



## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

### **CONTRIBUTION TO SECTORAL DEBATE**

**HON ANDREW HOLNESS, MP**

**MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

**MAY 20, 2008**

#### **Opening Remarks**

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today humbled by the great task that the Nation has placed in our hands. There was a time when some public affairs commentators promoted the view that the JLP did not have the people to be able ministers of government. Those commentators must now be amazed at how we have taken up the gauntlet, even under trying circumstances from hurricanes to high food prices. We have not faltered, we have not stumbled and most of all, we have kept our promises.

#### **Acknowledgements**

Mr. Speaker, my wife and my mother are here with me today, and they more than anyone can tell you how I have dedicated my life to the service of the Nation. Public life can be brutal, ungracious, and ungrateful, today you are a hero and tomorrow you are a villain; such are the vicissitudes of politics. Everyone in this House knows how difficult it is to insulate your family from your job. I think, sometimes the families bear a greater burden than we do. While we have developed thick exoskeletons our families oftentimes suffer in silence. So today I would like to thank my family, particularly my wife and my mother for their unwavering support.

Mr. Speaker, the word constituency is a challenging word in every sense. However, one of the first words my sons learnt was constituency. We had used that word so often in our household that they understood that that is daddy's workplace. So here to support me today, are some of my co-workers from my workplace, including Councillor Delroy Williams, Councillor-Caretaker Glendon Salmon, and Constituency Organisers, Veronica Baker, Elizabeth Lyn, Paula McKenzie and Keith Kitson. I would like to thank them for the invaluable work they have done in securing a 3<sup>rd</sup> term for the JLP in West Central St. Andrew. Since I have been seconded to the Ministry of Education, my constituency time has suffered. However, Mr. Speaker, balance will soon be restored, as we must never forget the people who elected us.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the Prime Minister is overseas and could not be here today. However, I would like to place on record my deep gratitude and appreciation for his consideration for me join the Cabinet and I am further

humbled to be asked to lead the Ministry of Education. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the Prime Minister. Officiousness is a disease of high office, and extravagance can become a feature of the culture of public officials. However, this Prime Minister has led by example, in being frugal, in being personally modest with the entitlements of his office, in declaring himself the servant of the people, in making himself accessible to the Parliament and the people, and most importantly he has kept his promises.

Mr. Speaker, in a low trust environment such as the one in which we live, keeping our word is extremely important. A leadership and governance survey carried out by Lawrence Powell, Paul Bourne and Lloyd Waller and published in the book, "Probing Jamaica's Political Culture", showed that only 7.4% of respondents could say definitively that they trust people in government to keep their promises, while 84.8% of respondents felt that they could not take persons in government at their word. This would not be surprising to most Jamaicans, because as a society we have accepted and have low expectations of trust in our government. However, what is worrying is that as a society we do not trust each other. Only 14.1% of respondent could say definitively that they trust their fellow Jamaican, 83.5% of respondents felt that they could not trust other people in the society.

Oftentimes we overlook the importance of credibility and trust in governance. Lack of trust makes society and social transactions inefficient. It increases the cost of government by forcing governments to spend more on enforcement, instead of benefiting from voluntary compliance. A government that is trusted and credible can get its citizens to change behaviour and cooperate without the need to enforce. Lack of trust increases transaction costs and hinders the formation of social capital. It is important therefore, that the Prime Minister does everything in his power to increase the level of confidence, credibility and trust in the Office and that he sets an example for the rest of the government to follow. In my view he is off to good start and I pray that God will give him the strength of will and the wisdom of mind to continue.

3.1 Trends: Interpersonal trust...

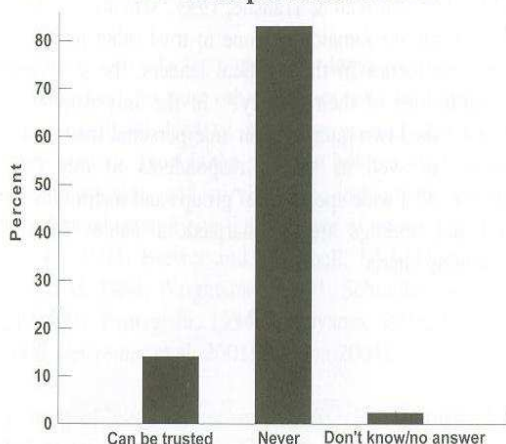


Figure 3.1a

"Would you say that most people can be trusted to keep their promises, or that you can never be too careful when dealing with other people?"

	Frequency	Percent
Can be trusted	189	14.1
Never be too careful	1117	83.5
Don't know/No answer	32	2.4
Total	1338	100.0

3.2 Trends: Trust in government...

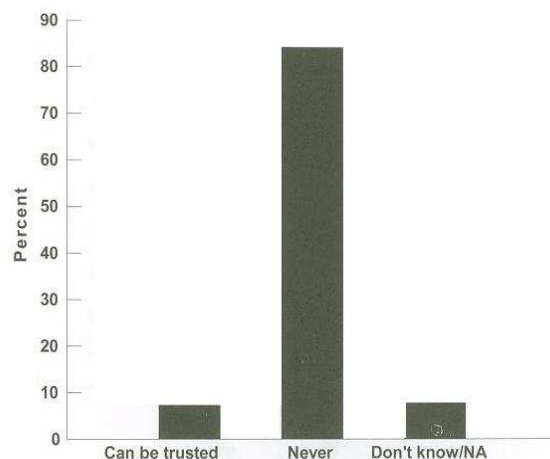


Figure 3.2a

"Would you say most people in government can be trusted to keep their promises, or that you can never be too careful in dealing with people in government?"

	Frequency	Percent
Can be trusted	99	7.4
Never be too careful	1233	84.8
Don't know/no answer	105	7.8
Total	1338	100.0

Figure 1: Reproduced from "Probing Jamaica's Political Culture, Vol I" by Powell, L.A

Mr. Speaker, many members of my senior staff from the Ministry of Education and its subject agencies are here with me today. I am pleased to report that I have found them to be professional and knowledgeable – some having served at all levels of the system. Most important however, I am satisfied that they are all committed to education. The Ministry is presently going through a period of change and there will be more changes to come when the transformation and modernisation of education begins. Change brings uncertainty and if not managed, it can lead to chaos. To manage uncertainty, leadership must clearly communicate a vision and clearly direct all players to that vision. Inevitably however, change will mean sacrifice, but the trade-off in change does not have to be a win/lose game. Change can be beneficial to everyone. Indeed the changes proposed to the structure of the education system under the Education Transformation Programme will benefit the nation significantly.

**TRANSFORMATION**

Mr. Speaker, in October 2003, Members of this House unanimously committed on a bipartisan resolution brought by then Leader of the Opposition Most

Honourable Edward Seaga, and supported by then Prime Minister Most Honourable PJ Patterson, to increase the allocation to the Ministry of Education, to 15% of the total budget over the next 5 years, during which period these funds would be utilised to:

- ✚ Build/rebuild and equip basic schools; (ongoing)
- ✚ Upgrade basic school teachers and train new ones; (ongoing)
- ✚ Develop a comprehensive textbook lending programme for primary and secondary schools; (ongoing)
- ✚ Allocate resources to secondary schools to ensure the quality delivery of education to all students at that level; (ongoing)
- ✚ Improve and expand the School Feeding Programme; (ongoing)
- ✚ Implement a compulsory homework/literacy hour after classes; (to be developed)
- ✚ Eliminate the shift system in all schools; (plan now in place)
- ✚ Upgrade teachers and teacher-training instructors to required degree levels; (ongoing)
- ✚ Provide performance incentives for all teachers; (long term plan)
- ✚ Attain target of 1:25 teacher/pupil ratio at primary level; (long term)
- ✚ Guarantee 5 years of education to all students entering secondary school; (ongoing)
- ✚ Freeze school fees at the 2003/2004 level and eventually remove by 2005/2006; (done)
- ✚ Implement a high school equivalency programme for adults needing secondary education certification. (ongoing)

Out of this bipartisan resolution, the Task Force on Education Reform was launched in February 2004 and a report delivered in September 2004 entitled "A Transformed Education System", or more commonly, the Transformation Report. The Transformation Report made certain recommendations and set certain targets to lead to a transformed system. The Education Transformation Team (ETT) was set up in March 2005 as a special arm of the Ministry of Education to implement the recommendations of the reports and JA\$5 billion was transferred from the NHT to support the work of the ETT. The transformation process has been criticised for being slow in delivering the much anticipated benefits of transformation.

### **Transformation: Role of the New Minister**

Mr. Speaker, my role as it relates to transformation is to do the following:-

- ✚ Given the extensive and costly nature of the proposed transformation exercise, as the policy leader, I have to set the priorities, that is, from the menu of proposals, a selection must be made of what will be done first

- ✚ There is a prevailing feeling in some quarters that transformation is an ongoing process. Philosophically this may be so, but from an operational perspective we must see transformation as the metamorphosis from a caterpillar to a butterfly, moving from one distinct state to another distinct state. Education transformation must mean that the education system evolves perceptibly from its current institutional state to a better institutional state and it must do so in a specified time frame. Mr. Speaker, I must ensure that transformation means real change, I have to set the deadlines for the deliverables of transformation and I have to motivate urgency in our approach.
- ✚ I also have a duty Mr. Speaker to improve the menu of transformation proposals to ensure that the transformation is comprehensive

Mr. Speaker, transformation has been in gestation for almost four years, I intend to deliver the “transformation baby”.

### **Transformation: What does it mean? : Accountability**

The term ‘transformation of education’ has been used so often that those of us close to the process take it for granted that everyone understands what it means. Transformation, if nothing else must mean greater accountability for the outcome and output of the education process. It cannot be Mr. Speaker, that we spend \$54 billion per year on education and we turn out an unacceptably high percentage of illiterate students into our secondary system, and the secondary system in turn demits unadjusted and semi-literate students into the society, and no one is held accountable. It cannot be that we spend close to 90% of the education budget on remuneration and some teachers do not turn up to teach their classes and no one is held accountable. It cannot be that every year 80% of students in a particular primary school fail to achieve mastery at the Grade Four Literacy Test and the teaching staff at that school is not scrutinised. It cannot be that a parent does not know whether his/her child is literate because they never took the time to check what that child is doing at school, and that parent is not held accountable. It cannot be that teacher relations in a school are allowed to deteriorate into a crisis and there is no intervention from the Principal or Regional Office to resolve the issue, and no one is held accountable. **Transformation must mean accountability.**

### **Transformation: What does it mean? : Emphasis on Leadership**

Mr. Speaker, lack of resources is oftentimes blamed for the varied output of the education system and the startling achievement gaps at the Grade Four Literacy Test (GFLT), Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) and the Caribbean

Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination. Undoubtedly, this is true, but I invite you to consider that there are some primary schools in challenging circumstances that perform on par with well resourced preparatory schools. Mr. Speaker at the secondary level, the performance gap between traditional high schools and upgraded high schools is worrying. It continues to perpetuate the "Two Jamaicas" syndrome. However, there are some upgraded high schools that perform on par with the average traditional high school. The reverse is also true, there are some traditional schools which perform at the level of the better performing upgraded schools. Many principals of upgraded high schools will tell you that their physical plant is newer and better equipped than most traditional high schools. From my observations, Mr. Speaker, the resource problem in schools is not so much the binding constraint, having the necessary resource is a sufficient condition for improving performance, however, the necessary condition for standardising and improving output and performance is leadership. Invariably, any school that is performing well has strong leadership. The varied output and the wide disparity in performance is primarily due to differences in leadership – leadership in the classroom, leadership of the principal, leadership of the school board, leadership of the education officer. Transformation then, Mr. Speaker, necessarily means a **focus on leadership**.

#### **Transformation: What does it mean? : Emphasis on Efficiency**

For any given resource constraint good leadership will maximise performance for that given constraint and will eventually, independently loosen the binding resource constraint. What does this mean? Consider a principal in St. James that takes over a small primary school with four classrooms, four teachers and 200 children. That principal may organise the resources available to him in the most efficient manner to yield the maximum result possible in GFLT and GSAT from a combination of classrooms, one teacher to 50 students. Eventually, that principal may mobilise all the resources available to him into a mission to build two additional classrooms. The only part the Ministry of Education may end up playing is cutting the ribbon at the dedication ceremony. There are many principals like that, Mr. Speaker, that are efficient in maximising their output and performance given their resource constraint. Transformation means a **focus on efficiency**.

#### **Transformation: What does it mean? : Minimum Standards**

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, not all school leadership demonstrates the level of efficiency and initiative just mentioned. Many of our educational institutions are operating below efficient levels, so before we start to throw more money at our low performance problems we need to ensure that we are getting the best

possible results from the money which we are already spending. To achieve this efficiency the Ministry of Education needs to support and empower school leadership at all levels. The resource management strategies and other best practices used by successful school leaders, in addition to policies and regulations set by the Central Ministry, must be propagated system-wide. To tackle the varied performance amongst schools, and the disparate performance between schools, minimum standards of performance must be established and invigilated.

Recently, a principal referred to the Chief Education Officer a new set of mass produced exercise books introduced into the market, which displayed substantially exposed women on the covers. The principal was obviously offended and concerned about this exposure and the subliminal messages which it was sending to his students. The principal was uncertain as to what action should be taken. Maybe he feared that if he decided to prohibit those exercise books he would face the ire of parents who could not afford a new set of exercise books. This principal may be a good leader but feels he is in a weak circumstance and needs the support of the Ministry to guide and legitimise his actions. In a second scenario, another principal faced with the same circumstance, may not see the exercise books as a cause for concern or a matter deserving his attention, therefore, no action is taken. Still, in a third scenario, another principal may decide immediately that these exercise books are not appropriate for his/her school and prohibit them without reference to the Ministry. This would be a strong principal who was confident in the support of the parents, the community and the school board. In the three scenarios I presented, there would be two outcomes, in scenario one and two, inappropriate books would be allowed in school, while in scenario three they would not be allowed. Students in the education system would have two different education experiences and outcomes.

In transforming the education system we must ensure that minimum standards are set so that strong school leadership, as in the first scenario is properly guided by the establishment of minimum standards and supported in their actions to implement the standards by the imprimatur of the Ministry of Education. In the second scenario, the school leadership would be held accountable against the established minimum standard and the quality of the educational experience and outcome would not be so dependent on the judgment and initiative of the school leadership. Mr. Speaker transformation means **setting and monitoring minimum standards.**

**Transformation: What does it mean? : Constantly Improving Standards**

Setting minimum standards will standardise the education experience, but improving performance requires a constant process of raising standards and challenging school leaders to attain them.

Mr. Speaker transformation means that everyone in the education system from students to teachers to principals to parents will be constantly challenged to **improve** their **standards and performance**.

**Transformation: What does it mean? : Data Driven**

A feature of transformation is that it must be measurable. To constantly challenge leaders to improve performance we must actively measure performance to determine areas of needed improvement. The transformed system will be data driven. Throughout the system data will be constantly collected, collated, and analysed. Data will drive policy, inform incentive structures, assist in goal setting and provide an index of exactly where we are in education. Mr. Speaker, transformation means **data**.

**Transformation: What does it mean? : Learner Centered Service**

The transformed education system will be learner-centered. The purpose of transforming the education system is to produce better Jamaicans. The transformed education system must be rights-based; in this country education is not a right. We are now contemplating explicitly making primary education a right in the proposed Bill of Rights. Under the transformed system the State will have an obligation to provide every Jamaican with a secondary education up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Under the transformed system education will not be optional, it will be compulsory. It will not be a privilege, it will be treated as a right, and the **education system will be geared to towards serving the needs of the learner**.

***How will we achieve accountability, strong leadership, efficiency, standardisation, consistent improvement in performance, and service orientation in the transformed system?***

**Transformation through Modernisation**

Mr. Speaker, the *Public Sector Modernisation Vision and Strategy 2002-2012* was tabled in Parliament in September 2002, outlining the implementation of a programme - Public Sector Reform / Modernisation. The reform programme was to be implemented under four broad headings:-

- ✚ Customer Service / Service Delivery and the Establishment of Performance Based Institutions
- ✚ Resource Management Accountability, Policy Development and Corporate Planning

- ✚ Human Resource and Change Management
- ✚ Information and Communication Technology

The Ministry of Education was one of the selected ministries in the public sector that was slated to be modernised/reformed along the lines of a Performance Based Institution (PBI). Under the modernisation programme, the departments, units and some subject areas will be developed into decentralised institutions which will take the form of executive agencies or operate under the principles of executive agencies though not necessarily having the legal identity of executive agencies. The modernised structure will mean that the Ministry of Education will be refocused towards: policy development, strategic planning, and management of outputs and outcomes delivered by the PBIs / executive entities within the education portfolio. The transformation of departments, divisions and agencies into Performance Based Institutions (PBIs), essentially means these new agencies will not be a part of the regular civil service design. Employees will have performance-based contracts and this should mean more efficient and effective delivery of services, standardised outputs and improved levels of performance.

### **New Institutions that will Transform the Education System**

Mr. Speaker, the process of modernising the Ministry of Education will provide the framework in which the transformed education system is governed. As said before, an Education Task Force was established to synchronise the many transformation activities. Transformation activities were divided into six work-streams:-

- ✚ Modernisation of the Ministry
- ✚ Schools Facilities and Infrastructure
- ✚ Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
- ✚ Behaviour Change and Community
- ✚ School Leadership and Management
- ✚ Communications and Stakeholder Relations

The main elements of the modernization programme are:-

- ✚ The creation of five Regional Education Authorities (REAs), with greater autonomy and a much stronger focus on improving schools
- ✚ The creation of five new agencies to focus on the main drivers of transformation: improving monitoring, accountability and quality assurance; curriculum and assessment; and transforming the teaching profession. The new agencies will be:-
  - The National Education Inspectorate
  - The Curriculum and Assessment Agency
  - The Jamaican Teaching Council
  - National Education Trust
  - Jamaica Educational Leadership Academy

- ✚ A smaller central Ministry focused on policy and strategy and not encumbered by day-to-day operational matters

Mr Speaker, transforming the education system is a mammoth task and given the financial and human resource constraints we will not be able to do everything all at once. We have therefore set priorities. The establishment of the Jamaica Teaching Council and the National Education Inspectorate (NEI) are set for implementation this year. The REAs are particularly complex and will involve human resource and infrastructure changes that have to be properly planned and managed. The ETT therefore will first focus on the implementation of one REA to be done parallel to the implementation of the National Education Inspectorate. It will be used as a pilot that will guide the phased implementation of the other REAs.

The National Education Trust is a new proposition to the modernisation framework but it is considered a priority and will be implemented early next year. The creation of a smaller policy ministry is entirely dependent on the pace of the establishment of the new Agencies and REAs, as they are developed, the Ministry will delegate functions or hand-over duties completely. The Curriculum and Assessment Agency is not considered a priority for immediate implementation at this time.

The Jamaica Educational Leadership Academy (JELA) will develop leadership training, focusing on competencies and individual development for Jamaica's school leaders. It is proposed to establish a national professional qualification for principals which will become a prerequisite for appointment as a principal. Jamaica Educational Leadership Academy (JELA) will develop and oversee the delivery of the course leading to the national qualification. This agency is not slated to be established in the current phase.

The first stage of implementation has been completed for the REAs and all new prioritised agencies except the NET. Detailed documentation of their proposed operation and terms of reference have been prepared/or are being prepared.

These include:-

- ✚ Schemes of management for the new agencies
- ✚ Staffing structures and job descriptions
- ✚ Medium term finance plans
- ✚ Key performance indicators for the modernised bodies
- ✚ Performance agreements for the CEOs
- ✚ Recommendations for consequential amendments to the legislative framework for the new bodies

Let me take some time explain the new institutions that will deliver 'transformation':-

### **The Jamaican Teaching Council**

Mr. Speaker, recently I got a note from someone who was distressed by a recent incident where teachers were shown on a news report demonstrating. The note read:

*"Minister, is there nothing you can do to penalise those teachers who were seen demonstrating on television? Couldn't that be treated as professional misconduct and be the basis for their dismissal? I was a teacher and it was inconceivable that any teacher during my stint in the classroom would behave in that manner. Teachers are destroying their profession and you must act quickly to halt this worrying trend. Teachers are more than just instructors in the classroom, they are role models in the society, if this is allowed to continue it will become more difficult for teachers to lead students as they would have lost all moral authority. Please Minister, the situation is urgent..."*

There is a process under the Teacher Services Commission where unprofessional conduct could be treated, however, only teachers registered with the Teacher Services Commission would fall under its purview. The school board could take action to reprimand those teachers but their action could be rendered ineffective by the tedious processes involved.

Mr. Speaker, we have approximately 25,000 teachers and they account for close to 80% of the education budget. With such a large body, teaching in Jamaica is not an 'organised profession' in the strictest sense. The JTA has been playing the role of a professional body for teachers for many years. And I want to commend the JTA for the work they have been doing in the area of professional development for teachers. However, the primary role of the JTA is that of a union. The primary function of a professional body is to protect and preserve the standards of ethics, conduct and performance of those it has given a franchise. It has the ability to say who is fit to be a member of the profession and who is not. It can take disciplinary actions against its members including withdrawal of the franchise to operate, and it can also set schemes of reward and recognition.

Teachers need a professional body in much the same way as accountants have the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Jamaica (ICAJ), and Lawyers have the Bar Association and the General Legal Council. I am pleased to report Mr. Speaker that one of the first performance based institutions that will be set up under the modernization of the Ministry of Education is the Jamaican Teaching Council. This new institution will be

clothed with the statutory power to regulate, license, and advocate for the teaching profession. The JTC is based on successful international models, and is being established to:-

- ✚ Raise the status and profile of the profession
- ✚ Provide professional leadership for teachers
- ✚ Maintain and enhance professional standards
- ✚ Regulate, register and license the profession
- ✚ Review and oversee conditions of service
- ✚ Advise on teacher supply, demand, and deployment
- ✚ Provide strategic direction on training and professional development

We expect to have a Chief Executive Officer in place by September 2008, and this would mark the formal establishment of the JTC. A scheme of management has already been developed and the CEO will be charged to implement the scheme of management as it relates to hiring additional staff, identifying office space and procuring equipment. In the interim the Teachers Services Commission (TSC) will continue to operate as before but eventually it will play the role of the governing board of the JTC and the JTC will act as the executing arm of the TSC. By September 2009 the JTC should be fully operational and ready to register, license and regulate all teachers.

### **The National Education Inspectorate**

Mr. Speaker, every year Dr. Ralph Thompson produces a ranking of schools by their CSEC results and every year the nation is appalled at the poor performance of our schools. The quality of our education process is being called into question, as the results would suggest that students are put on a conveyor belt and no value is added to them at the end of the process.

The National Education Inspectorate will be established as the quality control and assurance mechanism across the education system. Currently a limited form of inspection is done but there is inadequate follow up from inspection reports and schools are not held accountable for implementing recommendations arising from inspections. The National Education Inspectorate will:

- ✚ Provide a rigorous, independent evaluation of schools against set standards
- ✚ Undertake a comprehensive programme of inspection of those institutions whose work impacts on schools including REAs themselves
- ✚ Inspect all schools in its first two years
- ✚ Monitor improvements in weak and failing schools and ensure appropriate remedial action is taken
- ✚ Hold REAs to account for ensuring that improvements take place

- ✚ Publish an annual report on the standards and quality of education in Jamaica's schools
- ✚ Publish inspection reports in accordance with the terms of the Access to Information Act
- ✚ Recommend minimum standards and policy initiatives to the Ministry of Education

The Inspectorate will insist on the very highest professional standards by inspectors, particularly in the rigorous use of evidence and data in forming judgements and making recommendations. It will provide high quality advice to Parliament and to the Ministry of Education. It will have a certain level of independence and the Inspector of Schools is expected to be an advocate for school improvement. For the first time in our modern history we will be able to determine exactly what is happening in our schools, have clear evaluations on underperformance and nonperformance of school leadership at all levels to inform the process of accountability.

The Ministry has already shortlisted persons for the post of Chief Inspector of Schools and we expect by September 2008 to have selected the Chief Inspector. A scheme of management has already been prepared and once hired the Chief Inspector will begin to implement the scheme of management as it relates to hiring additional staff, finding office space and equipment and preparing for inspections. The National Inspectorate of Schools should be conducting inspection by the latest September 2009.

### **Regional Education Authorities (REAs)**

Mr. Speaker one of the most far reaching change that will occur in the education system, is the decentralisation of the day to day operations of the Ministry of Education to Regional Education Authorities. The experience of other decentralisation programmes in Jamaica has not been overwhelmingly successful. True devolution of authority to regions is a long term process and will require the commitment of the central ministry to allow the regional authorities to stand on their own and develop the required leadership.

Currently there are six regional offices across Jamaica that have a number of administrative responsibilities, but no real authority, as they are effectively branches of the central ministry. Five new REAs have been proposed that align with parishes and will enable greater synergy between local government, health and other agencies whose work supports the education and welfare of children and young people. The new REAs will be charged with:

- ✚ Implementing the policies and minimum standards set by the central ministries
- ✚ Implementing the recommendation and directives from the NEI regarding findings from school inspections

- ✚ Continually challenging and raising educational standards and improve the quality of education
- ✚ Increasing participation in education, training and lifelong learning
- ✚ Provide a strong framework for rigorous performance management
- ✚ Enable greater participation by parents and communities
- ✚ Foster closer working relationships with other sectors and agencies that impact on the development of our learners.

The main function of the REAs will be school improvement. In fact, the position of the Education Officer will be redefined as a School Improvement Officer. These officers will focus relentlessly on improving the management of schools through monitoring, challenging and supporting, and setting and reviewing targets for improvement. They will be supported by experts in curriculum and assessment, teaching and learning and special education and by teams specialising in behaviour, attendance and child welfare issues. The REAs will also have the specific function of engendering and promoting community and stakeholder involvement in the education process.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand in principle that the REAs will be the last point of decision or appeal on operational matters. REAs are expected to act as the final authority on operational and administrative matters for the areas and functions devolved to them. For REAs to be effective, the Nation must understand that provision of the 'education service' is now considered a local function and there is a local/regional agency with final authority and responsibility for the quality of service. This will require a mindset change. Too often, when there is a crisis in schools, the call goes out for the Minister of Education to intervene. The Minister and the Ministry find themselves under political pressure to respond to a local crisis. Mr. Speaker, it is not possible or prudent for the Minister or the central ministry to spend their time putting out little fires while ignoring the big policy picture. Under the decentralised structure of transformation, the REAs must be able to respond to local crises. Therefore, it is important that REAs are aligned and interfaced with local government bodies to achieve maximum accountability.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is currently interviewing for CEOs of the REAs and the process is ongoing. We expect to have at least one REA functional by September 2009.

### **A New Policy Ministry**

The function of the new Ministry of Education will be to set and monitor minimum standards, develop effective and appropriate policies and monitor and evaluate the performance of the education system. When the modernisation process is complete, the Ministry will be leaner, more focused and will not

engage in the full range of operational activities that can distract from strategic development and innovation. Its main functions will be to:

- ✚ Provide sector leadership
- ✚ Advise the minister
- ✚ Develop policy and support its implementation
- ✚ Develop coherent sector strategies
- ✚ Develop and monitor performance standards for the education system
- ✚ Allocate funding equitably and transparently to REAs and other supporting bodies
- ✚ Hold education leaders at all levels accountable for their actions, output and performance.

The new MOE will be the driving force and brain of the transformed education system. Its ultimate role is to make sure that all other agencies do their job.

**National Education Trust**

Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure requirements to support a transformed education system is overwhelming. There are 116 schools on shift. Currently, it is estimated that it would require approximately thirty new schools and thirty classrooms and other facilities at an estimated cost of US\$185M to remove the 45 secondary schools from the shift system. To remove the primary level schools from the shift system would require an estimated 22 new schools and some 90 classrooms at an approximate cost of U\$122m. These figures do not include the other schools and education institutions we will need to build to provide access to every Jamaican child at an average teacher-pupil ratio of 1:30.

<b>Table 1: Schools on Shift</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>All Age</b>	<b>Primary &amp; Junior High</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of Shift Schools	28	9	34	45	<b>116</b>
Number of Schools	543	163	87	164	<b>957</b>
% of Total Schools	5.2%	5.5%	39.1%	27.4%	<b>12.12%</b>
Enrolment in Shift Schools	39,393	5,848	35,605	74,313	<b>155,159</b>

Mr. Speaker, the original transformation plan did not contemplate a formal institutional structure to deal with infrastructure development. While the maintenance function of







school facilities would be devolved to the REAs, the business of building schools would not be best managed on a regional level, neither would it be compatible with a policy focused ministry. I therefore proposed the idea of the National Education Trust to be the institutional vehicle that would finance and manage education infrastructure development.

Mr. Speaker, the recurrent calls on the education budget will always take precedence over capital development; and the capital budget is never certain. The concept of the National Education Trust (NET) is born out of the need to create a secure and certain fiscal space for ongoing long-term capital investment and infrastructure development in education.

The main functions of the National Education Trust can be summarised as follows:

- a.** Manage a National Education Endowment Fund;
- b.** Direct and co-ordinate non-financial resource, such as voluntary human resources, donated equipment, material and technology;
- c.** Act as the agency through which government could execute its strategic objectives in developing and maintaining the education infrastructure, without being hampered by fiscal constraints;
- d.** Act as an agency that could interface with local and international funding organizations on education infrastructure development projects;
- e.** Act as the focal point for interfacing with the Diaspora on issues of education and national development;
- f.** Provide a credible institutional framework for accountability and efficient use of donated funds.
- g.** Plan and execute a programme of school facilities construction and maintenance.

It was proposed that the National Education Trust be set up as a statutory body. The core responsibility of the NET will be to secure and manage an Endowment Fund from which capital educational projects will be financed. The Endowment Fund would be supported from:

-  The National Consolidated Fund
-  Proceeds from a Casino Tax
-  Local and international philanthropy
-  Local & internationally sourced loans
-  Grants from international partners
-  Grants from other Government programmes, such as the CHASE Fund, UAF/E-LJam

Mr. Speaker, we have discussed with the World Bank its engagement in assisting us in establishing the Trust. I thought it important, to have the World Bank

involved in the establishment of the Trust from the outset, so we could build into the Trust the standards of governance, accountability and management systems endorsed by the Bank as an international funding agency. We have started preliminary work on the structure of the Trust and the World Bank has indicated its willingness to provide technical assistance and fund the operation of the Trust for the first year, subject to further discussions. We expect to have the National Education Trust operational by June 2009.

Mr. Speaker, a defining feature of the Trust will be its mission to raise funds from the Jamaican Diaspora. It will be the first institution of its kind set up to harness the philanthropic resources of the Diaspora at a national level. Except for remittances, we have not been able to benefit in a systematic and coordinated way from the goodwill of Jamaicans overseas who would like to contribute to the national effort in education. The Trust will be actively seeking out donations from the Diaspora to be used directly the construction of school, particularly for the elimination of the shift system.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Jamaica will have to make serious contributions and commitment to the endowment of the Trust and in the reform of the tax system a secured follow of funding must be found. Mr. Speaker, while we promote the notion that school leaders must maximise their performance and output in the short-run given their infrastructure constraints, there comes a point where the only way to improve performance is by improving the capacity of your infrastructure. Improving the quality and performance of our education system in the long-run will depend on our ability to address the infrastructure question.

### **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

Mr. Speaker, the greatest concern facing our education system is the breakdown of discipline in our school. The following statement is also true. The greatest concern facing our education system is the breakdown of discipline in the society. It is inescapable that society will shape our schools, but we must never forget that schools have a duty to shape society. In fact, the public education system is the main tool of the government in shaping the society. Every day, for almost 8 hours, the Government has in its hands the minds of approximately 700,000 young and impressionable Jamaicans, to mold, guide and instruct in areas of knowledge, skills and attitude. The objective of the process is to produce: a creative and productive worker for the economy, a literate, articulate, informed, and law abiding citizen for the society, a responsible, loving and caring member of the family, and a human being who is understanding and protective of his environment. This process of formal public socialisation is being impacted by several factors in the external school environment.

**Behaviour Management: The Macro-social Environment: Family and Parenting**

Jamaica's historical context never promoted the evolution of a dominant family type where the average child benefited from having both biological parents present in the home. The absence of the male parent in particular has a negative impact on behaviour both at home and at school. Generally, schools report that it is getting increasingly difficult to get parents to participate in the education of their children. The **noncooperation of some parents**, particularly those parents of disruptive children contribute to the ineffectiveness of some schools in managing disruptive behaviour.

**Behaviour Management: The Macro-social Environment: Violence**

Mr. Speaker, our society is growing insensitive to violence. In fact, **violence is becoming a natural response to resolving conflicts**. Violence is supported and promoted in our popular music and culture. Violent content is easily accessed and distributed in our media. Mr. Speaker, learning cannot take place in a violent school environment, or in a violent home, or in a violent community. Schools are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the levels of violence displayed by students, parents, community members and some instructional leaders.

**Behaviour Management: The Macro-social Environment: General Deterioration of Values**

Mr. Speaker the **deterioration of values and the erosion of standards** in the society has also impacted negatively on the behaviour of our children. There is a growing acceptance of mediocrity. It is no longer the standard in the society to challenge our children to do their best in all things. Education has lost its value to many of our young. Lack of self-esteem is at the root of much of the behavioural problems being displayed in the schools.

**Behaviour Management: The Macro-social Environment: Information Age**

Mr. Speaker, one of the most common laments I hear, is that this generation is different from the generation that went before. In many ways this is true. Jamaica is now irreversible in the **Information Age**. Twenty years ago, cable TV, satellite receivers, and video-players were not widespread in Jamaica. We had one television station and two radio stations. There was no Internet, and government still retained a measure of control over the broadcast media. No doubt there were behaviour issues in schools then, but they rarely got reported. Today, we have an explosion in media, we have the Internet and we have personal mobile phones that can broadcast content to the Internet. Never before has any generation of children been exposed to this much volume of information, some of which is edifying but some of the content available is unwholesome and perverse. This explosion of information which provides alternate perspectives to what is traditionally held as the norm, changes the

power structure of social relationships. Students are being exposed very early to information above their maturity level without guidance, filter and context, and this affects how they think and behave relative to what we accept as the norm.

Mr. Speaker if you put all these external macro-social factors together we begin to understand the complex and difficult situation faced by the public education system. For many of our students, what we teach in the education system is being challenged and erased as soon as they leave the school. There is no parallel reinforcement in the home of what is taught in the school. The macro social factors I have outlined run counter to the formal education system. Still we cannot throw our hands in the air helplessly. We must tackle the problem no matter how overwhelming it may seem.

### **Behaviour Management: Strategic Responses: Multi-sectoral Responses**

Strategically, the government has to take a multi-sectoral approach to the problem. The solution does not lie in one ministry or even with the government alone. All Jamaicans must realize that our society is at risk of becoming, "nasty and brutish", if we do not act now.

Mr. Speaker the Prime Minister will soon launch a programme to address family life and, values and attitudes. In fighting crime and dealing with violent communities the Prime Minister has put together a multi-agency committee to assist law enforcement efforts by coordinating the delivery of social services and amenities to communities troubled with crime and violence.

### **Behaviour Management: Strategic Responses: National Parenting Support Commission**

I have been on record calling for greater accountability for parents. Mr. Speaker, we understand the difficult and stressful times in which we live, and we understand the economic hardship faced by our people, however, we cannot accept that as an excuse for poor parenting. Trying economic and social circumstances may be a reason for poor parenting but it does not relieve parents of their parental responsibility. For too long the state has seen parenting as a private function. However, there are negative external consequences to the public from the private actions of poor parenting. Mr. Speaker recently a mother told me that her seven year old came home one day using a certain curse word repeatedly. The mother found it surprising that her child would have picked up that word, because as a parent she was very careful about exposing her young child to curse words. Concerned, she enquired and found out from her daughter that a classmate at her prep school was using the word to describe everything. The mother alerted the teacher the next day. The teacher found out that the classmate picked up the word from watching an adult comedy special on a late night cable TV and that it was common practice that

watching television was not regulated in that household. The private action of parents in one household affects the welfare of another household.

Mr. Speaker, principals complain to me of their great frustration in trying to get some parents involved in controlling the behaviour of their disruptive children. To be clear, not all schools face this problem, traditional high schools seem to have a greater level of parental involvement and support than the upgraded high school. Some principals have suggested that the state needs to implement stronger measures to force parents to respond to the school when they are called by the principal. Indeed, one suggestion is that we should amend the Education Act to make it an offense for a parent to ignore the visitation request of a principal. The suggestion is that principals or the REAs, after exhausting certain set procedures for contacting the parent should be able to report that parent to the courts, for the latter to issue an order for the parent to respond to the school. Failure to comply with the court order within a specified time, would see the force of state being brought to bear on that parent.

Mr. Speaker, I am seriously considering this measure, but we are not yet there. First, I want to encourage and if necessary help parents to properly execute their parental duties. To this end we have started work towards establishing a National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC).

The NPSC will be an overarching coordinating body providing a framework for action to support holistic child development and act as a guide to identifying policies, programmes and resources through which the government will foster an enabling environment for better parenting. The NPSC will be tasked with the following:

**✚ Elevate the understanding and importance of parenting in national development, specifically in the areas of:-**

- Health and Environment (Healthy Lifestyle, Conservation and Protection of the Environment)
- Education (Parallel Reinforcement, Behaviour Control, Truancy)
- Socialisation (Law and Order, Good Citizenship, Character Development)
- Economy (Productivity, Innovation, and Creativity)

**✚ Dissemination of information to encourage and facilitate proper parenting practices:**

- Develop and distribute material on recommended parental practices (parenting manual).
- Develop media and public education campaign and mobilize national support.

**✚ Provide the institutional framework that will facilitate government policy and develop partnerships and co-ordination of existing programmes.**

- Co-ordination among related agencies in a multi-sectoral approach - CDA, Child Advocate, Early Childhood Commission, Family Court, Police, NGOs and others
- Operate and support specific intervention programmes, such as resource centres and time-out facilities.

The long term results of the NPSC will be improved parenting behaviour in the following areas:-

- ✚ **Planning** (with a particular emphasis on the concepts of family planning and saving for a child's higher education)
- ✚ **Parenting skills** (i.e. positive and developmentally appropriate)
- ✚ **Learning** readiness of children
- ✚ **Advocacy** for children and their rights
- ✚ **Accountability** for delinquency, neglect and poor parenting
- ✚ **Health** promote nutrition, exercise, play and wholesome lifestyle

**Eventually, Mr. Speaker, it is envisioned that the NPSC will develop a National Policy on the Family and evolve into a Commission on the Family** which will ensure that families are at the centre of policy development on health, education, child care, the law, tax and benefits, housing, community safety, culture and media.

Mr. Speaker, we are at the stage where we are ready to submit drafting instruction to the Chief Parliamentary Council to prepare legislation for the NPSC. We expect to be fully established by the first quarter of 2009.

### **Behaviour Management: The School Environment**

Mr. Speaker, knowledge of the teaching learning process has expanded in the last 30 years. Much more is known about the dynamics of how students learn and how behaviour can be controlled. The art of teaching has been extensively studied and has been reduced to a science. We now know that poor teaching methods and unaccommodating learning environments negatively impact student behaviour. This means that, outside of the external macro social variables, there are things we can do internally in the public education system to manage, control, modify and eventually improve behaviour.

### **Behaviour Management: The School Environment: Corporal Punishment**

Mr. Speaker, I listened to a caller on a radio talk show commenting that corporal punishment should not be prohibited in school as it was necessary to control student behaviour and that in the absence of corporal punishment indiscipline will increase. Mr. Speaker, I want to draw your attention to an incident that happened in a school just on the border of Clarendon and Manchester on January 17, 2008. A male teacher was brutally attacked and seriously wounded

by a machete wielding mob. The day before, the teacher had beat students who had not done their homework. Friends and associates of one student who was beaten took offense and launched a most vicious attack on the teacher during devotion. I visited the teacher and I could tell that he is committed to the education and the development of the children under his charge and it was not his intention to abuse children.

However, Mr. Speaker, this incident made it clear to me that in the present context of the external macro-social variables - declining respect for the authority of teacher, our growing acceptance of violence, and the absence of parallel reinforcement - corporal punishment was more likely to inflame and destabilize an already shaky public education environment, than bring order. The belief that we can beat discipline into children or beat children into submission will only lead to chaos in the public education system given the current context of our society.

### **Behaviour Management: The School Environment: Legality of Corporal Punishment**

Mr. Speaker, corporal punishment may be defined as physical punishment inflicted on the body. There is no provision in the **Education Act, 1965 or Education Regulations** that deals specifically with the use of corporal punishment in schools. Except were altered by express language of an Act of Parliament (or necessary implication), the authority to administer corporal punishment exists at common law.

*"The fundamental principle, plain and incontestable, is that every person's body is inviolate"*<sup>1</sup>. At common law, deliberate or negligent interference with an individual's person, however slight, may constitute a trespass. Trespass to the person can take one of three forms, namely, assault, battery and false imprisonment. However, there are special circumstances in which a trespass may be justified, such as the case where a teacher administers moderate and reasonable corporal punishment when required or takes such action as may be reasonably necessary in the circumstances to maintain discipline<sup>2</sup>.

*...when a parent sends his child to school, he delegates to teachers at the school the power to inflict reasonable and moderate corporate punishment when required, in the way a parent would have power to inflict moderate and reasonable corporal punishment in a proper case, and that he delegates to the teacher the taking of such steps as are necessary to maintain discipline with regard to the child committed to the teacher's care.*

<sup>1</sup> Collins v. Wilcock [1984] 3 All E.R. 374, per Robert Goff L.J. at p. 378

<sup>2</sup> Ryan v Fildes [1983] 3 All E.R. 517

Where a teacher steps outside the limits of what constitutes “reasonable” and “moderate” punishment or treatment, that teacher will be guilty of trespass to the person and liable at criminal as well as civil law. Where liable at civil law, depending on the circumstances of the case, the Board of Management may be vicariously liable for the actions of the teacher.

What constitutes “reasonable” and “moderate” punishment depends on the age of the child, the physical condition of the child, the method of carrying out the punishment and the motive. To be lawful, corporal punishment must be: 1) Moderate; 2) Reasonable; 3) Administered with a proper instrument; and 4) Administered for a proper reason i.e. not activated by malice or anger. If the above conditions are not met, then the corporal punishment administered could constitute assault, battery or child abuse.

**Section 62(d) of The Child Care and Protection Act 2004** abolished the common law authority to administer corporal punishment in Places of Safety. **Section 16 of The Early Childhood Education Act, 2005** abolished the common law authority to administer corporal punishment in Early Childhood Institutions.

The Child Advocate maintains that the authority of any adult to administer corporal punishment is abolished under **Section 9** of the **Child Care and Protection Act** by necessary implication (rather than by express words). However, the Ministry has received advice from the Attorney General's Chambers to the contrary. The Attorney General is the Ministry's principal legal advisor and we stand guided by her opinion. However, as a matter of policy, the Ministry has chosen to adopt a more restrictive stance than exists at common law.

### **Behaviour Management: The School Environment: Position on Corporal Punishment**

The Ministry has indicated that it does not support or promote the use of corporal punishment in primary and secondary schools by teachers and principals for several reasons. One of the reasons is administrative in nature. The law in this area is framed in such a manner that a teacher has a **justification or defense** at law for their actions, **providing** certain conditions are met. Each case must necessarily turn on its own facts. Many years ago, the Ministry published guidelines for the use of corporal punishment in its “Handbook of School Management” in an effort to set parameters for what it considered to be reasonable and moderate punishment. However, for the most part, these procedures were not complied with and as a result, legal action has ensued. In addition to the criminal liability that a teacher may face if he fails to satisfy the court that his actions were reasonable and moderate, the School Board and ultimately the Ministry may be faced with civil liability suits.

In the circumstances, the Ministry expressed the desire to abolish corporal punishment in schools all together and intends to propose the enactment of legislation for this purpose. In the interim, the Ministry has informed all Boards and Principals in public educational institutions of its policy directive that the practice of administering corporal punishment in schools should be discontinued and alternative means of disciplinary control should be pursued instead.

It should be noted however that the Ministry has expressed support for the reasonable, moderate and proportionate use of force by a teacher against a student where such force is necessary to protect that student from injuring himself or others. Principals and teachers should keep in mind the age and discretion of a child as compared to that of an adult when considering what action is appropriate in all the circumstances and should always prefer the least physical/violent approach.

### **Behaviour Management: The School Environment: Alternative Behaviour Support**

Mr. Speaker, we are not only concerned about physical punishment in schools, we are also concerned about violent, aggressive and demeaning delivery of disciplinary instruction. This has no positive effect on engendering good behaviour and only serves to frustrate the teaching learning process. This kind of negative and reactive disciplinary instruction results from the stressful environment in which teachers operate. Mr. Speaker, a columnist who is also a principal wrote<sup>3</sup>:

Teachers have to realise that they are teaching in a war zone. This war zone has students on one side, with some parents aiding them, while the teachers are on the other side, with some parents aiding them.

Mr. Speaker, if this description of the school environment is true, then we are at the brink of disaster. We need to step back from the brink and employ different strategies to address the problems. It is obvious that the old ways of delivering disciplinary instruction are not working and pursuing them further only compounds the problem. Mr. Speaker, teachers who rely on these methods of disciplinary instruction feel helpless in the classroom against out-of-control students. We understand. Let me say it clearly, teachers have a right, like any other citizen, to defend themselves from attack by any student. Outside of that, Mr. Speaker the Ministry of Education has a duty to empower and support our teachers and school leadership with alternative means of discipline.

### **Behaviour Management: The School Environment: Alternative Behaviour Support: Proactive Approach to Behaviour Management**

Mr. Speaker we have to change the way we view behaviour in schools. There is a belief that disciplinary instruction, whether they are traditional methods such

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<sup>3</sup> See, "Teachers at risk", Esther Tyson, The Gleaner, May 4, 2004

as: corporal punishment and humiliation, or alternative methods, such as; a merit system of reward and deprivation, assertive instructions, separation or confinement, will change behaviour. Disciplinary steps may control behaviour in the short term but fails to teach new behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, we tend to view behaviour as naturally occurring and that bad behaviour is pathological or abnormal. Behaviour is a learned phenomenon, and our children are learning bad behaviour. We have to get our teachers and school leaders to view behaviour as a skill to be acquired and practised in much the same way as other academic and sporting skills. This leads to a new understanding in which we define behaviour as a set of competencies and skills, such as compliance, attention, learning disposition, aggression, and social skills, that can be curricularised, taught and assessed. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry will seek to explicitly teach and develop behavioural skills in the same way in which we plan for curriculum-assessment, programming, direct instruction and evaluation. Behaviour will be incorporated into the teaching learning process.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear the call for a course in character education to be included the school curriculum. Essentially this is a call for us to teach our students how to behave. Already, we have instituted in this a health and family life element in our secondary curriculum. Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) is a life skills based programme that fosters the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that make for a healthy personal, family and social life. It promotes principles that underlie personal and social well being and addresses the whole child through the transmission of values, attitudes and social identity. We have also implemented the Citizenship Education Programme in 122 schools. The programme is designed to promote positive attitudes and core values such as patriotism, respect and volunteerism.

Mr. Speaker, another important part of pro active behaviour management is assessment. Behaviour has to be constantly monitored and evaluated and feedback passed to the student and teacher. This will support a merit system of promoting positive behaviour through reward and sanctions. An effective behaviour assessment system:

- ✚ Employs an assessment instrument which delivers precise information with minimal time and effort
- ✚ Defines and identifies target areas for intervention
- ✚ Engenders a culture of permanent recordkeeping and logging of behaviour
- ✚ Uses recorded data, to track, monitors, and evaluate behaviour over time
- ✚ Provides feedback to students and teachers on behavioural issues

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry already has in place behaviour assessment instruments under the Programme for Alternate Student Support (PASS). This is a Ministry

based programme that responds to schools that require high level specialised intervention with students that are assessed to have chronic maladaptive behaviours that can lead to interruption of their secondary education. The assessment instruments employed under PASS will be simplified to be used in schools. We are also piloting in some schools, a daily incident report sheet, on which we ask teachers to indicate each incident of misbehavior they notice on an individual basis. The forms have several categories of misbehavior or infractions and the teacher is only required to note the name of the student and the code of the observed infraction. The form will be supported by a database software that will be used to collate and analyse the data. It will generate useful reports that will give insight into the type of infractions, the misbehaving student, and the teachers affected. These reports will then be used to strategically guide intervention. For example a report may reveal that the school has a problem with bullying from the number of incidents reported, but more than that it would show main perpetrators, their class and possibly identify the victims. Armed with this information the school leadership will be better able to design effective intervention programmes. More than that Mr. Speaker, the keeping of permanent records is a powerful long term deterrent to indiscipline. Permanent records are themselves a disciplinary tool and for older students it is more effective than corporal punishment or humiliation. When students realize that every detail of their behaviour could possibly be made available on transcripts, references and recommendations, they would think twice about their behaviour. Of course Mr. Speaker it is the intention of the Ministry to design an overarching information management system which will see this information being passed from the schools to the region to the Ministry to inform policy.

### **Behaviour Management: The School Environment: Alternative Behaviour Support: Responsive Approach to Behaviour Management**

Mr. Speaker the measures I have announced to deal with the macro-social problems and the measures outlined for a proactive internal strategy will take effect in the long term. Right now, Mr. Speaker, we need to bring order to our schools .

Very soon I will be having discussions with the Ministry of National Security on measures that can be taken to strengthen the Safe School Programme. Informal discussions have already been held on the way forward and we are due to meet next week in formal talks. Mr. Speaker it is our intention to have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Police for local police stations to adopt schools as part of their community policing drive and support schools in behaviour management.

Mr. Speaker, we must be firm with students who carry weapons to schools. We have imported into the Island 100 hand-held metal detecting wands which will

be distributed to the most affected secondary schools early next month. These wands will be used by the Safe Schools Resource Police Officers or designated teachers in a regular and random fashion. The Ministry has endorsed the presumed right of schools to conduct searches and we have developed guidelines as to how teachers should conduct searches. Nevertheless, we intend to formalise the teacher's power of search in legislation, as well as all other powers necessary for good conduct and order in schools. We intend to seek the support of the Police, under the proposed MOU, to conduct regular school-wide search exercises at least once every month in all schools where it is needed. I repeat my position, all students who are found with offensive weapons should be reported and turned over to the Police.

The decision has been taken to pursue the establishment of the post of Dean of Discipline in schools. This position will be responsible for managing and implementing both the proactive and responsive behavior management strategies. We expect that by September 2009 the post will be formally established. Some schools have already created that post or have assigned a teacher to undertake those responsibilities. The Ministry is now finalizing the job description for the post and in the interim I would encourage schools that are able, to assign a teacher to undertake these responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, we have been receiving significant help from our international partners, UNICEF and UNESCO. They have provided us with support to develop:

- ✚ A manual and training schemes for the effective classroom management strategies
- ✚ A systems of rewards and sanctions, including a system programme for building self-esteem
- ✚ Development of a standard Home School Agreement and Code of Conduct for students, teachers and parents

We expect that these programmes will be ready for deployment by September 2008.

Mr. Speaker, what I have just outlined is a comprehensive strategy of managing behaviour given the global context of the society in which we live. We will not see results over night. Key to its success is the increased involvement of parents in the education of their children. Mr. Speaker, failure is not an option in this matter, we must succeed.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

The passage of the Early Childhood Act and its attendant Regulations (2005) established legal framework and standards by which the operations of Early Childhood Institutions (ECIs) in Jamaica are govern. The Act and Regulations outline the minimum operating standards that all ECIs must achieve in order to ensure that all children have equity and access to quality Early Childhood Development programs within healthy, safe and nurturing environments. The Early Childhood Act came into force November 30, 2007, and its first requirement is that all ECIs should apply for registration within 90 days of the EC Act taking effect.

### **Status of Applications as at April 2008**

- ✚ Some 3225 ECIs have been identified
- ✚ 2308 ECIs made contact with the ECC (72%)
- ✚ 1708 ECIs submitted an application (53%)
- ✚ 1322 applications were deemed incomplete
- ✚ 390 applications were deemed complete

Letters are now being sent out to institutions that have not applied and those with incomplete applications. The definition of a 'complete application' is set at a high standard. It includes completed visits by the Public Health and Fire Departments with approvals by both, and clean police records for all staff. Almost 400 ECIs, (1 out of every 4 applicants) have met these stringent requirements. The main reasons for incomplete applications are missing police records, public health reports, food handlers' permits and fire certificates, reflecting the pressure placed on government agencies by the new process.

### **Engagement and Training of Inspectors**

Thirty-five Early Childhood Inspectors were engaged by the ECC in November 2007. Inspectors received intensive training in the EC Act and Regulations, inspection techniques, report writing, inter-personal interactions and conflict resolution.

### **Status of Inspections**

- ✚ Inspections commenced April 21, 2008.
- ✚ 124 ECIs have been assigned for inspection.
- ✚ Operators have been very welcoming to ECC inspectors.
- ✚ 50 ECIs have been inspected to date.
- ✚ All reports on the inspected ECIs recommended that a 'Permit to Operate' be granted.

It is important to note that the Government of Jamaica has allocated an additional JA\$200 million to assist institutions that are in danger of closure because they are in breach of public health and safety guidelines. We have also secured the cooperation of the CHASE fund in placing its resources for early childhood education under the discretion of the Early Childhood Commission. This will be used for improving schools that are inspected and found to be operating critically below the standards of the ECC. This is in keeping with our commitment that no ECI will be closed during the development phase of the regulations.

Mr. Speaker the Early Childhood Commission recently completed a loan agreement with the World Bank for a performance based loan of US\$15 million. This loan will be used in to achieve the targets set in the National Strategic Plan for the early childhood sector. Mr. Speaker, the hard work of the Chairman Professor Maureen Samms-Vaughan and the staff of the Commission is deserving of special commendation.

### **SECONDARY SCHOOL TUITION FEES FOR THE 2008/2009 SCHOOL YEAR**

In keeping with the commitment of the Government to cover the full cost of the Approved Tuition Fee for all students in secondary schools, provisions have been made in the budget that will see increases to schools ranging between 20% and 27% over the 2007/2008 school year. The Approved Tuition Fee paid directly to schools will move from an average of J\$8,000 per student to **\$10,500** per student, for all students from Grades 7 to 12. These levels of increase are well above the projected inflation rate. The overall sum available for Tuition Fees is \$2.76b, up from \$1.82b. This represents a massive overall increase of 51.6%

Mr. Speaker, a sum of \$440m has been set aside for special interventions in high schools, in order to support the special needs of students and institutions, based on:-

- ✚ Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) intake scores
- ✚ Grade Nine Achievement Test (GNAT) intake scores
- ✚ School performance in the CSEC examinations

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to remind schools that the auxiliary fees they charge are not mandatory and no child should be excluded from schools because of their inability to pay. Where auxiliary fees represent user fees for special services over and above what is required by regulation, then the school reserves the right not to provide the service to the students. Nevertheless, we encourage schools to accommodate all students regardless of their means. At the same time I want to encourage parents to contribute as much as they can to the development of their school. It is a good parenting practice to support the school.

### **THE 16 to 18 AGENDA**

At 16 our young people are out of school and many find it difficult to transition into the society as productive citizens / workers. It is at this point their formal attachment to any state institution ends, and they become at risk of entering into a life of crime and deviant behaviour. More worrying is the fact that the vast majority of this age cohort will never be empowered to achieve their full potential or contribute positively to society. Government must now address this great wastage in our human resources and develop an agenda that will cater to the needs of this cohort.

**Education Status at Age 16 / Grade 11**

	<u>Cohort</u>	<u>% Population</u>	<u>%Enrolment</u>	<u>%Examination</u>	<u>Uncertified Cohort</u>	
		<u>Cohort</u>	<u>Cohort</u>	<u>Cohort</u>		
Age Cohort in Population at Grade 11	53,600	100%				
Enrolled Cohort at Grade 11	40,630	76%	100%		12,970	Not in School
Examined Cohort	32,109	60%	79%	100%	8,521	In School No Exam
Cohort sitting exams with zero pass	7,268	14%	18%	23%	7,268	In School Failed Exam
Cohort sitting exams with two or less passes	16,597	31%	41%	52%		
Cohort passing 3 or more at minimum grade	15,512	29%	38%	48%		
Cohort possibly matriculating to Tertiary	10,347	19%	25%	32%		
HEART/NTA Application (Apr-Oct07)	12,507	23%	31%	39%		
HEART/NTA Application passing	4,906	9%	12%	15%		

admissions test						
Pop. Cohort with 2 or less subjects at Min. Grade	38,088	71%				
Uncertified Pop. Age Cohort					28,759	54%

Ministry of Education '07 Data

### Compulsory Education to Age 18

- ✚ It can be seen that 54% (28,759) of the school leaving age cohort has absolutely no qualifications and 71% (38,088) of that cohort passed only two or less subjects. This means that every year the education system adds between 28,700 and 38,000 to the pool of unattached and at-risk youth
- ✚ These unattached young people at age 16/17 are not employable, but are still trainable. However, the longer they remain in the unattached pool the more 'untrainable' and unemployable they become
- ✚ The pool of unattached youth represents a dead weight loss to the society in terms of their productivity and creativity, but we pay a real cost in terms of crime, health, and welfare
- ✚ The policy on compulsory education is evolving to state that all Jamaicans must be attached to an approved educational institution up to the age of eighteen (18) years old. The Ministry of Education has already drafted a policy which will be brought to Cabinet shortly

### Post Secondary Years

It is proposed to add two years to Secondary Schools to create a 'Senior School':-

- ✚ Persons who did not matriculate to 6<sup>th</sup> Form or Community Colleges would be required to continue on to 'Senior School'
- ✚ The curriculum would be based on the 'Knowledge Skills and Attitude Model'

**Knowledge** - students would get the opportunity to continue their academic development with the curriculum being technical and vocational oriented

**Skills** - a large component of the programme would be based on apprenticeship and on-the-job-training

**Attitude** - character education, good citizenship, a national service would also be key components

- ✚ At the end of the programme students should graduate with at least the Level 2 (NVQ2) HEART/NTA certification. (Unlike CSEC which only certifies academic competence the vocational qualification certifies work competencies and readiness)
- ✚ The NVQ2 qualification could then be articulated through levels 3, 4, and 5. At NVQ the holder would have a qualification equivalent to first degree
- ✚ The resources of the following would be mobilised to create the Senior School:-
  - HEART/NTA - vocational training
  - NYS - national service and apprenticeship
  - Schools - continuing academic education

### How can this be done?

- ✚ It is not optional
- ✚ There are no plans to build an entirely new infrastructure. The model being pursued may be described as a mixture of the School-to-Lab and Fixed Lab model:-
  - School-to-Lab** - each school in a cluster is equipped with a particular lab. Students move to those labs within their cluster as the practicum requires.
- ✚ In some cases, **Fixed Master Labs** will be created, where no school in a particular cluster has suitable facilities to host the lab. This system is already being piloted in Westmoreland for the Tech/Voc curriculum in Grade 10. Most schools close at 2 pm at which time facilities are unused, this programme will maximise the use of the plant
- ✚ A new Apprenticeship Act will be drafted to provide the framework for the apprenticeship, mentorship and national service aspect of the 'Senior School'.

### Benefits

- ✚ Reduction in crime and youth delinquency
- ✚ Better trained workforce
- ✚ Greater alignment between education and industry
- ✚ Greater sense of purpose and value in our youth
- ✚ Increased productivity and creativity
- ✚ Greater social cohesion

### CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, education is a national endeavour. The planned transformation of education is a massive undertaking. The behaviour problem in our schools is

cause for alarm. At times the education system can seem as if it is out of control. People stop me all the time and say, "you have a tough task". I nod and I smile. Yes the task is challenging, the results of our effort may not be readily seen, and the nation may be impatient. Nevertheless, I am confident in the staff of the Ministry of Education, I am confident in the support of the Prime Minister and my colleagues in the Cabinet and both sides of the Parliament, the teachers know I have their best interest at heart and I know that Jamaicans want the best for education. With God's help we can make it.