



## STATEMENT

### To Parliament

By The Honourable Fayval Williams

Minister of Education, Youth and Information

November 10, 2020

Madame Speaker,

It is with great sadness that I report the deaths of a few of our children over the past few days:

- Jade-Ann Mclean, 13-year-old student who attended Brown's Town High School (daughter of Kadean Howard)
- Rihanna Howard 14-year-old student who attended Marcus Garvey Technical High School along with their relatives Kadean Howard 34-year-old (sister of Rihanna) and Jason Gayle (common law husband of Kadean Howard)
- 9 year old Alifia Timbawala **of St. Judes Primary** died on Saturday from leukemia
- 5 year old DeAndre 'Jaydon' Peterkin from Flanker St. James who died in a fire. He was a student at **Providence Basic School**.

Our sincerest condolences to the families. The MoEYI has been in touch with families to offer psychosocial support and condolences letters are being prepared.

Death of our children is never easy and so we mourn for these children as though they were our own. Infact, Madame Speaker, they are our own children our nation's children. May their souls rest in peace.

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I am pleased to bring another update to the House on the steps being taken by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information to ensure the continued education of our students.

Madame Speaker, this morning (Nov 10<sup>th</sup>), 15 schools reopened for face-to-face teaching under a pilot programme that will allow us to gain confidence in having our students and teachers back in the physical classroom as we live through this covid-19 pandemic. Yallahs High School in St. Thomas did not open as a result of flooding on the school grounds and more time needed to make arrangements after the flooding. Moore Town Primary & Junior High School in Portland has also requested that they open tomorrow. That is quite understandable, Madame Speaker.

The 17 schools are:

1. Steer Town Primary and Junior High School, St. Ann
2. Somerton All-Age and Infant School, St. James
3. Newcombe Valley Primary School, St. Elizabeth
4. Morgan's Forest Primary and Infant, Clarendon
5. Mile Gully Primary School, Manchester
6. Kemps Hill High School, Clarendon
7. Garlogie Primary and Junior High, Clarendon
8. Chatsworth Primary and Infant School, St. James
9. Chantilly Primary School, Westmoreland
10. Bethlehem All Age and Infant School, St. Elizabeth
11. Ballards Valley Primary School, St. Elizabeth
12. Alston High School, Clarendon
13. Moore Town Primary & Junior High School, Portland
14. Chalky Hill All Age, St. Ann
15. Devon Primary, Manchester
16. Moneague Primary and Junior High, St. Ann

## 17. Yallahs High School, St. Thomas

In preparation for the phased resumption of face-to-face learning, the Ministry activated its processes with principals. At a meeting held on November 6, 2020, principals gave the assurance that they were ensuring that their schools were fully prepared for the reopening on Monday, November 9, 2020. This reopening was delayed by a day however, given the prevailing weather conditions over the past weekend and the challenges dealing with flooding in some areas. All schools received a satisfactory inspection from the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

Madame Speaker, through our regional directors, we received reports that the parents and teachers have expressed support for the pilot initiative, and some physically assisted with the preparatory activities.

Accommodations have been made for teachers and students with comorbidities. For example, the teacher with comorbidity or other issues would stay at home and provide the lessons remotely with the help of another teacher in-the classroom. Psychosocial sessions have commenced for the students and we will continue to ensure the fears, and anxiety of the stakeholders are addressed.

Furniture for schools have been delivered to ensure the observance of the social distancing protocol and obsolete items were removed from the school grounds.

The schools will have a staggered resumption with different year groups reporting on different days. The high schools and a few of the primary schools will utilise the rotational approach guided by the blended learning model.

Madame Speaker, the Ministry has also put in a place a rigorous programme to assist in the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot of the 17 schools to reopen for face-to-face classes.

The tools include:

- Monitoring & Evaluation Plan
- Monitoring & Evaluation Visitation Schedule (Data Collectors)
- School Resumption Observation Schedule & Checklist.
- Principal Interview Schedule
- Protocol for Administering Data Collection Instrument

### **Purpose of the Evaluation**

This evaluation will be conducted to determine the extent to which the reopening of 17 schools (pilot) during the COVID-19 Pandemic for a period of two (2) weeks was done efficiently. It aims to facilitate evidence-based decision making to determine the successes and highlight further consideration that needs to be given to the full and/or partial resumption of face-to-face instruction for the education system as a whole.

### **Sampling**

For the purpose of this evaluation, the Ministry's Planning and Development Division will seek responses from all students and teaching staff in these 17 schools using electronic questionnaires. The questionnaires will be shared through the Ministry-provided email addresses, the Regional School Improvement Officers, Supervision Education Officers and general Education Officers.

The population of students and teachers that attend face-to-face classes will be targeted for response. Parents of students will be asked to be present when students complete the questionnaires. All 17 schools will be visited by data collectors and the 17 principals (or vice principals) will be interviewed.

### **Methodology and Approach**

A mixed method approach is being utilized. Data collectors will collect both quantitative and qualitative type data for monitoring purposes that will inform

the progress of the initiative and will inform the evaluation at the end of the two weeks. Officers from the Planning and Development Division will participate in active monitoring exercises to provide systematic feedback at different intervals within the two weeks' period. To increase the reliability ratio of the judgments made, inter-rater reliability is required in the form of two simultaneous observers.

In the meantime, Madame Speaker, the three (3) approaches: Online, Audio-Visual and the Learning Kits will continue to be utilized by all schools including the 17 schools if so needed.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information remains committed to ensuring that no child is left behind.

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### **Own Your Own Device Incentive Programme (OYOD)**

Finally, Madame Speaker, I would like to share with Members the procedures for the distribution of tablets and laptops voucher application forms for the new Own Your Own Device Incentives Programme.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (MoEYI) has developed a Voucher Incentive Programme for students who are in need but are not on PATH.

The programme is called the **Own Your Own Device Incentive Programme**. The Government of Jamaica (GoJ) through the MoEYI has been utilizing technology to enrich and improve the educational levels of its students and move towards a fully connected and knowledge-based society. This incentivized programme will support the goals of the GoJ Vision 2030 outcomes to develop world class education and training, a technology-enabled society and an internationally competitive ICT industry structure.

The OYOD Programme is in keeping with the **Ministry's Bring Your Own Device Policy**, which outlines the specifications for tablets/laptops to be purchased.

The OYOD Incentive Programme seeks to benefit an estimated 36,000 needy students in primary and secondary schools across the island. A selection

mechanism has been proposed to make the determination regarding the 36,000 neediest students who are not on PATH.

**The criteria for selection are:**

1. Parents or guardians can apply through an established website, powered by eGov Jamaica or via a manual numbered application form available from their respective Members of Parliament or the Ministry's Regional Offices.
2. The website to use is **oyod.educate.gov.jm** and will begin accepting applications on **November 17, 2020**. The application process will close on **December 4, 2020**.
3. The distribution of the manual numbered application form by the Member of Parliament will commence on **November 17, 2020**.
4. The information via the website and the manual numbered application form will be verified to ensure the integrity of the application process and that there is no duplication of applications or devices to any one student.
5. Verification of students' information will be done by way of the electronic National Student Registration System (NSRS)
6. Verification of TRN numbers for parents or guardian will be done by way of the Tax Administration Jamaica's (TAJ's) database.

Madame Speaker, the following is the protocol for the electronic and manual numbered application form distribution:

1. Each Member of Parliament will receive **250** manually numbered application forms in sequence.
2. Application forms should only be distributed to parents of students who are **not** on PATH.
3. All areas on the form must be completed.
4. Forms must not be copied or reprinted.
5. Forms copied or reprinted will be rejected as these will not bear the security feature.
6. Information from the application form must be uploaded on the **oyod.educate.gov.jm** website before **December 4, 2020**.
7. In the unlikely event that a parent or guardian is unable to upload the information from the application form, the parent or guardian can send

the form to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information at the following address:

These can be addressed to:

**Attention – Own your Own Device Programme**

**2 – 4 National Heroes Circle, Building 1**

**Kingston 4**

8. Each form will be processed electronically; therefore, **ALL** forms must be uploaded.
9. A reference number will be sent via SMS and email to the phone number and /or email address provided by the parent or guardian upon submission of the application. This can be used for tracking purposes.
10. Once the information is verified, an electronic voucher will be submitted to the email address provided by the parent or guardian upon approval of the incentive. This eVoucher will serve as proof of eligibility for the incentive programme.
11. Parents or guardians are asked to visit an approved vendor to complete the purchase of a tablet or laptop utilizing the eVoucher.
12. NOTE: The value of the eVoucher is \$20,000. Parents or guardians will be responsible for the difference in the cost of the laptop or tablet.
13. Parents or guardians must present a valid ID when claiming this incentive. The eVoucher will be valid for 6 months.
14. Queries in relation to this programme can be made by calling 888-OYODNOW (888-696-3669) weekdays between the hours of 9am and 4pm or email oyod@moey.gov.jm

Madame Speaker, we are endeavouring to make as many of our Jamaican children as possible to have access to devices to help them into the transition to online learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century realities.