

Computers Presented to Balcombe Drive Primary

BALCOMBE DRIVE Primary School in Kingston, on July 9, formally received computers under the Government's 'Tablets for Teachers Programme', so its teachers can use them while working from home.

Distribution of the tablets results from the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) and the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) Heads of Agreement of May 2018, which aimed to provide teachers islandwide with tablet computers.

Also distributing the tablets is e-Learning Jamaica Company Limited (e-LJam) – which is an agency of the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology.

Principal of Balcombe Drive Primary School, Ms. Yvette Foster, accepted the tablets on behalf of the teachers. The presentation was made by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness; Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams; and



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left); Chairman, e-Learning Jamaica Company Limited, Christopher Reckord (left); and Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams, hand over tablets to Principal, Balcombe Drive Primary School, Yvette Foster (2nd right); and Teacher, Anishka Baker Samuels, on July 9.

Chairman of e-LJam, Christopher Reckord, at the school.

Mr. Holness encouraged the teachers to use the equipment to enhance the learning experience for their students.

"The use of technology to enhance teaching and learning, through digital inclusion and

digital literacy, has been the key objective of the Government," Mr. Holness said.

"The temporary closure of schools, as a result of the [coronavirus] COVID-19 pandemic, has reinforced the need for us to accelerate progress in achieving this objective," he added.

Mr. Holness noted that under the Tablets for Teachers Programme, the Government has procured 65,000 tablets for distribution.

Some 114 schools received 2,000 tablets in the month of June from e-Learning Jamaica Company Limited.

Gov't Extends SET and Best Cash Grants

MINISTER OF Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, has announced a two-month extension of the Supporting Employees with the Transfer of Cash (SET Cash) and the Business Employee Support and Transfer of Cash (BEST Cash) components of the COVID Allocation of Resources for Employees (CARE) Programme.

Dr. Clarke, in a statement to the House of Representatives on July 7, said that the grants will continue up to August.

The SET Cash grant is for persons earning \$1.5 million or less, whose employment was terminated after March 10 as a result of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on economic activity.

The BEST Cash component provides temporary cash transfers to registered businesses operating within the tourism industry that are registered with the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo).

Dr. Clarke pointed out the decision to extend the components through July and August is based on the fact that while jobs are slowly being restored,



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke

recovery will take some time.

"The airports have reopened and the tourism sector is gradually reopening. Other sectors that have partially closed have also started reopening on a phased basis. In addition, the extension of the curfew hours is restoring the viability of other sectors. Jobs are slowly being restored. However, we have a long, long way to go towards recovery," he said.

Dr. Clarke told the House that just under 50,000 Jamaicans will benefit from this extension of the SET Cash and BEST Cash grants.

High Dependency Unit Opens at Spanish Town Hospital

THE GOVERNMENT has invested more than \$423 million to improve the health services for high-risk pregnant women at the Spanish Town Hospital in St. Catherine, with the construction of a high dependency unit (HDU).

It is one of four facilities to have been built from funding provided under the Programme for Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality (PROMAC), which is a partnership between the European Union (EU)

and the Government of Jamaica.

"This is a significant added capacity to what is already being done by the Government to enhance the public health infrastructure in Jamaica," said Minister of

Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, at the official opening of the facility on July 9.

He argued that the programme was well conceptualised and that PROMAC has been managed effectively, where "tangible benefits" are now being realised from commitments made during the launch of the initiative.

"This facility is going to ensure that Jamaican mothers, supported by fathers, who have to use it for their newborn, will have as good a service as at any other facility anywhere with modern equipment," the Minister said.

The Spanish Town Hospital admits up to 100 women to its maternity ward every month, where five to eight per cent of babies are delivered prematurely. Mothers now have the benefit of the new HDU, a rehabilitated neonatal space and general nursery.



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (right); Head of the European Union Delegation to Jamaica (EU), Ambassador Malgorzata Wasilewska (centre); and Spanish Ambassador to Jamaica, His Excellency Josep Maria Bosch, cut the ribbon to officially open the \$423-million high dependency unit (HDU) at the Spanish Town Hospital in St. Catherine, on July 8.

Drought Management Committee Revamped

THE MINISTRY of Economic Growth and Job Creation has revamped its Drought Management Committee to better equip the body to play a more proactive role in mitigating the impacts of drought on the country.

initiatives and drought management response.

He said that the committee will work to improve the resilience and coping mechanisms of the country and spearhead the revision of the existing Drought Management Plan, which was developed in 2000.

"The committee has commenced the revision of the plan and it is anticipated that it will be completed during the second quarter of the 2020/21 financial year," Mr. Vaz said.

The Drought Management Committee is a subcommittee of the Integrated Water Resources Management Council (IWRMC) for which Cabinet approved the appointment of members in June.

The multidisciplinary and multisectoral body, led by the Economic Growth Ministry, is comprised of key stakeholders in the water, physical planning, health, housing, environment and climate change sectors, along

with representatives from academia and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Minister Vaz noted that the establishment of the

IWRMC seeks to facilitate broad-based consultation among key stakeholders on matters relating to water and water-related resources.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Daryl Vaz

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry, Hon. Daryl Vaz, made the disclosure during a virtual briefing on July 8, to provide an update on the Government's water

PM Commissions Rehabilitated Bridge on Liguanea Avenue



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left) cuts a ribbon to open the rehabilitated bridge along Liguanea Avenue, in St. Andrew, on July 9. Sharing the moment are (from left): Minister of Justice, Hon. Delroy Chuck; Chief Executive Officer, National Works Agency, Everton Hunter, and Deputy Mayor of Kingston, Winston Ennis. The structure was renovated at a cost of \$26.5 million.

Country Saves \$70M Through Violence Interruption Programme

THE VIOLENCE Interruption Programme (VIP) of the recently ended Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) is estimated to have saved the country's health system \$70 million, due to its prevention of violent crimes.

According to Programme Manager, CSJP, Orville Simmonds, the initiative, which was a partnership with the Peace Management Initiative (PMI), was one of the CSJP's hallmark achievements.

"We took on what was called the Cure Violence approach, in which we used persons called interrupters to engage violence producers with a view to have them cease and desist from their violence production," he said.

Speaking at a recent JIS 'Think Tank', Mr. Simmonds



Programme Manager of the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) III, Orville Simmonds,

said that the emphasis on prevention of shooting was crucial to the successful implementation of the programme, as they were able to detect more than 600 potential shootings.

"The focus was on shootings, identifying potential shootings and interrupting those shootings. When we looked at the data, we saw the number of shootings that were interrupted, and based on the treatment costs in hospitals for a shooting victim, which is an estimated \$400,000, we saw that there was a benefit of approximately \$70 million saved due to the shootings that were prevented," he explained.

According to Mr. Simmonds, the VIP personnel were able to successfully mediate and resolve 90 per cent of the conflicts that were detected.

The Violence Interruption Programme was carried out in Kingston and St Andrew, St. Catherine, Clarendon, Hanover, and St James.