

# Face-to-Face Classes Resume Today

**A**LL STUDENTS are set to return to face-to-face learning effective today, March 7.

The Ministry of Education and Youth has provided \$430 million in additional support, to help with the full resumption classes.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Fayval Williams, made the disclosure during the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee, on March 3.

“Our children have been away from school since March 2020, except for brief periods last summer and since the virtual and face-to-face started in November of 2021, where we prioritise our exam students,” Mrs. Williams said.

She informed that 100,000 students on the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) will be provided with breakfast and 18,782 students with snacks, through the Nutrition Products Limited. The overall nutrition budget is \$6.583 billion.

Also under way are efforts to “help children recover from



**Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams (left), speaks at the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee in the House of Representatives, on March 3. With her is Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Maureen Dwyer (right).**

learning loss through customised learning, guided by assessment data,” the Minister noted.

“This will be school-based. There’ll be extended learning opportunities through the extra lessons and summer school programmes at a cost of \$250 million,” she pointed out.

She explained that Mathematics and Literacy coaches will work with “underperforming schools”, and that student coaching, co-teaching and co-planning parent sessions with maths and literacy camps will take place. Also included is capacity building for teachers.

Meanwhile, Minister Williams stated that of the 120,000 students who are not connected virtually or otherwise to schools, the Ministry has re-engaged approximately 40,000.

This has been achieved through the Yard to Yard, Find the Child initiative, which has a budget of \$103 million.

## Electrification and Water Supply Projects for Chamber’s Pen

THE MINISTRY of Local Government and Rural Development will be undertaking electrification and water supply projects in Chamber’s Pen, Hanover.

“In another couple of weeks, I will be signing the contract for [electrical] installation of 150 households in Chamber’s Pen and another 150 [communities] between the Corporate Area and Portland,” portfolio Minister, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, told JIS News.

The installation works will be undertaken as part of the Ministry’s Rural Electrification Programme (REP) being spearheaded by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF).



**Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie**

Chamber’s Pen will also be the focus of a major water supply project.

“An extensive amount of work [will be done] to bring water to the community... and that will be done by Rural Water Supply Limited (RWSL),” Minister McKenzie said, while addressing a water supply commissioning ceremony in Top Aberdeen in St. Elizabeth, recently.

Chamber’s Pen is the pilot community under the Ministry’s \$650-million Rural Development Programme.

The programme, which will create temporary and permanent employment opportunities across the country, includes the installation of water, electricity, internet access, roads, sidewalks, community parks and indigent housing.

**“An extensive amount of work [will be done] to bring water to the community... and that will be done by Rural Water Supply Limited (RWSL).”**

The programme aims to extend electricity to rural Jamaica as part of measures to stimulate economic and social activity and improve the quality of life in rural communities.

So far, several rural areas across the island have been benefiting from the project.

## 20 Students Arrive Home from Ukraine

TWENTY JAMAICAN students arrived safely at the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay on March 2 from Ukraine.

Their journey home was arranged by the Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

State Minister in the Ministry, Hon. Leslie Campbell, who was on hand to welcome the students, said that getting the students home safely was “always a priority”.

He noted that the Government has a “commitment and responsibility” to get “our students” out of harm’s way.



**Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Hon. Leslie Campbell (2nd right), was on hand to welcome Jamaican students on their arrival at the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay from Ukraine on March 2.**

Mr. Campbell said that the 20 students will be given all the support needed “in what must be a traumatising experience”.

“We have to ensure their mental state is ready,” he added. The State Minister, who was representing Portfolio

Minister, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, who was in Belize on official business, said the Jamaican Government stands in solidarity with Ukraine.

Medical student Chelsea Williams, who is in the fourth year of her programme, said she is happy to be back in Jamaica and will be taking time to contemplate her next steps.

## NIDS ID Cards to be Piloted in KSA

THE ISSUING of identification cards (IDs) under the National Identification System (NIDS) will begin through a pilot programme to be undertaken in Kingston and St. Andrew (KSA).

Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Floyd Green, said that the exercise is expected to kick off early in the second half of this year.

He was speaking during the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives on March 1.

The Minister informed that enrolment sites will be established at post offices in collaboration with the Post and Telecommunications Department “so that we can maximise existing resources”.

He indicated that once the pilot phase is completed, “then we will roll out island-wide, and we expect [this to



**Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Floyd Green (right), addressing the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives at Gordon House on March 1. At left is Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke.**

happen] towards the end [of this year] going into early next year”.

Minister Green said that the Office of the Prime Minister, under which NIDS falls, will also be partnering with the Registrar General’s Department and the Electoral Office of Jamaica to assist with the full rollout of ID cards across the island.

Jamaica’s national identification system will provide a comprehensive and secure structure to enable the collection and storage of identity information.

This secure, voluntary tool can also verify an individual’s identity, facilitate the electronic signing of documents and securely access a range of Government services online.

## Jamaica’s Fuel Supply Secure – Minister Vaz

MINISTER OF Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, says the country’s fuel arrangements are not in jeopardy, despite the instability in Eastern Europe.

He gave the assurance while providing an update on energy security and oil prices during the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives on March 3.

“I want to categorically state to the people of Jamaica that we have storage capacity both in Jamaica and outside of Jamaica, which is more than adequate for the island.



**Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, speaking during the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives on March 3.**

Minister Vaz informed that Jamaica currently sources both crude oil and finished product from Colombia, Equador, Brazil and Barbados.

“In the case of Barbados, we do about 60,000 barrels every two months. All of these are based on fixed contracts, some yearly and some shorter,” he noted.

Minister Vaz told the House that funds are available to make the necessary purchases.

“There is no need to panic as it relates to our supply and we will be [monitoring] the prices as things and time unfold,” he said.

Minister Vaz said the fact that there may be some dislocation in relation to supply from Russia, is an opportunity for others to ramp up to be able to meet that shortfall.

He is urging Jamaicans to practise energy conservation. “We have always talked about conservation, but we really have not practised it, and maybe this unfortunate situation is really a wake-up call for each and every one of us to take that responsibility into our own hands to be able to conserve and use less fuel,” he said.

**“This situation is being actively monitored and our supply chain is not in jeopardy.”**

“We are well secure in terms of our fuel arrangements,” he said, noting that the country has three to four weeks’ reserve supply of finished product and six weeks of crude.

“This situation is being actively monitored and our supply chain is not in jeopardy,” he stressed.

## Labour Ministry Acquires Buses for Overseas Employment Programme



**Minister of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Karl Samuda (centre), is joined by Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica, Her Excellency Emina Tudakovic (left), and Permanent Secretary for the Ministry, Colette Roberts Ridsen, in cutting the ribbon to officially commission into service two buses, which will enhance the services of the Overseas Employment Programme. The ceremony was held recently in downtown Kingston.**

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