professionals, our athletes and artistes as great as they are. Spread the word – if you want to step up “inna” life, ignorance and underachievement are your enemies. Effort and performance are your friends
- While it is the responsibility of the State to provide the basic requirements, for effective education, partnerships are required with all segments of the society to ensure quality and equity in education.
- I take the opportunity to thank all the dedicated teachers, as we celebrate Teachers' Day today. I think of the Early Childhood practitioners who are earning less than their worth; the young graduates I met last Friday working in dark, hot, makeshift classrooms behind the workshop at Porus High, or the ones who in the crisis at Penwood last year stepped forward for training as social workers to better cope with the demands of the job; or the long-serving staff at Bethabara Primary and Junior High who I met recently. There are many more teachers who continue to serve with distinction. Let us salute them all.
- Let us salute the teachers who are embracing voluntary redeployment to serve more effectively; those who patiently offer individualized and differentiated instruction suited to their students' special needs, thus adding value, rather than

sticking slavishly to the curriculum – those who make learning more interesting and less boring.

- As we observe Child Month, I also encourage all our children, especially those living in difficult circumstances, to go to school every day, to take homework seriously and to “hug up” Maths and English. Students! Congratulations on your results which are getting better. Take Timar Jackson as your example. He is just like you. He rose from a below-average Maths student at Vauxhall High to receive a First Class Honours degree in Actuarial Science at the University of the West Indies and was selected as Rhodes Scholar for 2014.
- Timar’s mother and his Maths teacher, Mr Clarke, were also crucial to his success. His Maths teacher took a special interest in him when he was failing and skylarking and this made all the difference. His mother made and sold snacks and brought the money to him for lunch. I pay tribute to all the parents who sacrifice so much for their children’s education. Come with me to downtown Kingston any school day at the crack of dawn and see the young fathers carrying their children on bike-backs or bicycles, on their shoulders, to see them safely to the school gate. These are the types of parents and teachers who will make more ordinary students extraordinary and exceptional.
- Taxpayers, through government, spend most of their tax dollar year after year in the hope and anticipation that the younger generation will do better. We who spend or receive any fraction of this money must add value. We accept this awesome responsibility and pledge to serve you as we focus this year on **student achievement**. The decision to spend every dollar this year will be on the basis of how much value it adds, and how much it promotes **student achievement**.
- All segments of the society have the personal responsibility to seize the opportunities available to advance themselves. The story to be told today traces

the challenges and advances in education throughout the whole life cycle. Let us start with the little ones.

2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Early Childhood and Special Education are the headline items for student achievement this year. All we know indicate that the dollar investment in Early Childhood can give you a 17-fold return.
- Mr Speaker, the early childhood education cohort includes all our four to eight year olds, that is, students from infant school age to Grade 3 at the Primary level.
- This year we will spend approximately \$14.1 Billion or 18 percent of the Ministry's Recurrent Budget on our Early Childhood cohort. Additionally, 18 percent of the Capital Budgets (A & B) or \$316.5 million will be spent on supporting and improving Early Childhood Education.



“More than seventy percent (70%) of a child’s emotional control is learned before he/she is three years old. Emotional control is critical to the process of learning and succeeding in school and social life.”

“Parents are children’s first teachers.”

Nutrition

- Mr Speaker, research showing the harm done by poor nutrition to children in the early years, makes the school feeding programme a priority. Our Early Childhood interventions are world-rated. All the studies point to inadequate or inappropriate nutrition as being a significant cause of poor brain and personality development.
- The Ministry of Education, through the School Feeding Unit, conducted a pilot breakfast programme for menu acceptance, daily requirements, food preparation and cost; fed 12,000 Early Childhood students and got good results. Student achievement begins here!
- The evaluation showed about forty percent (40%) of children in need of constant supplement while another thirty percent (30%) sometimes go hungry.
- Hence, starting this September the Ministry will expand the breakfast programme to provide free breakfast to seventy percent (70%) of the EC cohort or 138,000 children, including PATH beneficiaries, with the remaining thirty percent (30%) having the option to make a contribution or pay in full.
- We have allocated \$1.05 billion to this programme. We will use a combination of Nutrition Products Limited (NPL) produced breakfast as well as breakfasts provided at the local school level.

Upgrading Facilities

- In the new school year the Ministry of Education will be targeting the integration of 200 Early Childhood Institutions into infant departments of primary schools or the construction of stand-alone infant schools. Last year 68 basic schools were

merged into infant departments, exceeding the target of 50 mergers, along with two stand-alone schools.

- The CHASE Fund has committed \$87 Million for repairs and retrofitting of ten Early Childhood Institutions in this financial year.
- Food for the Poor has, as at the end of February, built/expanded twenty-nine (29) basic schools and thirteen (13) more are at various stages of construction.
- The Ministry of Education would not have been able to implement the Early Childhood Rationalization Programme, without partnership from public and private entities such as CHASE. Over \$50 million were spent last year on the programme.
- This year we will implement a new model of grant-aided assistance. This will result in a sharing of cost with our partners such as the Church and NGOs.
- Tribute must be paid to the likes of Mr Glen Christian, chairman of Cari-Med Limited, who has not only established a basic school in Top Hill using the cluster concept, but also will be building another one in South West St. Andrew.
- Mr Speaker, interest is growing in the Early Childhood sector in Jamaica.
- Imagine Gulf Stream Oil, parent of Texaco, has now expressed an interest. So have Diaspora interests in California. Others already involved include the Rockhouse Foundation, Sandals Foundation, Digicel Foundation, Food for the Poor, Jarrett Foundation (UK), Wray and Nephew Group, Sugar Transformation Programme funded by the EU.
- Corporate donors to the sector also include JPS, Radio Jamaica and Nestle. And not to be left out is the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

- We salute the churches that have long given tangible support to Early Childhood Education.
- There is room for many more partners large and small. Early Childhood Education is the most appropriate vehicle for public and private philanthropy and volunteerism.



“It is within our grasp to finally have one trained teacher available at least part-time to each Early Childhood Institution island-wide. To achieve this, the Ministry proposes to ask each Early Childhood trained teacher assigned from his/her primary school to coach pre-trained teachers in one other school that has no trained teacher”

Staffing

- The majority of our early childhood practitioners are employed to private or non-government organizations. In recognition of the invaluable contribution of these practitioners to the sector and to student development, the Ministry of Education provides a subsidy in support of their wages, and this year we will increase their monthly subsidy by fifteen percent (15%). Next year we hope to do it again. We want our best teachers and practitioners to stay in the Early Childhood system.
- We will also be engaging the services of 200 trained teachers through JEEP as well as 40 others who will provide coaching and teaching support to 480 schools.
- Mr Speaker, it is within our grasp to finally have one trained teacher available at least part-time to each Early Childhood Institution island-wide. To achieve this, the Ministry proposes to ask each Early Childhood trained teacher assigned from his/her primary school to coach pre-trained teachers in one other school that has no trained teacher. Teachers who make this additional effort will be offered incentives.
- Our objective is to give our little children a better chance than they had before, to **achieve their fullest potential** and I am asking the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) and the Opposition members to give their full support to this proposal.
- Mr Speaker, let me make it clear that as the Ministry strengthens the early childhood sector, for children from four to eight years old, we expect that many basic schools will continue to provide good developmental and educational experiences for the 0-3 year olds.

Curriculum

- Mr Speaker, the Early Childhood Commission will carry out a pilot in May-June this year of the 4-year-old Readiness Evaluation. The Readiness Evaluation will identify children as either being **on target** for entry to primary school or requiring additional support and/or assessment. Any additional support or assessment required by the children will be done during the last year of basic or infant school.
- Mr Speaker, kudos to Crayons Count. For the third year in a row, they have provided a significant contribution worth \$60 million, by donating play and learning kits to every one of some 2,600 basic and infant schools. Additionally, every Saturday in The Gleaner there is a curriculum guide for the following week.
- The Jamaica Observer also promotes an Early Childhood feature on Thursdays.
- More funding for Early Childhood Education is being realised from revising how we spend the existing Education budget. We are trying to do more with what we have, to **advance student achievement**.
- Mr Speaker, it would be remiss of me to end the Early Childhood Education chapter here. There are some 2,600 basic schools out there in communities and we cannot leave them as we found them. All of them are supported by parents. We merged 68 last year and plan to consolidate 200 more this year. About 1,500 of them are sustainable and that leaves some 800 for further treatment. Mr Speaker, of the 2,660 Early Childhood Institutions, forty-three percent (43%) or 1,150 have a trained teacher. The plan to ask these teachers to cover an additional school where possible will be a fillip to education quality at this level. For the

first time at last almost every Early Childhood aged student in Jamaica could have exposure to a trained teacher.

- In these circumstances I am inviting new partnerships with the local businesses, churches, government offices and schools in the community for they will receive the output of these basic schools later on as students and workers and have a vested interest in better quality.

3. PARENTING

- Mr Speaker, I want to make the crucial link between strong families and good education starting even before Early Childhood. Research published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Council for Early Childhood Development (2010) shows that more than seventy percent (70%) of a child's "emotional control" is learned before he/she is three years old. Emotional control is critical to the process of learning and succeeding in school and social life. It is up to parents to help their children learn these critical skills before they even start basic or infant school. Parents are children's first teachers.
- The Early Childhood Commission, working in collaboration with the National Parenting Support Commission (NSPC) will strengthen Resource Centres to become the strategic hubs for parenting support for families of young children and children with special educational needs. In the next financial year three Resource Centres will be upgraded to perform these functions, with the others being upgraded over the next 2-3 years. Parents can expect parenting seminars, assessment, and intervention for their children.

- Mr Speaker, with the help of UNICEF and USAID, the Ministry has established over 60 Parent Places. We are on track to establish another 30 at the primary level. The Parent Place is a centre with the necessary equipment and resources for parents to meet and discuss parenting issues as well as to participate in workshops on literacy, numeracy, homework strategies among other areas.
- The Ministry of Education invites the Churches to join forces with the National Parenting Support Commission to assist parents in improving their child-rearing skills.
- All of us in this House deserve a “cussing” that we still have not passed law making it mandatory for a father’s name to be on every child’s birth certificate.
- Being a good parent is the supreme achievement of any mother or father. Can our popular culture affirm and emphasize this?
- Parents if you invest time, love, presence and discipline from the Early Childhood level, you won’t likely have the brawls and disgrace like what took place among girls at Santa Cruz Primary and Junior High last Friday.
- Make them read to you, even if your eyes are dark. Take them to Church and Sunday or Sabbath School. Make sure they join the nearest library. And parents try to never miss a parent-teachers meeting.
- Be very careful of which step-father or step-mother you bring in on your children. Encourage your children to open a savings account. Feed them porridge and an egg in the morning. Help them to develop a taste for locally grown foods, which are better for them than fast food. Manners and good behaviour are important, style and fashion less so. Even if your pocket is low, these are things we all can do, because of who we are.

4. PRIMARY EDUCATION

- Mr Speaker, it is at the Primary level, if properly done, that parents and community begin to reap the first fruits of our investment in Early Childhood Education. If children are ready for primary school, the heavy reliance on extra lessons ought not to be needed.

Literacy

- The country is on track to achieve the target of one hundred percent (100%) of the educable cohort mastering literacy at the primary level by 2015. Our girls are leading towards this goal, but our boys are lagging behind. The following interventions are designed to improve literacy:
- The National Literacy Team, with assistance from the USAID, is providing direct support to four hundred and fifty (450) primary schools across the island through the deployment of ninety (90) Reading Coaches at grades one to three.
- Twelve other literacy specialists have also been assigned to forty-eight (48) secondary schools to provide support in the teaching of English Language at grades seven to nine.
- Between August 2013 and April 2014 approximately one thousand five hundred (1,500) teachers across the system benefitted from training by the team of reading coaches or specialists.
- They also engaged over one thousand three hundred (1,300) parents in seminars designed to equip them with skills so that they can better assist in the literacy/language development of their children.
- This level of literacy intervention is unprecedented.

Numeracy

- We are far off track to meet the national target of eighty-five percent (85%) proficiency at Grade Four by 2015. In recognition of the importance of student performance and achievement in mathematics to individual and national success, the Ministry of Education has restructured the National Mathematics Programme to make the **mathematical success of every student a non-negotiable priority**.
- This year the Ministry of Education has allocated an additional \$390 million to expand the mathematics programme, and we are targeting an eighty-five percent (85%) proficiency in numeracy at grade 4 by 2018. At grade 11, we are setting a target of eighty-five percent (85%) of the age cohort to sit CSEC mathematics by 2017.
- In September of this year the Ministry of Education will deploy 146 Mathematics Coaches to primary and secondary schools. They will be charged with the specific purpose of raising teaching standards and student achievement in mathematics. In addition, teachers in targeted schools will be given access to an online training programme designed to strengthen their content knowledge.
- Very importantly, the implementation of the mathematics programme also includes the training and sensitisation of principals and Heads of Department (HOD's), by the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) to take responsibility for ensuring **student achievement** in this subject at their schools.
- At great expense, the Ministry of Education is upgrading its teachers. The outcomes should be commensurate with the investment. The quality of teaching and learning in these two core subjects must be improved.

Grade Six Achievement Test, 2015-2017

- With the 2014-2015 academic year adjustments to GSAT will be as follows.

Science

- The GSAT science curriculum will no longer require detailed knowledge which is not age appropriate but, more the mastery of general concepts and basic scientific principles. It is expected that this will result in more targeted instruction to students.

Social Studies

- The content will be reduced by a quarter and the test will consist of 60 items instead of 80.
- By 2017, a new primary curriculum will herald a different primary exit examination; one which relies less on recall and more on continuous assessment that emphasizes the student's developing reasoning and critical thinking skills.



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“The country is on track to achieve the target of 100 percent of the educable cohort mastering literacy at the primary level by 2015. Our girls are leading towards this goal, but our boys are lagging behind by nearly 18 percentage points.”

New Curriculum

- Mr Speaker, the Ministry is well into the development of this exciting new national curriculum. The review which was the genesis of this effort pointed to the weight of content of curricula in areas as science and social studies at the Primary level. The new curriculum will set a premium on higher order skills as reasoning, analysis and mastery of a range of literacies.
- Mr Speaker an enduring core of English, mathematics and values will be central to the inspiring new content. Work is underway in piloting grades four to six.
- Mr Speaker we need to galvanise the writers, illustrators, printers and publishers to embrace the new opportunities and provide education with excellent options in print and electronic media solutions for students at all levels.

Small Schools

- Finally on Primary Education, we cannot postpone beyond this year decisive action in relation to more than two hundred (200) schools each with less than one hundred (100) students. In these schools, it costs more than \$168,000 per student, which is nearly twice the per student cost at other primary schools. The outcomes are generally poor despite optimal teacher student ratios.

5. SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Jamaica must achieve great benefits from expanding Secondary Education for all. This goes beyond the State's obligation in the Charter of Rights. Quality in Secondary Education is our quest from now on, and the elimination of the shift system continues to be a major objective.

School places/Shift system

- This year we will expand classroom places in forty (40) schools at a cost of \$1.35 Billion. As a result, twenty (20) schools are projected to come off the shift system.
- We also propose to use the extended day method to relieve the enormous shortage of quality secondary places island-wide. This model has been in operation at Champion College for over thirty (30) years, and works excellently. This allows for a school to operate as a single shift, with two additional 40-minute periods on the timetable.
- The model works like this, Mr Speaker:
One half of the students in each grade begins classes at about 7.30 a.m. and ends at 2.10 p.m. and the second half begins at 8.50 and ends at 3.30 p.m. This enables the school to expand its population by approximately thirty percent (30%) using the same facilities with minimal classroom addition and facilities. A four-stream school could easily move to a six stream, and an eight-stream school could easily move to a twelve stream with the timely addition of a few classrooms and facilities.
- Since September 2013 six (6) schools have been removed from the shift system. These are Holy Trinity High, Glengoffe High, Crescent Primary, Albion Primary and Junior High, Sandy Bay Primary and Junior High, and Bethabara Primary and Junior High.
- Elimination or reduction of the shift system, Mr Speaker, will provide more instructional time, moving from four to five and a half hours, and opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities, which will facilitate **student achievement**.

- As part of this year’s School Infrastructure Programme, Montpelier will begin operating as a second campus to Anchovy High in St James in September 2014. Mount St Joseph Catholic High School in Manchester will begin operating as a new grant-aided secondary school at the start of the next school year.
- Belair High School will be extended and Sydney Pagon will be converted to a regular high school in order to alleviate the space shortage at the secondary level in the parishes of Manchester and St Elizabeth.

New/Expanded School Plants

- Last year Mr Speaker, I officially opened a number of new and/or expanded school plants that will positively impact student achievement.

These include:

Garvey Maceo High School

Central High School

Jonathan Grant High School

Holy Trinity High School

Brown’s Town High School

The Cedar Grove Academy

Glengoffe High School

Red Hills Primary School

Bellefield High School

Appleton Early Childhood Institution

Marymount High School

Moreland Hill Primary & Infant School

Belair High School

Torrington Early Childhood Institution

Munro & Dickenson Trust Sixth Form

- Expansion is underway right now at Belmont Academy, Hampton, Tacius Golding and Aabuthnott Gallimore High Schools.

- Mr Speaker, I want to congratulate publicly a number of principals who, through their astute leadership and frugality, financed expansion to their school plants:
 - Mr Vinroy Harrison, Central High School
 - Dr O'Neil Ankle, Jonathan Grant High School
 - Mr Johnallson Feraria, Brown's Town High School
 - Mr Clayton Hall, Spanish Town High School (plans advanced)

They have caught the vision.

- Thanks to the Mutual Building Societies Foundation, and in particular Victoria Mutual and Jamaica National for the faith they have demonstrated in the Jamaican people and commitment to Jamaica's future. They have provided over the last five (5) years more than \$100 million for in-service training and capacity building in six (6) of our high schools, as well as technical and managerial support to the leadership in these schools. They too, share the vision.

Sanitation Programme

- Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education, along with its partners, is targeting the removal of pit latrines and installation of ninety-four (94) flush toilet units during 2014-2015. Food for the Poor (FFP) has submitted a proposal to construct one hundred and twelve (112) units in two phases starting in 2014-2015 at a cost of approximately \$168 million. This amount does not include sewage disposal; however, where required, it will be constructed with assistance from the Ministry's budget.
- The 94 units projected for this year will be provided in partnership with other entities including the CHASE Fund, Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), Members of Parliament and Non-Governmental Organisations as follows:
 - JSIF - 26
 - CHASE - 16

- NGO - 2
- MOE/FFP - 50 in 2014/2015
- MOE/FFP - 50 in 2015/2016

The PetroCaribe Fund will also provide considerable assistance, and we hope to complete the elimination of pit latrines in the following financial year.

Aid to PATH Students

- Mr Speaker, many of the secondary schools whose students are from poorer families are hampered by their inability to collect auxiliary fees. A reasonable contribution to school cost is a necessary supplement to the \$11,500 tuition which government pays.
- In the new academic year the Ministry of Education will provide to schools for each of their PATH beneficiaries, an additional \$2000 per student towards their auxiliary fees. Secondary schools whose populations are primarily PATH beneficiaries should therefore get some additional financial relief. Notwithstanding, PATH families must still try to contribute to their children's schools as much as they can.
- Last year, strong intent to contribute was evident in the high percentage of parents who entered into arrangements with schools. This year auxiliary fees will not normally be increased but parents must arrange to pay and cannot simply ignore this obligation.

School Partnership

- The Ministry of Education encourages schools to partner with others to share resources and best practices for student achievement.

- Champion College is already relating to Mona High and is helping with Mount St Joseph. I am hoping St George's, Kingston College, and Alpha Academy will combine to make Holy Trinity a Centre of Excellence. This takes vision, leadership and generosity of spirit, which I am sure our school community has. All school boards and managers should seek out such partnerships.

Technical and Vocational Education

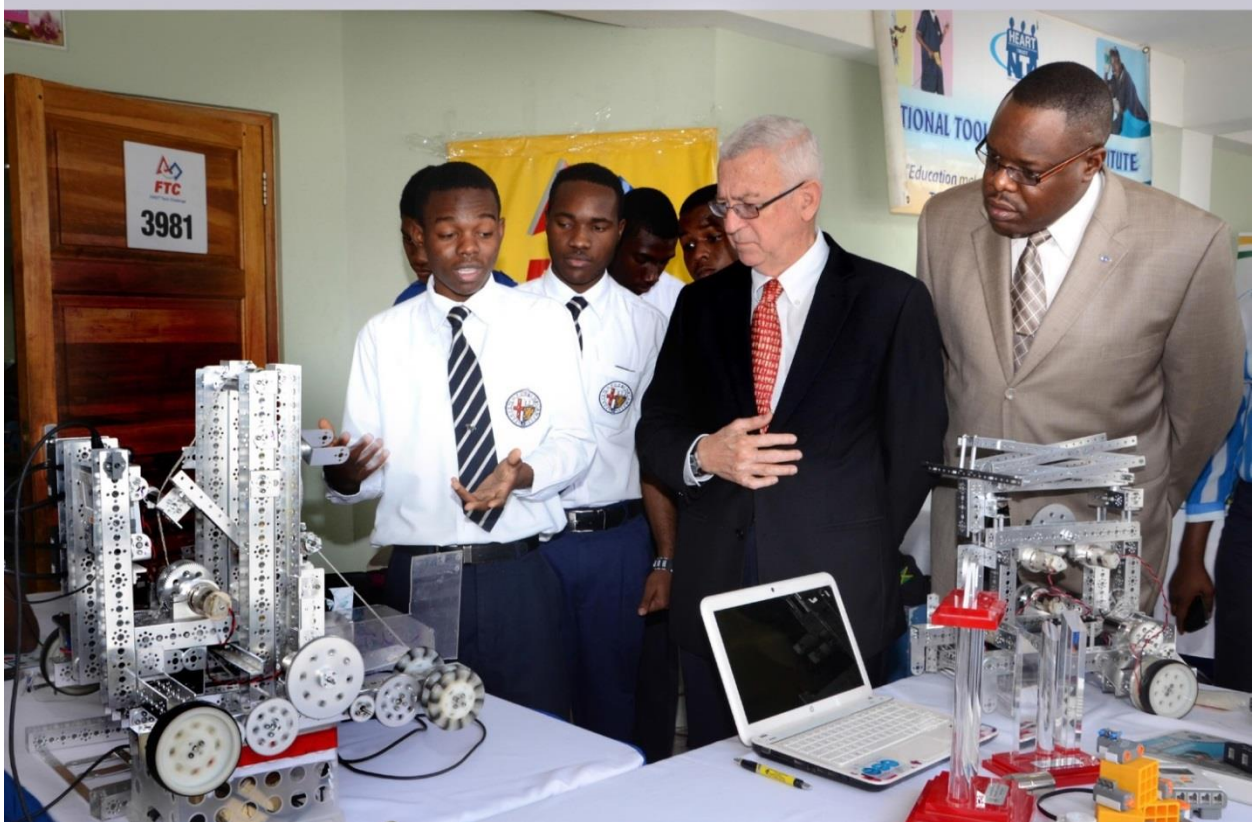
- It is our determination that by 2017, all students should graduate with at least one marketable skill among the suite of subjects in which they all sit examinations. Mr Speaker we now have a policy to guide the TVET Integration Programme in our schools.
- To this end, last September we introduced into fifty-four (54) secondary schools, five new occupational skills as follows:
 1. Call Centre Operations
 2. Digital Animation
 3. Crop Production
 4. Food and Beverage
 5. Motor Vehicle Repair (Air Conditioning)

There are many more to come – all dictated by the needs of the economy.

- The Ministry of Education and HEART Trust/NTA will this year double the training for more than two hundred and fifty (250) teachers who can guide new students to Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) and National Vocational Qualification of Jamaica (NVQJ) examinations. All this is to boost **student achievement**.
- In the past, we trained in skills without sufficient linkage to workforce opportunities. We know that education has to be liberal and that human

development involves more than being work ready. It is also about developing good citizens – a matter of balance. But in our situation, much more weight must be given to acquiring those skills which will attract investors and equip our young people to work and thrive here and anywhere in the world.

- Mr Speaker, we are on track to fully integrate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in the education system in a formal way. Our technical schools and other selected schools will be among the first to begin this integration. STEM is now being used as a pillar in the development of the new curriculum from grade one to grade nine.
- Mr Speaker as we make this important change an audit is currently being conducted to ascertain the needs for science in our schools. This will result in the upgrading of science laboratories and provision of equipment in our high schools. Micro-science kits will also be provided at the upper primary level to ensure the proper preparation of those students for high school.
- HEART will be helping us in this regard. Levels one and two NVQJ programmes must become more available to the secondary school cohort.



“We are on track to fully integrate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in the education system in a formal way. Our technical schools and other selected schools will be among the first to begin this integration.”

Reintegration of school-age mothers into the formal education system

- Mr Speaker, let there be no doubt, it is our stated policy that any student who becomes pregnant must be offered a place to continue her education as soon as feasible after delivery. Five thousand copies of the policy have been circulated and ensuring instructions have been issued to all school leaders.

6. BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

- It is estimated that we are wasting up to twenty percent (20%) of instructional time and adding unnecessary stress to our teachers “big time” just to get a few of our students to behave “properly” at school. It gets worse after school hours, aggravated by the shift system, large number of unsupervised children and the free-for-all at the Transport Centre and town squares. This is bigger than the school system can handle on its own.
- Broadly speaking, Mr Speaker, popular Jamaican youth culture is not conducive to student achievement. This society and this House need to face reality and decide what we are going to do about this problem. We are in denial right now.
- Notwithstanding this, our children spend on average 12 years in school, so we have to start there, to do better with what we have.
- We want to catch these tendencies at the earliest stage, so the Ministry will be implementing new programmes to support behaviour modification. These will all fall under a National Inter-Sectoral Steering Committee chaired by Professor Fred Hickling.

- Dr Elizabeth Ward, Dr Kim Scott, Mrs Pauletta Chevannes and a team of specialists will be responsible for the overall implementation working with the Ministry's line officers. The Committee has proposed a three-year Behaviour Modification Plan using the life cycle approach as follow:
 - focusing on the first 1000 days
 - a resiliency promoting service for 8-12 years olds
 - an adolescent behaviour modification service for 12-18 year olds
 - a young adult training and job promoting service for 19-25 year olds.

Elements of these programmes have already worked at Allman Town, George Headley, and Seaview Primary Schools.

- In the first year the MOE programme will focus on the 8-12 year old age group. A programme promoting resilience will start in fifty (50) schools across the five parishes with the highest levels of crime and violence. At these schools there will be a process of capacity building and interventions put in place based on identified needs.
- The programme will focus on literacy support, use of sports and creative activities, life skills training, parenting and nutritional support. It will also include after-school activities and structured summer camps for children at risk. The programme will be data driven and guided by experienced personnel.
- This is aimed at successfully increasing literacy and reducing the risk of violence while improving the overall behaviour, values and attitudes of attending students. The programme will hone the skills of the teachers and support the positive involvement of parents and the community. The programme will be rolled out to additional schools over a three year period.
- Mr Speaker, one aspect of the behaviour modification programme is the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) Framework. The

Ministry of Education has developed this behaviour intervention framework and piloting has started in fifty-six (56) of the neediest schools in the country. It places emphasis on the:

- prevention of problem behaviour
 - development of pro-social skills
 - use of data-based problem solving for addressing existing behaviour concerns.
-
- Mr Speaker, I underscore the point that although it is a small percentage of the student population that displays these anti-social tendencies, we regard it as very important to help them to cope and develop into productive citizens.



“The Ministry will enter into a partnership with the Voluntary Organisation for the Upliftment of Children (VOUCH) to establish the institution as a diagnostic, assessment, and treatment centre for children with special needs at the early childhood level, particularly from ages two up to eight.”

Rejuvenation of Valuable Pathways in Schools

- Mr Speaker, we hear the cry and feel the need for a renewed values and attitudes programme. The schools have a part to play and must start doing so now. It is intertwined with student achievement.
- The Valuable Pathways Programme, an initiative on values and attitude, which was implemented in 2004 in our Technical High Schools, will be reintroduced as part of Prof. Fred Hickling's intervention. This programme will include a direct focus on positive values being inculcated in all schools. All personnel in the system, including education officers, principals, and teachers will be sensitized and trained before the full roll out.
- Mr Speaker, other values and attitude programmes such as the Respect Agenda, led by Mr Reginald Budhan and the Office of the Governor General, and the programme launched by the College of Agriculture Science and Education (CASE) last week are two positive examples that will go a far way in helping to develop positive behaviour traits in our children.
- So, I welcome the call from the Member for North East Manchester for all of us to be united in ensuring the building of character through what we do in education.

Diagnostic Centres

- Mr Speaker, we budgeted for the establishment of three diagnostic centres last year; this was, however, stalled by the procurement process. We are now on track for these to be established during this financial year. The centres will be established at the College of Agriculture Science and Education as well as the Sam Sharpe and Church Teachers' Colleges.

- In the new academic year, Mr Speaker, the Ministry will enter into a partnership with the Voluntary Organisation for the Upliftment of Children (VOUCH) to establish the institution as a diagnostic, assessment, and treatment centre for children with special needs at the early childhood level, particularly from ages two to eight years old.
- The Ministry of Education has planned for twenty (20) “pull-out” classrooms specially designed for children with special educational needs to be established in schools across the island.
- Further Mr Speaker, the Regional Office in Portland will be establishing two rooms at the regional offices to be used for the diagnosis of children with special needs. They are also refurbishing spaces at two (2) schools that will provide intervention and support to over 100 children.
- Mr Speaker, I make mention of the work being undertaken in Portland because of the special circumstances facing our children in this region. They are disadvantaged by the terrain, the weather conditions and access to some resources, for example, the internet. In all national assessments of student achievement and CSEC, as well as attendance, the region falls below the national average. We must fix it.

Uniformed Groups in Schools Programme

- Mr Speaker, our efforts to establish uniformed groups have yielded, to date, one hundred and five (105) new formations making the total number of groups in schools to over four hundred (400). We have exceeded the target set and the number continues to grow.

- The overarching goal behind the establishment of these groups has been the inculcation of wholesome values in the lives of the youngsters. Although no formal study has been conducted specifically to determine the effect of the uniformed groups on the general discipline and conduct of students, the reports suggest that boys and girls who have become members of these groups, and who were previously prone to undisciplined behaviour, have demonstrated marked improvement. Some have even begun to be role models.
- A dedicated training officer has been assigned to the Scout Association to assist in increasing the number of troops and leaders across the island. Various training workshops have been conducted in parishes including Portland, St Catherine, Kingston and St Andrew and St James.
- The Jamaica Combined Cadet Force has undertaken a massive recruitment drive for officers to be assigned to units without leaders and to bring new units on stream for the next academic year.
- Discussions are being held with the Caribbean Maritime Institute to introduce its Maritime Cadet Corps programme into ten (10) pilot secondary schools for the new academic year.



“During 2014 the Ministry of Education will begin educational broadcasting, through the Education Broadcasting Network (EBN), as an aid and supplement to classroom instruction. We propose to deliver aspects of the curriculum by electronic media: tablet, smartphone, television, and radio to offer options to students who learn differently”

7. VIRTUAL EDUCATION

Education Broadcasting Network (EBN)

- Mr Speaker, during 2014 the Ministry of Education will begin educational broadcasting, through the Education Broadcasting Network (EBN), as an aid and supplement to classroom instruction. We propose to deliver aspects of the curriculum by electronic media: tablet, smartphone, television, and radio to offer options to students who learn differently.
- Raising the national level of **student achievement** requires that more students wherever they are, whether rich or poor, must have access to high quality engaging and informative lessons. Students will be able to access lessons in their homes and elsewhere and therefore able to learn at their own pace.
- The EBN will produce educational programmes that will engage students, using animation, cartoon, mystery, drama and adventure in an age appropriate manner, and with the infusion of values and attitude.
- Mr Speaker the EBN will work with partners – public ones such as the Creative Production and Training Centre (CPTC), Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica (PBCJ) and private partners as Jamaica Education Television (JET) and DC Digital to produce and broadcast digital content.
- The Ministry has signed a number of MOU's in this regard and test transmissions are on Jamaican Educational Television (JET), channel 117 on FLOW, seven (7) days a week from 9:30 am to 7:00 pm. DC Digital will begin transmissions in May on FLOW channel 670, and on Love-TV, Monday to Friday 16:00 to 18:00 and 21:00 to 23:00 and weekend for a total of 27 hours. We have received unsolicited requests from Cable TV providers in several parishes to join

the Education Broadcasting Network. We expect to partner with all in our surge toward **student achievement**.

- Further, Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education is working with the Universal Service Fund to afford content appropriate to the new curriculum and the development of the character of the Jamaican youth.
- The EBN will deliver programmes for Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary school students but the Ministry has other audiences to serve, for e.g. 25,000 teachers; principals and bursars who we cannot afford to move to hotels for meetings and training sessions. Our out-of-school and adult learners pursuing the High School Diploma Equivalency (HSDE) island-wide are also crucial. In time, the Education TV Guide will be a household item for all students to find their desired programme. I ask your support for this initiative.

8. TEXTBOOKS

- This year, Mr Speaker, the Ministry has allocated over \$900 million to the textbook programme. Without any detriment to our students, the text book cycle has been adjusted to save over \$88 million from the current textbook budget to be redirected to other important areas. The cycle for books scheduled for three-years has been extended to five (5) years, and those books on the five-year cycle must last for seven (7) years.
- We have to take better care of what costs so much. So parents you must insist that your children make good use of the books and take care of them.
- The Ministry of Education is appealing to principals, in recognition of the economics of the time, to ask parents to buy only books that are absolutely

necessary. I invite Members of Parliament to ensure this happens when you are providing your back-to-school support.

- Mr Speaker, for the first time the Ministry of Education has reviewed all booklists from the schools and will be approving the list of books for schools to give parents to purchase at the different grades. **No book lists are to be issued by schools unless approved by the Ministry.**
- **Parents should not be spending more than an average of \$5,000 on supplementary texts at the primary level and no more than \$12,000 at grades seven to nine at the secondary level.**



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Attitude to Learning

- Mr Speaker, a number of our students are not achieving their full potential for various reasons. Some of them lack the will to learn and perform. They lack self-confidence, demonstrate low self-esteem and some have acquired a less than desirable value system.
- To address this, we have begun to broaden the civics programme. We had indicated that other national heroes would have been included following the input about Rt. Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey last year. We have had consultations and taken the decision to focus for this year on the founders of modern Jamaica: Rt. Excellent Alexander Bustamante and Rt. Excellent Norman Washington Manley.
- Accordingly, the Ministry of Education has commissioned the writing and publication of two series which will help supplement the Ministry's social studies curriculum, "Founding Fathers of Modern Jamaica" and "Heroes of Jamaica: People of Purpose."
- Mr Speaker, these series will seek to infuse values of respect for self and others, love for learning, innovation and achievement, and promote civility, self-sufficiency and interdependence within community. They will reaffirm and appropriate the positive attributes of being a Jamaican. These works are a subset of the Ministry's Behaviour Modification Programme which seeks to heal fractures and counter moral decline in our society. Eventually, I would love to see these stories of inspiring Jamaicans made into film documentaries.

9. SCHOOL FEEDING

- Mr Speaker, you will recall that earlier I stated that the Ministry of Education will be providing breakfast and lunch for 138,000 students or seventy percent (70%) of the early childhood cohort to the tune of \$1.05 billion.
- PATH beneficiaries will continue to receive a free lunch three days per week. This will cost us \$2.4 billion. Mr Speaker, can we ask parents to contribute between \$45 and \$60 per day of the cost of the meal for the other two days?
- There is another group of our children, about thirty percent (30%) of the school population not on PATH but are vulnerable. Sometimes they have lunch money, sometimes they do not. For this group, Mr Speaker, we will expect parents to pay about fifty percent (50%) of the cost of their lunch whenever they can afford it.
- We also have children whose families experience a crisis from time to time; we will ask our principals to continue to look out for these children and feed them as and when necessary.
- Government will no longer purchase, store or distribute large quantities of imported commodities such as tinned corned beef, tinned mackerel, flour and cornmeal. The school feeding menu will use, as far as possible, locally produced protein: meat, peas, beans and eggs.

10. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL)

- Mr Speaker, school leadership is the most critical determinant in improving student achievement. The National Education Inspectorate underscores this. We believe that those who lead learning must be learners themselves.
- The programme for the continuous development of principals has been spearheaded by the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL). To date NCEL has exposed four hundred and fifty (450) principals and education officers in round one of the Effective Principals' Training Programme. Twenty-five (25) principals who lead schools in volatile communities across the country received training support, and two hundred and twelve (212) school leaders (primary and high school) participated in a Leadership of Math Workshop. This was delivered in partnership with the National Mathematics Team. NCEL will this financial year continue the training of principals and introduce leadership programme for bursars and middle managers in schools.
- In an effort to support the thrust towards improving accountability, the College has created a training charter. Additionally, boards of management have been asked to give oversight to ensure their principals successfully fulfil post-training requirements. Unfortunately, more than twenty percent (20%) of participating principals, so far, have not complied despite the urging of their Union. This is not acceptable. Their performance will have implications for tenure and licensing.
- The College has introduced, in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, the Aspiring Principals' Programme, which is a competency-based programme that prepares individuals for the rigors of effective school leadership and administration in Jamaica. Fellowships have been awarded to some forty

(40) of two hundred seventy-eight (278) applicants. The first cohort is on an accelerated pathway and will complete the programme in October 2014.



“NCEL ... has designed a programme for the coaching and mentorship of system and school leaders. The programme, which will be fully implemented at the start of the 2014 academic year, aims to develop among leaders in the sector additional capacity to improve their competencies and increase their outputs.”

- Upon successful completion individuals will be awarded a Professional Qualification for Principalship (PQP) which is a certification pitched at the postgraduate level. This, therefore, allows for matriculation to other graduate programmes at the UWI and other tertiary institutions. With the passage of relevant legislation, it is expected that the PQP will become a part of the national qualifications framework that is being developed.

Coaching

- NCEL, with technical assistance from the University of Florida and the British Council, has designed a programme for the coaching and mentorship of education officers and school leaders. The programme, which will be fully implemented at the start of the 2014 academic year, aims to develop among leaders in the sector additional capacity to improve their competencies and increase their outputs.

Accountability

- More than eighty percent (80%) of the appeals to the Teachers' Appeal Tribunal are allowed on procedural grounds and the substantive charges are most often never determined. Revision of the Code of Regulations and improved training for boards and principals should ensure a better administration of justice and greater accountability in the education system during this year.

National Education Inspectorate

- The National Education Inspectorate has completed one hundred and twenty-nine (129) inspections over the year. This baseline work has so far covered over 808 schools. The data from this study has informed the current interventions for

school improvement. Again, Mr Speaker, we have met and exceeded our expected target.

- School boards and principals are responsible for the successful implementation of School Improvement Plans. They will be held accountable for their success.

11. TEACHERS

Salary arrears

- Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Finance has committed to pay all verified arrears owed to teachers by the end of August as agreed with the JTA.

Tuition Refund

- We gave the assurance that we would try and settle the fifty percent (50%) refund of tuition. Every month the Ministry of Education makes payments on all settled claims.
- Whatever is owed must be paid to our teachers. In return we expect that teachers will conduct themselves professionally and be accountable to add value to their students.

Job Portal

- In order to assist our teachers to find jobs, the Ministry has developed a Teachers' Job Match web portal which will link teachers seeking jobs with

potential employers locally and overseas. About eight hundred (800) teachers have already registered and posted their resumes on the website.

China Recruitment

- Mr Speaker, overseas trips undertaken by my Ministry have resulted in benefits to the education sector. Arising from our visit to China, funded primarily by the Chinese Government, I am happy to report that a total of fifty-nine (59) teachers are being recruited to fill positions at high schools, kindergarten, primary and junior high schools, senior vocational high schools and tertiary institutions in the academic year 2014-2015. Nearly three hundred (300) persons applied for these positions via the teachers' job portal. This is just the beginning of a huge opportunity.
- As a result of this same visit, Mr Speaker, six (6) Jamaicans will take up scholarship offers to Shanghai during the summer of 2014.
- I am also told that Jamaican teachers of English are doing so well in Japan that the number to be recruited this year will likely increase.



“The University of West Indies and the Teachers’ Colleges of Jamaica are collaborating to jointly award the bachelor’s degree in education. The colleges must meet the standards of the UWI for the degrees to be awarded.”

12. TERTIARY EDUCATION

Teachers' Colleges

- It is vital to improve the quality of entrants and standards of outcomes in all our teachers' colleges.
- Mr Speaker, I am pleased to report that the University of West Indies and the Teachers' Colleges of Jamaica are collaborating to jointly award the bachelor's degree in education. The colleges must meet the standards of the UWI for the degrees to be awarded. This is in keeping with the strategic approach to streamlining tertiary institutions.

UTech & UWI

- Mr Speaker, the government funds two universities, one regional - The University of the West Indies (UWI) - and one national - University of Technology (UTech). Our policy is to avoid un-strategic duplication and get best value from our investments in these institutions.
- Competition in education will foster innovation, but it must be healthy and progressive. Harvard and MIT are neighbours in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They are complementary campuses and no one confuses them. Our policy is to have the same relationship between UWI and UTech. Mr Speaker, UTech is our national university; we are determined it should become the MIT of the Caribbean.
- Mr Speaker, you will recall that UTech was the subject of some internal controversy last year and as a result certain actions were taken by this Ministry. I am pleased to report the Ministry's intervention through the Jamaica Tertiary

Education Commission (J-TEC) was salutary, as a special committee chaired by Ambassador Derrick Heaven has delivered its report to the UTech Council, which is now considering its recommendations.

- The Council has invited Ambassador Burchell Whiteman to act as interim President from June 1, 2014 to February 2015. I wish to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister for releasing him to undertake this special assignment.
- Mr Speaker, Prof Errol St Y. Morrison is a distinguished academic and I congratulate him on his call to higher service in the area of science and technology. His record at UTech stands tall and may he use this larger canvas to do Jamaica proud.

13. AGENCIES

HEART Trust/NTA

- Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that from now on, HEART Trust/NTA will turn away no one who applies for training without the necessary grade 9 level competencies. You will be channelled into the High School Diploma Equivalency (HSDE) programme and then have a promised place in an area of HEART Trust/NTA training. Allowance will be made for those with challenges who won't manage the HSDE programme offered by the Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL).
- National Vocational Qualifications of Jamaica (NVQJ), levels one and two ought to be located in the secondary system and existing community based and

workplace centres. Higher levels of training will be available at the workforce colleges in HEART.

- As examples, visit the Brazilian-aided HEART College of Construction Services in Portmore where the most advanced programmes in building, equipment, and maintenance are certifiable at world-class standards.
- This year we will establish the Advanced College of Automotive Technology in conjunction with Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC) to be located at the Lyndhurst Road Depot.
- Work will begin at the Machado Complex in a range of competencies all aligned with the Caribbean Maritime Institute (CMI) to meet the needs of the maritime sector and the logistics hub.
- HEART Trust/NTA must train to meet the needs of the economy. And HEART Trust/NTA will become more flexible. It is not prudent to continue training persons for oversupplied industries. Divest those areas and move on.
- Graduates must have appropriate competencies and appropriate attitudes. Both, not one or the other.

Logistics Hub Training:

- HEART Trust/NTA is collaborating with the Caribbean Maritime Institute (CMI) to expand its capacity to offer training for the Logistics Hub.



“National Vocational Qualifications of Jamaica (NVQJ), levels one and two ought to be located in the secondary system and existing community based and workplace centres. Higher levels of training will be available at the workforce colleges in HEART.”

Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) Facilitation

- HEART Trust/NTA is a key facilitator of the BPO industry and has commenced collaboration with the Business Processing Industry Association of Jamaica (BPIAJ) in building capacity and fostering growth in the sector, with over four hundred (400) individuals in training.
- HEART Trust/NTA will deepen linkages with the industry by partnering with the company, Sutherland Global, to provide approximately two hundred (200) incubation work stations at the Gordon Town Road facility.

Community Training Interventions (CTIs)

- Another major area of HEART's involvement will be the Community based Initiatives. \$317 million to be spent in taking skills training into communities across the island. The number of CTIs will increase from eighty-one (81) to ninety-six (96), an increase of twelve and a half percent (12.5%) over the previous year.
- A CTI project now in progress is the training of youths in batches of twenty-five (25) in the maintenance of the National Heroes Park. These individuals were selected from nearby communities. They will be certified in Ornamental Horticulture and landscaping.
- Another project involves the development of the Sedburgh Automotive Skills Training Centre in Christiana, which should commence by January 2015. In addition, a partnership is being finalised between HEART Trust NTA/Ebony Park Academy and St. John Bosco Boys' Home in Manchester to deliver joint programmes in the skills areas of piggery and butchery which are scheduled to commence September 2014.

- The St Anne's campus will offer a broader range of skills to students and community members in the already excellent facilities that are available starting next September.

Alpha Vocational Training Centre

- Partnership with the long established Alpha Boys' Home to offer technical and vocational training in the creative sector. This facility will continue to provide training in music and will add other areas including: graphics, fashion designing, digital animation and skills for the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry.
- A national music academy is envisaged including a special outreach to youth-at-risk for whom music can be an inducement to learning is planned. We are confident the popular music industry and the bands of the security forces will help. The spirit of Alpha will not die. It will grow.

Apprenticeship

- Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that after a gap of some ten (10) years the Apprenticeship Board has been reactivated under the chairmanship of Professor Gossett Oliver of UTech and with strong representation from new industries – BPO, ICT, media and tourism. The board will work closely with HEART Trust/NTA as they modernise and roll out the programme.
- The Apprenticeship programme will provide on-the-job training in technical skills. Five hundred (500) persons are targeted for training in the current financial year, and an allocation of \$30.7 million has been made to facilitate this.

Job Certification

- The HEART Trust/NTA will spearhead an initiative to facilitate on-the-job training and certification which will encompass skills and job readiness training for approximately 20,000 individuals.
- HEART Trust/NTA now offers employers an online facility to recruit employees. Trainees can also apply online.
- Finally Mr Speaker, we congratulate the management and staff of HEART for being awarded as the Jamaica Business Leader 2013 for its contribution to the development of the private sector. We also extend congratulations to the Executive Director of the agency Dr Wayne Wesley on his appointment as Chairman of the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA).



“The Ministry of Education encourages more fully developed schools to partner with less developed ones so that there may be a rising tide of outstanding student achievement all across the education sector.”

Jamaica Library Service

- Mr Speaker, the Jamaica Library Service has received approximately US\$2 million in grant funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to implement a project known as "JLS: Using Technology to Empower Individuals and Communities for Development." This grant, augmented by over USD\$1 million co-funding from the Government of Jamaica will be used to significantly increase the quantity of Information and Communication Technology resources in public libraries island-wide.
- It will also be used to boost public access to information resources and services with the installation of hardware and software.
 - One hundred twenty-seven (127) public libraries will benefit from the Project
 - Six mobile libraries will be provided
 - Approximately 843 state-of-the-art computer systems will be installed
 - Senior citizens, persons from rural communities, the unemployed and persons with disabilities will be direct beneficiaries
 - Project will be launched in November 2014
- The Jamaica Library Service is also the beneficiary of grant funding from the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries under the Sugar Transformation Programme totaling approximately \$58 million. This will be used to enhance the provision of library services in select sugar dependent communities. The projects include the construction and equipping of three (3) new infant school libraries, namely the St. John's and Savanna-la-mar Infant Schools in Westmoreland and Falmouth Infant School in Trelawny.
- In order to improve access to computers and the internet in select sugar dependent communities in Clarendon, Westmoreland St. Elizabeth, Hanover, St.

Thomas and Trelawny, funding of \$10 million has also been approved for the provision of fifty five (55) computers and related equipment for select libraries in these communities.

- A library building will also be constructed at Clarks Town in Trelawny with grant funding approved from the Sugar Transformation Fund totaling \$18 million. Through these various initiatives the Jamaica Library Service is playing a critical role in advancing student achievement.
- The Alexandria Branch Library in St Ann will be upgraded with assistance from the Government of Japan.

14. PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership with Embassies – Language Development

- I use this opportunity, Mr Speaker, to thank the various foreign missions and their leadership here in Jamaica for the many tangible ways they have contributed to student learning and achievement.

Partnership with NGO's Private/Public Entities

- The Ministry of Education continues to benefit from the efforts of the Diaspora in countries such as the United Kingdom. We were fortunate to receive approximately 4,000 pieces of classroom furniture from the Jarrett Foundation.
- Special thanks to the Jamaica Defence Force that has collaborated with us in the refurbishment of over 15 schools.

15. LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- The National Council for Education has reviewed all submissions on the JTC Bill and the 1980 Code of Regulations. Final revised versions of the Education Regulations (2014) and the JTC Bill have been prepared and will be reviewed and then proceed through the legislative process.
- A discussion Bill for the establishment of the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (J-TEC) and the accompanying regulation are now with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel for review.

16. IMF AGREEMENT & EFFICIENCY GAINS/COST SAVINGS

- Mr Speaker, Section 39 of the four-year agreement with the International Monetary Fund states “Spending on education will also be made more efficient and effective”. I am pleased to report that a number of initiatives are in train and yielding early results. For example, Nutrition Products Limited has reduced operating costs by \$75 million in transport, logistics and conversion from diesel to LPG.
- The Ministry of Education has implemented a video conferencing solution in all six Regional Offices. This is projected to save \$25.8 million in reduced travel costs when used by forty percent (40%) of the Ministry’s staff.

Savings from Regional Offices

- Mr Speaker, in addition to the efficiency gains from the application of technology, significant savings accrued as a result of the decision to spend the Education budget more purposefully during the last year. Our six Regional Offices, led by prudent management, and the thoughtful teachers whom willingly opted for voluntary relocation allowed us to contain costs in the regions.
- The close to 200 teachers, who opted for voluntary relocation, did so without any loss of benefits to them. They relocated with their salaries and any other allowances as well as seniority to which they were entitled and previously enjoyed. **Over \$ 900 million was achieved in savings.**
- The significance of their willingness to be redeployed, Mr Speaker, was that it saved the taxpayer from spending additional money to employ new teachers. Instead, existing teachers were placed where they were most needed.

- In addition, one of our regions has saved a total of \$27 million due to innovative cost containment strategies that the staff developed and implemented. We worked with our staff and our teachers, listened to their suggestions for improving the process, and we all benefitted.
- I use this opportunity, Mr Speaker, to express my personal thanks and that of the entire Ministry of Education to our teachers for their sacrifice made in the interest of advancing student achievement, the management of education resources, and the country's development.
- With dialogue and communication we can achieve. It is clear, Mr Speaker, that if we focus on what is good for our children and for our country, and act on this, Jamaica wins!
- But, Mr Speaker, in order to reap efficiency gains in dollar value, it is important that attention be paid to accountability. Through our Human Resource Division and the Professional Development Unit, we have begun to implement our Performance Management Appraisal System (PMAS).

Renewable Energy and Conservation

- Mr Speaker, this year we want as many schools as possible to be equipped with solar panels. The Ministry is dedicated to cutting the energy bill to achieve savings from nearly \$900 million spent on electricity each year. Look at what has happened at Holy Trinity High. Since installing a solar power system in August 2013 the school has reaped reductions in its electricity bills which decreased by some twenty percent (20%) over the last six months.
- We are saying to schools that what you save you can keep for advancing student achievement.

- We are pleased to note the continued support from the PetroCaribe Fund for energy conservation.

18. CONCLUSION

In closing I make reference to the words of one of the world's greatest leaders, the late Nelson Mandela. He said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."

Students, wherever you are, at whatever institution of learning, I say to you, your achievement ultimately rests with you. Put away the guns, knives, fights, disrespect and uncouth behaviour. These are weapons of your destruction.

Instead, regulate yourselves by learning to:

- Set academic goals
- Develop strategies to meet those goals
- Evaluate and reflect on your performance

Then ask yourself, "Am I satisfied?"

It is time for action. You can achieve!