



Ministry of  
Education & Youth



# The Ministry of Education and Youth Sectoral Presentation

Presenter: The Hon. Fayval Williams, Minister of Education and Youth

## **TRENDing:** Charting The Course for Jamaica's Educational Transformation







Ministry of  
Education & Youth



# The Ministry of Education and Youth Sectoral Presentation

Presenter: The Hon. Fayval Williams, Minister of Education and Youth

---

## TRENDing: Charting The Course For Jamaica's Educational Transformation

---

Wednesday, May 8, 2024



# Contents

4	Introduction
5	Commendations to our Teachers
6	School Violence
17	We are TRENDing
19	Indicators of Success
19	Time Frame for Transformation
24	Investment Needed for Transformation Implementation
27	Pillars of Transformation
o	Governance & Accountability
o	Early Childhood Sector
	• Special Needs Students
	• CPFSA
o	Teaching, Curriculum & Teacher Training
o	TVET
o	Infrastructure & Technology
o	Tertiary Education
o	Teacher Training Institutions
o	Council of Community Colleges of JA
o	Tertiary institutions
o	Youth Division
55	Finance
57	<b>Conclusion</b>





## Introduction

Madam Speaker, I rise in this most Honourable House to make my 8th contribution to the Sectoral Debates.

It would be remiss of me to not begin with gratitude and so I pause to thank the people of St. Andrew Eastern, for granting me the great honour and privilege to serve as their Member of Parliament. I also express my heartfelt thanks to the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, for allowing me to do so, as the Minister of Education & Youth.

Madam Speaker, it is not possible to execute my duties without the support of my husband, our two daughters, my extended family, my many friends, the committed Divisional Heads (Councillor Gary Gordon and Caretaker Councillor Phillips), my entire worker core, management team and supporters from St. Andrew Eastern and of course, my two Close Protection Officers who go above and beyond

the call of duty day after day. To each of you, I remain truly grateful.

I must also take the opportunity to thank the team at the Ministry of Education and Youth, led by Dr. Kasan Troupe, Permanent Secretary, Ms. Terry Ann Thomas Gayle, Chief Education Officer (Acting), the cadre of senior officers at the central Ministry and across the 7 regions, the staff, my trusted team in my office, including my advisors and the other members of the Executive Management team, portfolio agencies and all who serve the Ministry of Education & Youth in various capacities, for their individual and collaborative commitment in this consequential effort called **"Transforming Education For National Development (TREND)."**

Madam Speaker, let me also acknowledge our School Boards, our Principals, our Teachers, parents and the support staff in all our schools.



## Commendations to our Teachers

Today we celebrate Teachers' Day and to our Jamaican teachers, I categorically state that you are the backbone of our educational system and you deserve to be commended for your work. Madam Speaker, please allow me to pause, and extend a Happy Teachers' Day to all our educational practitioners. I say a big 'Thank you' for all you do.

It is through our school leaders and teachers that we have begun to see the implementation of the recommendations from the Professor Orlando Patterson led-Jamaica Education Transformation Commission (JETC) report commissioned by the Most Honourable Prime Minister. To date, we have begun the implementation of the recommendations in the education system which has **1,009 public schools, 2,431 Early Childhood Institutions, 500 prep and private high schools, 21 tertiary institutions, 600,000 students, 25,000 teachers** and approximately **400,000 additional stakeholders**.

In the words of Benjamin Franklin (who was also known to be an inventor) "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest." This underscores the idea that education and learning have enduring value and can yield significant returns over time.



# School Violence

Madam Speaker, I will begin with the immediate threat that concerns us the most, the matter of School Violence. It is true that it has overshadowed, in a most negative way, all the efforts of our principals, our teachers, parents, students and the Ministry of Education and Youth.

School Violence is student violence that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school, on the way to or from school-sponsored events, or during school-sponsored events.

School Violence disrupts learning and has a negative effect on students, schools and the broader communities.

Madam Speaker, when we look at the data from our Critical Incident Reports that schools are required to submit within 24 hours of the critical incident, for the period January 2022 -January 2023, a total of fifty five (55) Critical Incident Reports were submitted through the regional offices to the Safety and Security in Schools Unit at the central Ministry.

It is instructive to note that the 55 critical incidents occurred at 50 different schools (15 primary and 35 high schools). Five of the schools had two critical incidents each. These incidents range from gang violence to physical assault to robbery to break-ins at the school, to school bus accidents, to alleged sexual grooming, to drowning to vandalism, to stabbing, to attempted abduction, to brawls, to physical altercations between a principal and a parent, to a fire and to an alleged sexual assault.

While 50 schools represent approximately 5% of the total number of primary and secondary schools in the education sector,

these incidents of School Violence and assaults on school property are way too frequent for a small society such as Jamaica's where most of us know each other.

Madam Speaker, I want to say to Jamaicans, that if you think it is the sole responsibility of the principal, the teachers and the MoEY to solve School Violence, I humbly ask you to think again.

Yes, the education sector has a big role to play but it is the treatment that our children receive at home and in their communities that will determine their state of mind when they arrive at school. It is the very loud music and selectors screaming at the top of their voices until the wee hours of the morning during a school night in many communities that determine if our children arrive at school fully rested or simply exhausted from lack of sleep and just want to put their heads on the desk. It is the lewd lyrics being broadcast in some of the public passenger vehicles that our students have to travel in to get to school that will determine if they arrive at school in a calm spirit or sexually charged.

Add to this, the access to weapons and drugs and the fact that many of our children are witnessing violent acts in their homes and within their communities and it is not difficult to understand that it does not take much to spark School Violence. So, I reiterate, Madam Speaker that the responsibility lies with all of us, as Jamaicans. We all have a part to play in eradicating incidents of School Violence.

Madam Speaker, given that there are 190 school days in the school year, 55 critical incidents at our schools equate to a critical incident happening somewhere in the education sector every 3.5 school days. This is utter madness, Madam Speaker.





## Prevention Efforts

Madam Speaker, we have employed an approach that is multi-pronged and it starts with **The Safety and Security Policy** that is designed to prevent violence. It clearly spells out how to implement physical security measures such as searches of students' school bags, organising training programmes for school personnel to recognise warning signs and intervene effectively, counselling at-risk individuals, developing crisis and emergency plans, assigning roles for students, parents, and the community, and addressing and resolving conflicts in a constructive manner.

Currently, School Resource Officers (police officers) are assigned to a group of schools, and though no longer physically operating from our educational institutions, they continue to provide valuable support to schools. This support includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Coordination of searches, upon request
- Regular school visits
- Motorised patrols in the general school environs before and after school hours
- Regular patrols in the transport and town centres to prevent students loitering during school hours
- Safety Audits and reports, upon request
- Investigation of critical incidents
- Training session for staff and students
- Motivational talks
- Gang prevention intervention
- Summer camps
- Mentorship programme

Madam Speaker, we have several Behavioural Support Services in Schools

### 1. School-Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (SWPBIS)

is in 509 primary and secondary schools. SWPBIS is a framework designed to enhance students' understanding of behaviour expectations at school. SWPBIS builds and/or changes the social culture within the schools in which it is practised. This is a universal, school-wide prevention strategy aimed at reducing behaviour problems that lead to discipline referrals and suspensions and change perceptions of school safety.

### 2. Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)

is a life skills-focused education process to help students achieve their potential and assure their healthy contribution to the social, cultural and economic development of Jamaica. This is time-tabled and is taught from primary through to secondary. It focuses on:

- Problem solving
- Conflict resolution
- How to deal with stress
- How to say NO
- How to walk away



# Behavioural Support Services in Schools

HFLE also provides Guidance and Counselling to individuals, groups and families

### 3. Civics Education -

Since December 2022, Civics was reintroduced in schools. There are three levels to the Civics in school programme:

#### Grades 1-3

Awakening of Awareness

#### Grades 4-6

Awakening of Social Consciousness

#### Grades 7-9

Awakening of Social Responsibility

Civics Education encourages good citizenship, greater respect for cultural integrity, nation-building, among other things. Civics Education helps to create a Jamaican who is confident and productive, a Jamaican who is a successful lifelong learner, a Jamaican who is deeply rooted in the Jamaican culture, a Jamaican who understands his or her rights and responsibilities as a Jamaican citizen, and a Jamaican who understands him or herself as an individual and as a member of a group endowed with God-given abilities.

### 4. Guidance Programmes

and summer interventions

### 5. Counselling Services to include fully funded counselling from external clinicians

(internal and external referrals) and home visits. Counselling is mandated for all students who are suspended for breach of school rules especially where violent behaviour is concerned. Follow up must be done to ensure this is being maintained.

### 6. Student Leadership Development (peer counsellors, student councillors, prefects, club leaders etc.)

### 7. Restorative Practice Training Programme

Earlier this year, in February, the Ministry of Education & Youth signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the continued delivery of Restorative Practice training in schools across Jamaica. Through this agreement, 500 schools will be targeted and some 12,500 participants that include school administrators, educators, students, parents and guardians will be trained.

In the previous year under the MOU of May 2022, training took place in 258 schools impacting more than 7,900 students, 1,109 educators and 1,034 family members.

Restorative Justice is an important tool in reducing violence by enabling individuals to have access to a dispute resolution process at the early stage of conflict to avoid escalations to violent reactions.

Madam Speaker, Restorative Justice goes further by holding the offender accountable in a more meaningful way by focusing on repairing the harm that has been caused by the offence, helping to integrate the offender into the community and achieving a sense of healing for both the victim and the community.

**8. Clubs and Societies** (uniform groups) and sporting programmes.

Uniform groups in schools such as Girl Guides, Brownies, Boys Brigade, Cub Scouts, Cadets, and Pathfinders have played an invaluable role in shaping the character and awakening the social conscience of our young people for decades. The MoEY continues to give support and continually reaches out to our parents to be trained so they can lead one or more of these groups. We could expand the uniform groups significantly if more adult volunteers would make themselves available to be trained. We encourage you to come on board.

**9. Partnership support** - schools have partnership support such as pastors in schools, chaplains, Peace and Justice Centres, Clinicians, inter-ministerial initiatives, local police and non-governmental organisations such as Jamaica Conservation Development Trust as well as programmes implemented by our International Development Partners such as UNICEF and USAID-Positive Pathways

**10. Capacity building and Programme Development** for school staff and development of responsive programmes for implementation at the school level is undertaken by the MoEY on a continuous basis, e.g. the Psychosocial Week.

## Behavioural Support Services in Schools cont.

**11. Literacy and Numeracy initiatives** -

I hope all Jamaicans get to see the videos of the significant impact our literacy and numeracy initiatives are having. The students involved are expressing delight at the significant improvement in their reading and ability with numbers much of which will be scaled in the upcoming school year.

**12. Parental Engagement and Training Programmes** in schools to strengthen home-support partnerships - in this year alone and to date we have reached over 81,000 parents through training initiatives.

**13. Boots on the Ground**

We have 1,098 Guidance Counsellors. In our larger schools we have two (2) guidance counsellors per school while for smaller schools we have shared service.

Deans of Discipline total 140 across our high schools. In some schools, senior teachers are given additional responsibility and an allowance to carry out the role of Dean of Discipline. Each year, we add to the cadre of Guidance Counsellors in our schools in order to get to a more manageable ratio of Guidance Counsellors to students.

**14. USAID Positive Pathways Programme** has a curriculum and training is provided to guidance counsellors in 12 schools impacting approximately 450 students.





## Behavioural Support Services in Schools cont.

**15.** Another USAID programme is called **“Transforming our Perspective - Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.”** Its focus is on changing your thinking. Ten (10) schools and 150 students benefited from this programme.

**16. Case Management** - social workers intervene in the 34 schools in the ZOSO communities. The 34 schools couple safety and security with literacy initiatives. This is an inter-ministerial schools’ strategy which seeks to provide support for children who display anti-social behaviour in schools.

**17. In December 2023,** we introduced our **Behaviour Change Student Support Team Approach.** We allocated an additional \$72 million to support the Behaviour Change Support Services for Students initiative in schools. Our Deans of Discipline came forward with this idea to combine all the efforts in our schools being led by all the helping professionals in the school. So the classroom/form teacher + Dean of Discipline + Guidance Counsellor + school nurse + HFLE + Principal or the Vice-Principal form one unit to provide collaborative support services for the students.

**18.** We also worked with the **Jamaica Conservation Development Trust** which has been partnering with us to do behaviour

change. They take students deemed high risk on hikes and offer therapeutic sessions.

**19.** We have implemented **Psychosocial Week**, a time when our schools pause the regular curriculum. Specialists are engaged to do therapy, role playing, how to focus on conflict skills, how to walk away, Inspirational sessions and motivational talks. Schools can do this repeatedly depending on their context.

**20.** School administrators can **call in the MoEY** if they feel overwhelmed. We help them to find resource personnel.

**21. Clinical services** are also provided. - Each region has a list of specialists who provide private service to the country. Students are referred if the Guidance Counsellors feel overwhelmed. This service is available to students and teachers and has an annual budget of \$15 million.

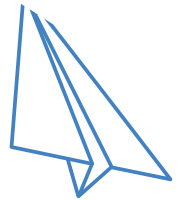
**22.** Madam Speaker, recently Jamaica, through the Ministry of National Security signed a **£15 million Violence Prevention Partnership** to last for over six (6) years. This will also be focused on developing effective responses to School Violence.

**23. Parenting.** We are very encouraged with the take-up of our parenting sessions.



## Regional Updates

Region	# of Schools in Region	# of Schools Reporting	# of Parents Attended
Region 1	<b>153</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>10,712</b>
Region 2	<b>162</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>8,400</b>
Region 3	<b>121</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>12,129</b>
Region 4	<b>145</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>8379</b>
Region 5	<b>161</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>10,240</b>
Region 6	<b>127</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>9,080</b>
Region 7	<b>118</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>10,274</b>
Total		<b>580</b> <small>(4% increase since 03.28.2024)</small>	<b>69,214</b> <small>1.7% increase since 04.19.2024)</small>
		<b>NPSC</b>	<b>12,308</b>
			<b>81,522</b>





## Regional Updates

The topics covered in these sessions are many:

### Topics covered

- Developmental Challenges in Childhood
- Parenting with a Purpose
- Being a Supportive Parent
- Understanding more about Disabilities in Children
- PATH Information Session
- Investing In Your Child's Future Goals
- 21st century parenting
- Building Self Esteem in Children
- Child Rights
- Communicating with children about difficult times
- A call to Action, Participation Matters
- How to continue the Learning process at home
- Communicating With Your Child
- Academic Success! How do i help my child to maximize his full potential
- Academic Support
- Being a positive role model
- Being a present Parent
- Being a Supportive Parent
- Budgeting 101
- Building Relationships - Setting up my child for success
- Cannabis Edibles
- Career Development
- Caring For Our Children: Rewards and Consequences
- Celebrating Excellence
- Child & Adolescents Development
- Child Care and Protection Act
- "Preserving the Environment- A S.T.E.M. Approach"
- Conflict in the Family
- Co-parenting, Bullying, self care

- Coping with differences in children
- Identifying and Treating with substance use and Abuse among Teenagers
- Cyber Safety: Protecting Your Children Online
- Different styles of parenting
- Discipline and your child
- Emotional and Mental Health
- Employability Skills
- Fathers make a Difference
- Knowledge is Power: Wise parents make smart decisions
- Managing your Stress
- Men of Valor: Taking Action in their Child's life
- Minimizing the effects of seperation
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Craft/Decoration For The Home
- Parental Involvement: A crucial Tool for Social Development
- Parental Wows and Woes
- Reclaiming our School through Prayer and Becoming Better Parents through Increased Knowledge
- Restorative Justice
- Sex and Sexuality
- Turning Skills into Profit

### Activities

- Mother & son day
- Father and daughter day
- Mothers Lunch hour
- Game session for mothers
- Evening of Appreciation
- Bring a parent to school day
- Health & Wellness Fair for parents
- Outstanding Parent Award ceremony
- Parent Empowerment and Appreciation Session
- Karaoke Night
- Prayer Breakfast
- Parent Expo
- Wellness Check Day
- School and Community Awareness Fair



### Duration of Parenting Sessions

Parent sessions vary between 1hr to 3hrs depending on the session topics and activities that are carried out by the coordinators at the school.

This effort has been with the help of the European Union through the Citizen Security Program. We are grateful and implore them to continue the very important partnership with the much needed funds they provide. We are seeing results.

Madam Speaker, effective parenting can work with the other interventions to reduce School Violence so too will all the multi-pronged efforts that we are putting into transforming the educational landscape in Jamaica.

The Jamaica Education Transformation Commission (JETC) calls for us to increase parent and community engagement with schools in specific ways such as through:

- Education programmes for parents after school
- Micro enterprise programme at schools targeting parents

Madam Speaker, we have embarked on these recommendations.

Parent & Community Engagement	Short Term	Medium Term
<p>OSF13: Increase parent and community engagement with schools.</p> <p>Pathway: PfL Finance: RA (OSF13.3); NF (OSF13.4)</p>	<p>OSF13.1 Include Parental and community involvement indicator in school inspections at all level.</p>	<p>OSF13.2 Increase capability of schools to engage with parents and community.</p> <p>OSF13.3 Implement education programmes for parents after school</p> <p>OSF13.4 Implent micro enterprise programme at schools targeting parents</p>

### **Inter-Ministerial School Support Strategy**

Madam Speaker, another avenue of service is the Inter-Ministerial School Support Strategy (formerly the 25 Schools Strategy) that is a three-year initiative that has been aligned to the Government of Jamaica's Citizen Security Plan. The Strategy represents an integrated approach to the delivery of educational services through targeted interventions geared at providing wrap-around services to over 25,000 children enrolled in thirty-four schools located within or serving the seven communities declared as Zones of Special Operation (ZOSOs).

The strategy, Madam Speaker, has one overarching goal with five desired outcomes. Additionally, there are four components that represent the main categories of needs identified across the thirty four schools guided by the findings and recommendations of the National Education Inspectorate (NEI) report. The proposed response treatments/ initiatives are based on the specific needs identified under the four components and contribute to the achievement of the overall goal and the desired outcomes.

The goal is to improve social, emotional, behavioural, and academic outcomes for students, in particular those at high-risk of violent behaviour.

And the outcomes are to:

- 1)** Improve student attendance and performance
- 2)** Improve delivery of education services
- 3)** Decrease in problem behaviours (including student involvement in gangs)

- 4)** Decrease in office disciplinary referrals, suspensions and expulsions
- 5)** Increased student perception of school safety and security

Madam Speaker, during the fiscal year, some of the noted achievements include:

### **The introduction of the Literacy Education Acceleration Programme.**

Through this intervention, the Ministry partnered with:

- The European Union to procure and pilot the ARROW Literacy Software in six high schools (Haile Selassie High, Kingston High, Norman Manley High, Holy Trinity High, Spot Valley High and Grange Hill High). We are seeing improved literacy levels for the students involved in the program.

- The Creative Language Based Learning (CLBL) Foundation to train and equip teachers with the Linda Moodie Bell resources to improve the delivery of remedial literacy and numeracy intervention programme in five schools (Denham Town High, Kingston High, Edward Seaga Primary, St. Andrew Primary and Holy Family Primary).

- The European Union-Jamaica, 5/10 K Walk/Run held in March 2023 and 2024 in downtown Kingston. Proceeds from both events were committed to fund CLBL literacy intervention summer camp in four schools.

### **Psychosocial Intervention Programmes**

- Through partnership with the Ministry of National Security to provide case

management and clinical services to medium and high risk students and their families.

### **Behaviour Change Intervention Programmes**

- Through partnership with UNESCO, USAID Positive Pathways, the Jamaica Conservation Development Trust, Nestle Jamaica Foundation, MultiCare Youth Foundation, and Fight for Peace to provide behaviour change intervention programmes for medium and high risk students.

### **Capacity Building Training**

- Through partnership with the Ministry's National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL), we provide capacity building training to principals and middle managers.

### **Anti- Gang in Schools Week, 2023**

Madam Speaker, the National Assessment of School Safety and Security, 2023, has revealed that 62.2 per cent of students indicated they had no knowledge of their peers being gang members. However, 20% of students indicated that they knew students in their schools who were members of a gang. For this reason, the Ministry of Education and Youth, through its Safety and Security in Schools Unit and in collaboration with the Jamaica Constabulary Force's Community Safety and Security Branch and Counter Terrorism and Organized Crime Investigation Branch (C-TOC) remain committed to its annual Anti-Gang in Schools Week.

Activities included church services, media interviews with the MoEY and the JCF's

Community Safety and Security Branch and CTO, delivery of the Anti-Gang sessions by HFLE teachers, virtual Anti-Gang workshops for school administrators, deans of discipline, Guidance Counsellors, HFLE teachers, a virtual town hall meeting, motivational talks, and a concert.

### **Safety and Security - CCTV**

Madam Speaker, in addition to all the programmes and initiatives, we deploy cameras in our schools to help us detect and deter. Based on a recent survey, one hundred and fifty four (154) of our schools have installed a total of one thousand nine hundred and fifty five (1,955) cameras. We have started to replace approximately 30% of them so we have better technology. We have embarked on a significant procurement of cameras in order to outfit all our schools with CCTV cameras. We should be able to put out the tender by the first term of the next school year.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Education and Youth continues to forge strategic partnerships with key Ministries, Departments and Agencies, International Development Partners and Civil Society Organisations to address anti-social and in some instances, criminal behaviours in our nation's students. As I stated earlier, this is not something that the Ministry of Education and Youth can do alone.

Madam Speaker, on this very serious matter of violence in schools, allow me to acknowledge the presence of Andrew Young. Andrew, seated in the gallery, is a 35 year old

male who, like many of our youngsters, grew up feeling rejected and so sought refuge in a school gang back in first form. It was at that same time, that he was introduced to a gun. Despite moving schools, he kept associating with the wrong crowds and was incarcerated a few times. His experiences, however, were not in vain and today he stands as a testament to resilience and as a symbol of hope for many students today. Andrew has turned his life around. He has even written a book, "The Power of Pain." This is a man who has changed his life through support and who is now committed to impacting positive change in youth. I share Andrew's story

with you all today, because I want all young people listening to know that all is not lost; you may have messed up but you can wheel and come again.

Andrew, thank you for sharing your story with us and also for being here today. We, as a government, as a Ministry of Education and Youth are committed to continue taking proactive measures to prevent violence, respond effectively to incidents and support those affected.



Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) beneficiaries' success stories bear testament to the programme's resilience and the collective will of our nation to ensure that no one is left behind





## We are TRENDing

Madam Speaker, all of our children and us as adults are living in the Fourth Industrial Revolution with technologies that are reshaping industries, economies, and even society itself, profoundly influencing how we live and work.

As we move forward into this Fourth Industrial Revolution, our children, our students, and all of us will need to adapt to the changing demands that require creativity, problem-solving, adaptability, digital literacy and emotional intelligence. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education is an interdisciplinary approach to learning that integrates concepts and principles from these four disciplines. STEM education aims to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world driven by innovation and technology.

In STEM education, students engage in hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences that emphasise problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Rather than learning subjects in isolation, students explore real-world challenges and apply concepts and methods from science, technology, engineering and mathematics to find solutions.

STEM education is not just about memorising facts or formulas; it's about fostering curiosity, experimentation, and a deep understanding of how the world works. It often involves activities such as experiments, coding, robotics, design projects, and mathematical modelling.

STEM education is increasingly recognized as essential for preparing students for the demands of the 21st-century workforce, where skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are highly valued. It also plays a crucial role in addressing global challenges such as climate change, healthcare, energy and sustainable development.

Two weeks ago, our Most Honourable Prime Minister declared Jamaica a STEM Island. This means that as a country we want to see our education sector graduating STEM students. We want to be known as a STEM-graduate producing country, one that promotes the creative and logical thinking skills of our students.

Madam Speaker, we identified one of the six locations in Bernard Lodge, St. Catherine to locate the first STEM school. Since then the land has been transferred to the MoEY and the design work has begun. We have also identified another location in St. Ann. Land transfer is in progress and other works have begun.

# Jamaica Declared a STEM Island

Posted on April 29, 2024 by OPM  
Communications



*"I am pleased to declare Jamaica a STEM island with a vision of fostering innovation, driving economic growth and empowering our people to thrive in the global knowledge economy"*



RIGHT: Jamaica was dubbed 'STEM Island' by the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica at the transformative 'Future Ready International Conference' at UTech. This conference is a beacon of innovation, equipping us with the tools and knowledge to shape the future of education in an AI-driven world. Let's dream bigger, think forward, and strengthen our commitment to empowering students and educators. Together, we'll build a brighter tomorrow through STEM education and 21st-century skills development.



## The TREND Campaign

365 recommendations.  
Implementation work has started  
on 101 of the recommendations

Madam Speaker, The “Transforming Education for National Development (TREND)” public education campaign is designed to build public awareness regarding the 365 recommendations as outlined in the Jamaica Education Transformation Commission: The Reform of Education in Jamaica, 2021 Report that was tabled in this Honourable House in May 2023 and in the Senate in June 2023. The reports, the long one and the abridged version, are available on our website and that of the Prime Minister as well.

### **TREND is not a PR Stunt!**

Through Town Hall meetings, school visits (which are referred to as Pop Ups) at schools such as Black River High School, St. Andrew High School, Wycliffe Martin High and Anchoy High School, principal engagement sessions and board chairmen and bursars stakeholder engagements, virtually and face to face, we continue to spread the message of education transformation. Madam Speaker, we have been utilising every media platform (traditional and non-traditional) that we can to appeal to the minds and hearts of Jamaicans for their support. The

education sector cannot transform without the buy-in of parents, communities and the wider Jamaica.

The TREND campaign allows Jamaicans to be a part of the process as we seek to implement the 365 recommendations, many of which are in similar reports dating back to 2004, some 20 years ago.

Madam Speaker, there is a strong resolve in the MoEY led by PS Troupe that this time, this time, the MoEY cannot afford to not implement. The MoEY cannot afford to falter. So, we have committed our collective strengths to getting results and that is why we took the time to develop an Implementation Plan with the help of the Mona School of Business. Having taken on the full responsibility for that implementation plan and in order to be true to our ideals, we have a technical team that is charged with leading the coordination of these efforts and a team responsible for monitoring and reporting on the process.

### **Time Frame for Transformation and the Success Expected**

Madam Speaker, it is intended that after eight years of the transformation and by working through the seven pillars that guide the 365 recommendations, the Ministry of Education & Youth will have achieved success on many fronts:

*This table outlines the current rate of the success against the future targets set for the 2031 period.*

Indicator of Success	Current Achievement - 2023	2031 Projections
<b>1. Literacy Rate at the grade 4 level</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Numeracy Rate at the grade 4 level</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<p><b>2. Effective Transitioning at All Levels</b></p> <p><b>Early Childhood</b>                      Number of students achieving developmental milestones to access primary level education as measured by the Jamaica School Readiness Assessment (JSRA)</p> <p><b>Areas of Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental Disability Screen</li> <li>• Child Behaviour Screen</li> <li>• Assessment of Academic Readiness Skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>27,179</b>  <b>4-year-olds assessed in 2022</b></p> <p><b>17,161</b> or <b>63%</b> of children require no action</p> <p><b>2,345</b> or <b>8.6%</b> of children-need increased monitoring in class</p> <p><b>7,673</b> or <b>28.2%</b> of children referred to 2nd-level screening ASQ-J</p>	<p>At least <b>90%</b></p> <p>No more than <b>5%</b></p> <p>No more than <b>5%</b></p>
<p><b>Primary</b></p> <p>% of students attaining proficiency and highly proficiency in all subjects at Grade 6 level by 2026</p>	<p>Language Arts - <b>60%</b></p> <p>Mathematics - <b>57%</b></p> <p>Science - <b>64%</b></p> <p>Social Studies - <b>67%</b></p>	<p>Language Arts - at least <b>95%</b></p> <p>Mathematics - at least <b>80%</b></p>



Indicator of Success	Current Achievement - 2023	2031 Projections
		Science - at least <b>90%</b> Social Studies - at least <b>90%</b>
<b>Secondary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematics - CSEC</li> <li>• English - CSEC</li> <li>• City &amp; Guilds English</li> <li>• City &amp; Guilds- Mathematics</li> <li>• Skill area</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>41.6%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>71.6%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>87.1%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>69.6%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">                         NQV-J – <b>57%</b>                          SPA – <b>53%</b>                          TecVoc Subjects at CSEC – <b>87%</b> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>70%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>95-97%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>98%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>90-95%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">                         NQV-J – <b>90%</b>                          SPA – <b>90%</b>                          TecVoc Subjects at CSEC – <b>95%</b> </p>
<b>3. Student Readiness for Higher Learning and the World of Work</b>  % of students sitting exams and passing five or more subjects including English & Math	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>60-80%</b>
<b>4. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)</b>	<b>Level 2</b> (Basic level of ability)	<b>2029/30</b>  <b>Level 4</b> (student with moderate ability) & <b>Level 5</b> (students with high ability)

Indicator of Success	Current Achievement - 2023	2031 Projections
<p><b>5. Teacher Competency</b></p> <p><b>Measured by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualification in teaching</li> <li>• School-level Performance Evaluation Report</li> <li>• Completion of Professional Development training minimum annually requirements</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>80%</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No collated data in the MoEY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Minimum standard not yet determined (awaiting The JTC Bill)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>100%</b></p> <p>80% or more of our teachers attaining overall ratings of proficient to exemplary</p>
<p><b>6. Quality of Leadership</b></p> <p><b>Measured by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-based leadership and management measured by NEI</li> <li>• School-level Performance Evaluation Report</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>62%</b> (Satisfactory)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No collated data in the MoEY</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>At least 90%</b> (Good)</p>

Indicator of Success	Current Achievement - 2023	2031 Projections
<b>7. Holistic Education</b> Students' personal and social development as rated by the NEI	<b>70%</b> (Satisfactory)	At least <b>90%</b>
<b>8. Completion Rate</b>	<b>85%</b>	At least <b>95%</b>
<b>9. School Performance Ratings measured by the NEI Reports</b>	Needs Immediate Support – 3 Unsatisfactory - 238 Satisfactory – 527 Good – 57 Exceptional High – 14	At least <b>80%</b> of schools rated good and above

## Investment Needed for Transformation Implementation

Madam Speaker, we know that investment will be needed to fully implement all the recommendations. We utilised the Mona School of Business to estimate the quantum of the investment that would be required.

Of the 7 Pillars of Transformation, Infrastructure & Technology (Pillar #5) requires the most investments to implement. The infrastructure component will take the longest time period as well, approximately 20 years, because we have to significantly upgrade many of 1,009 primary and secondary schools. Full technology implementation to all our schools will take approximately 8 years to complete. We are 2 years into the technology transformation of the education sector. While technology will take 8 years to complete.

Based on the outcomes desired, we should be investing 0.3 % of GDP annually to keep up with the maintenance needs, school upgrading, construction of additional schools and maintaining scheduled upgrade of the infrastructure of our schools to bring them up to and keep them at acceptable standards for our students, teachers and administrators.

Since 2021, the year of the transformation report, we have spent approximately \$1.2 billion for critical maintenance. For major infrastructure works we have spent approximately \$2 billion. Together, this totals \$3.2 billion.

For Technology, the amount that we should be investing is 0.1% of GDP annually to build out and keep our technology in schools current.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to announce that the investment in technology is already paying dividends. Never before in the history of Jamaica has there been so many schools with Broadband and internet connectivity. We just recently completed putting Wi-Fi in all our schools in St. Thomas. Gone are the days when connectivity was only available in the administrative office at a school. We are doing all we can to open up access to technology in our schools and so we are pleased to note that to-date 672 of our schools have internet connection and our work continues to have all 1,009 schools so equipped.





# Investment Needed for Transformation Implementation cont.

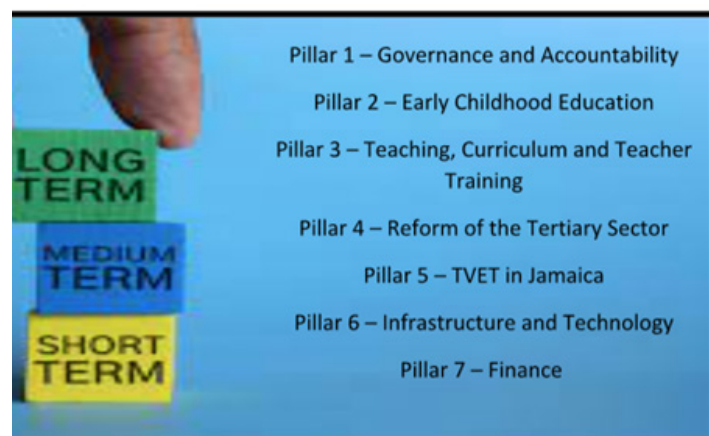
Together, infrastructure and technology accounts for approximately 69.2% of the total estimated investment in transformation.

In terms of investment, **Infrastructure & Technology** is followed by Pillar #2, Early Childhood Education. This is estimated to require investment of 13.6% of the total investment of transformation. This equates to 0.2% of GDP annually.

**Teaching, Curriculum and Teacher Training** (Pillar #3) is expected to require investment equating to 10.2% of the total investment required for transformation or approximately 0.2% of GDP annually.

Madam Speaker, these 3 Pillars account for 93% of the total investment estimated for transformation.

## The Pillars of Transformation



Madam Speaker, the Jamaica Education Transformation Commission report has 365 recommendations across seven pillars that include Governance and Accountability, Early Childhood Education, Teaching, Curriculum and Teacher Training, Tertiary, TVET, Infrastructure and Technology and Finance. The recommendations for each Pillar have been prioritised as short -term (2 years), medium-term (3 years) and long-term (4 to 8 years). In the case of Infrastructure, it is 20 years.

I am happy to report that so far work has begun on **101** of the 365 recommendations.

The table hereunder provides a breakdown of the progress made or otherwise, under each Pillar.

PILLARS	COMMENCED/ ON TRACK	ACHIEVED	LAGGING
1. Governance & Accountability	23	3	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. 9 - Make public reports on school financial, academic and NEI reports</li> <li>No. 14 – Implementation of Education Management Information System</li> </ul>
2. Early Childhood	5	1	1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. 33 -Measures to improve the quality of pre-service and in-service teachers at the early childhood level implemented</li> <li>Lagging in Sub activity 2.2.2.2 Request approval for increased budget to support in-service training of practitioners</li> </ul>
3. Teaching, Curriculum & Teacher Training	28	1	0
4. Tertiary Sector	11	0	0
5. TVET	7	0	0
6. Infrastructure & Technology	13	1	0
7. Finance	4	0	1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. 101 - Allocation of budgetary resources to the early childhood level gradually increased to an initial target of 10 per cent of per capita GDP, and to the primary level</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL 101</b>			

## Education Transformation Oversight Committee (ETOC)

Naming the Education Transformation Oversight Committee (ETOC) was the first of the 365 recommendations to be implemented. I must pause to thank the members of ETOC for their many hours of service. ETOC is chaired by Dr. Adrian Stokes who is relentless in ensuring results. I want to especially thank him for his insights and encouragement along with the cross section of stakeholders and Ministry of Education & Youth team members including the Chief Education Transformation Officer and support team. ETOC meets weekly to guide the work outlined in the Implementation Plan.

Madam Speaker, let me also take this opportunity to share that to date, ETOC has delivered 4 quarterly reports to the nation; and just two weeks ago I laid the most recent report before this Honourable House.

After one year into our efforts, I can say definitively that the transformation of the education sector is on in earnest. Thank you to the entire team across the education sector for your embrace of transformation.

As we align ourselves with the vision of our stakeholders being the best versions of themselves: students with good reading skills, more of them liking and performing well in the areas of Math, Science and other subjects, but not solely displaying higher intelligence quotient (IQ) levels but also displaying high levels of emotional intelligence (EQ).

Madam Speaker, we are also working to build out a sector with trained parents who are supported and who give support; with teachers who are passionate and who believe in continuous quality instruction. It is to this end that we continue in our efforts to share the Philosophy of Education for Jamaica that reads:

Philosophy of Education for Jamaica

“Under God, the Jamaican educational philosophy embraces diverse learning capacity and styles aiming to nurture each learner’s full potential. We provide a comprehensive education, blending academic and vocational pursuits with values-based teaching and life skills. Our focus is on fostering community harmony, appreciating our cultural heritage, promoting inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and respect for all. Through this approach, we aim to cultivate learners’ understanding of themselves, respect for humanity and love for country as embodied in our National Vision, Anthem and Pledge.”

This is the result of multiple consultations with key stakeholders from the ecumenical education group, the umbrella group of churches, the Jamaica Teachers Association (JTA), National Secondary Students Council (NSSC), Jamaica Prefects Association (JPA), Jamaica Union of Tertiary Students (JUTS), Jamaica Association of Principals of Secondary School (JAPASS and the

# Education Transformation Oversight Committee (ETOC) cont.

Association of Principals and Vice Principals (APVP) along with members of the Ministry of Education & Youth.

This is the 2nd completed recommendation of the 365 recommendations. Our job now is to make this Philosophy widely known and embraced by all.



## PILLAR 1 GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Madam Speaker, Pillar number 1 of our Education Transformation is Governance & Accountability.

Good governance is a key element in the ability to steer an education system as complex and young as Jamaica's, with multiple actors each playing varied roles. Decisions regarding the use of funds in the sector, channels of accountability, and agenda setting, all related to governance, will impact the overall effectiveness of an education system. Ensuring quality education is therefore dependent on the existence

of good governance and relies on the five principles of:

- Legitimacy and voice
- Performance
- Fairness
- Accountability; and
- Direction

The key recommendations of the Commission are grouped under three (3) broad headings: **Governance, Accountability, and Legislative Changes.**

- The reform of the board selection process to improve the selection of effective boards
- Increased training for school boards
- Enhanced training of principals especially in relation to change management and financial management

Madam Speaker, this in the main seeks to transform the governance of schools and tertiary public educational institutions in our country in light of the proven positive relationship between effective governance and student performance.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise this Honourable House that the transformation of the governance agenda is at an advanced stage as several initiatives are being pursued as we speak. These include:

### **Modernisation of the School Board Appointment Process**

Madam Speaker, a comprehensive set of revised procedures has been developed in keeping with the recommendations of the JETC Report in the quest to identify ideal candidates to serve as Board Chairs and Council Nominees. The revised procedures include a suite of criteria governing qualification and fit and proper guidelines, among other things. Other activities that are being pursued include:

- (i) Reviewing the performance of School Boards at the end of each Board cycle with the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation framework;
- (ii) Training of School Board Members continues to be a major priority for the National Council on Education to equip them with the necessary

tools to execute their mandate efficiently and effectively.

- (iii) Streamlining the current School Governance Arrangements – by exploring the efficacy of the Joint Board arrangement in governing several smaller schools at a given time;
- (iv) Acknowledging our school board members

I must share with the members of this Honourable House that School Board members constitute one of the largest corps of volunteers in our country. They total almost 10,000 and they give many hours and oftentimes, they give of their own resources to help our schools. They have the responsibility for ensuring fidelity to the Education Act and Regulation. It is against this background that the service they provide is valued and acknowledged.

The National Council on Education, the public body that has overall responsibility for the governance portfolio, is being strengthened institutionally to carry out this mandate in a more streamlined and effective manner to ensure that our schools and tertiary public educational institutions are effectively governed.

### **Structural Review of the NCE**

Already, a structural review of the NCE has been completed to strengthen the organisation's capacity against its designated legislative functions and to equip the organisation to function more efficiently and effectively. A revised organisational structure has been completed and job descriptions have been developed.



### **Improving the Accountability of School Boards**

Improving the accountability of our School Boards remains high on the policy agenda. An electronic portal for the uploading of confirmed School Board minutes has been implemented to provide greater support to the institutions against the background of improving the accountability of the Boards. The establishment of the portal is part of a wider strategy to support schools in their

quest to improve student performance. The portal/platform is designed as an effective tool to provide greater support to our school board chairmen and members who have wide-ranging functions. This is aimed at improving the accuracy of their decisions in keeping with the legal and regulatory framework as research has shown, Madam Speaker, we know that where there is effective governance, our students are well served and their learning enhanced.

## **PILLAR 2**

# **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### **Early Childhood Education**

Early Childhood Education is the second pillar of our education transformation!

Madam Speaker, Jamaica has a long tradition of concern for its pre-school population. The Early Childhood Commission (ECC), incorporated in 2003, is responsible for developing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plans and programmes relating to early childhood, acting as a coordinating agency to ensure effective streamlining of all activities relating to early childhood development, supervising and regulating early childhood institutions,

and convening consultations with relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

As we continue the transformation of Jamaica's education system, it is without a doubt agreed across all levels of our society that there must be a special focus on strengthening the early childhood sector as fundamental to any progress we are to make as a developing country.

Jamaica presently boasts one of the world's highest rates of enrolment in early childhood institutions (ECIs): in 2019, some 12.0% of the 0-2 year population and 93.4% of the 3-5 year old. Approximately 107,337 children are enrolled in brain build centres, basic schools,

government owned infant departments and infant schools and privately owned early childhood institutions (ECIs).

Of the 2,371 ECIs that are registered, the ECC reports that 471 (19.87%) are identified as public institutions fully funded by the Government of Jamaica in ECIs while 80.13% are privately run.

The ECC continues its work under the mandate to increase quality early childhood programmes and services within a healthy, safe and nurturing environment. To that end, we are taking a double-pronged approach to improving both the infrastructure and the human resource framework of the programmes and services in early childhood education and development.

The Transformation Report noted that while enrolment rates in ECI's are high, we have to work quickly to improve the quality of care and training including adequate exposure to developmental and educational activities. This includes socio-emotional activities and providing adequate numbers of play material for all children.

As of the close of the 2022/2023 FY, there were 2,431 early childhood institutions (ECIs) with a 97% compliance rate for registration with the ECC. However, registration is only the first step. Of this same number (2,431), 90% have been issued permits to operate with 100 new permits issued in the 2023/2024 Financial Year (meeting the target for the Financial Year).

Madam Speaker, the work of the ECC continues on a day to day basis through the team of Supervisors, Inspectors, Development Officers (DOs) and more. In the last year, approximately 1,687 ECIs had inspections done, with the target being 1,500.

An important step for ECI's is certification, a process of attaining 100% compliance to the 12 legal operating national standards that constitute the Early Child Act & Regulations. This lasts for a period of 5 years.

Madam Speaker, measures are in place to improve the quality of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers at the early childhood level. For the last Financial Year, we are pleased to share the following:

---

Early Childhood Practitioners that have been trained in various areas concerned with professional development practices. **1,500**

---

Principals and ECI operators that have been trained. **1,269**

---

Curriculum support sessions (including special education support), intervention, observation and documentation while building literacy and numeracy skills to match with the Jamaica School Readiness Assessments. **4,138**

---

Madam Speaker, the majority of our early childhood engagement takes place within privately owned ECIs (i.e. basic schools). The Ministry of Education & Youth continues its efforts to have at least one trained teacher in each early childhood institution. During the last financial year, the Ministry of Education & Youth paid the full salaries of 687 trained teachers that currently serve in private basic schools. Additionally, 2,235 practitioners within private basic schools received a top-up stipend or what is referred to as Salary Subsidy to complement what they are provided with by their employers. The MoEY is committed to having more qualified and trained teachers at the early childhood level.

	No. Trained ECI Teachers	EC Practitioners in private basic schools receiving a Salary Subsidy from MoEY
Region 1	<b>92</b>	<b>886</b>
Region 2	<b>88</b>	<b>279</b>
Region 3	<b>53</b>	<b>232</b>
Region 4	<b>126</b>	<b>431</b>
Region 5	<b>175</b>	<b>422</b>
Region 6	<b>87</b>	<b>522</b>
Region 7	<b>66</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>3,047</b>

An immediate strategy of the Ministry of Education and Youth is to ensure a pathway is created to enable the current cadre of 3,047 to become trained ECI Teachers over the period of the transformation.

### **Institutional Review of the Early Childhood Commission**

An institutional review of the Early Childhood Commission has been conducted with internal and external accountability mechanisms that support equitable and



effective service the system established. The proposed reclassification and restructuring of the ECC was approved by the MoFPS. The implementation date for this new structure to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness for this was April 1, 2024.

So too Madam Speaker, I share that the review of the laws that guide the early childhood sector is underway and the Early Childhood Development Policy is 30% complete.

Monitoring the cross-sectoral mechanisms established for coordination and monitoring to improve the services to our youngest citizens is also underway. Madam Speaker, I am happy to share that the oversight body has been selected, the TOR for this group has been drafted along with the development of Monitoring & Evaluating Framework.

The following eighteen recommendations are made toward improving this foundational level of Jamaica's education system.

**Conduct a thorough review of the Early Childhood Commission in order to:**

1. Identify and improve the human resources it needs to operate more efficiently improve staff remuneration to prevent rapid turnover, a major source of inefficiency
2. Increase data utilisation to inform its own practice and to inform the public
3. Conduct research to evaluate the impact of ECI Standards, and the performance of the different kinds of ECIs.
4. Undertake a review of laws guiding the EC sector, especially in regard to

- frequency of inspections of ECIs and required teacher qualifications
5. Rationalise the provision of centre-based ECD services
6. Conduct geographic analysis to determine optimum number and location of ECIs relevant to population needs
7. Accelerate the programme of creating infant departments within primary schools
8. Identify ECIs within areas of poverty and prioritise these ECIs to meet ECI Standards
9. Increase service for children 0-2 years, by establishing more Brain Builder Centres
10. Increase the quality of teaching and learning through provision of trained teachers and resources to ECIs.
11. Rationalise training and qualification of teachers for the early childhood sector
12. Provide at least one trained teacher for each ECI with urgency
13. Improve quality of pre-service and in-service training at all training levels.
14. Improve teaching and learning resources available at ECIs.
15. Establish an oversight body to co-ordinate and monitor implementation of strategies to improve services to young children.
16. Child development and stimulation programme offered at ECIs should be associated with certification that allow training for parents in basic literacy and numeracy and to transition into existing vocational training in ECD, especially early childhood education
17. Develop a co-ordinated strategy to engage and support parents of young children
18. Ensure adequate financing of the ECD sector

### Special Needs Students

Whilst we have been quiet about our efforts in the special needs arena, we have not stalled. In fact, we have drawn gears with our efforts to improve services for children with disabilities and special and varied needs and their families.

Two important recommendations are the following:

- ▣ Improve the services available to children with disabilities and their families
- ▣ Conduct research to accurately identify the prevalence and types of developmental disabilities at the EC level.

Madam Speaker, St. Andrew Eastern happens to be a constituency with a significantly large number of persons with varied and special needs. There is the community of Cheshire Village and just under 10 special needs schools. And so the issues that affect many persons, are the issues I am faced with as a Member of Parliament and also as the Minister of Education & Youth.

There has been much talk, especially in social media about Shadows (Special Education Assistants). These support staff do a lot to ensure that students engage academically, emotionally and they accompany students throughout the school day or even for part of the school day. Madam Speaker, their work is not easy but it is necessary and regardless of the circumstances, they go above and beyond their expectations to work with our learners with needs.

### On this matter:

New Shadows trained	<b>213</b>
Special Needs Students placed in private schools	<b>265</b>
Special Needs Students placed in integrated & non-integrated government schools	<b>265</b>
Special Needs Students who benefited from Shadow Support	<b>275</b>

### CPFSA, Child Rights & Protection

Madam Speaker, we are very encouraged with the yeoman's efforts to care for abused children. The Child Protection & Family Services Agency (CPFSA) continues to be the safety net for children who suffer all kinds of abuse. Under the guidance of a newly appointed Chief Executive Officer, the CPFSA is demonstrating its capacity to respond to the various needs and calls for help. The CPFSA works closely with the Early Childhood sector.

In the period 2023 - 2024, the CPFSA received 13,531 reports, 6,314 of which were made via the 211 distress hotline and were distress calls to rescue our children. I want Jamaicans to be appalled by that number.



May is Child Month and its theme is: **Stand Up. Speak Out. Protect the Rights of the Children.**

The Agency's 211 Child Abuse Reporting Helpline is operated through the National Children's Registry which offers zero cost access to customers (adults and children) calling through to the 211 Helpline.

Madam Speaker, I pause at this time to remind the members of this Honourable House to share with their constituents, the 211 hotline. I implore Jamaicans of all ages to dial 211, when they feel a child is being abused.

**Please use the 211 hotline.**

In my Sectoral Presentation in 2021, as a part of our reform to the Child Protection ecosystem, we sought and received approval from the Office of Utilities Regulation to activate 211 as a singular helpline for children at risk or for anyone who wishes to report child abuse. Hats off to my colleague Member of Parliament and Minister Robert "Nesta" Morgan for relentlessly pursuing this.

This hotline, 211, was launched in May 2021 during Child Month, exactly three years ago. At the time, we said it would be manned 24 hours by child care professionals and would be a significant addition to the Child Protection ecosystem and Madam Speaker, it is and that still holds.

**Table 1: Total number of reports received at the NCR, April 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024**

Months	22/23 FY	23/24 FY
April	1,193	925
May	1,389	1,435
June	1527	1,268
July	1,005	980
August	1,081	896
September	1,170	1,161
October	1,163	1,218
November	1,444	1,228
December	885	740
January	1,540	1,226
February	1,244	1,121
March	1,495	
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,136</b>	<b>12,198</b>



**Table 2: Types of Incident Reports to the NCR between April 1, 2023 - February 29, 2024**

Incident Types	2022/23 FY			2023/24 FY		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Sexual Abuse	546	2,875	3,421	418	2,195	2,613
Physical Abuse	1,783	2,032	3,815	1,392	1,587	2,979
Behavioural Problems	3,083	3,312	6,395	2,637	3,438	6,075
Neglect	2,941	3,237	6,178	2,333	2,663	4,996
Emotional Abuse	622	984	1,606	488	826	1,314
Child Labour	168	218	386	146	201	347
Bullying	60	57	117	52	78	130
Child Trafficking	9	33	42	4	30	34
Care and Protection	2,193	2,685	4,878	2,033	2,225	4,258
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,405</b>	<b>15,433</b>	<b>26,838</b>	<b>9,503</b>	<b>13,243</b>	<b>22,746</b>

Madam Speaker, my colleague Senator & Psychiatrist, Dr Sapphire Longmore will tell you that "...child abuse isn't just about black eyes. While physical abuse is shocking due to the marks it leaves, not all signs of child abuse are as obvious. Ignoring a child's needs, putting them in unsupervised, dangerous situations, exposing them to sexual situations, or making them feel worthless or stupid are also forms of child abuse and neglect - and these treatments that are all too frequently meted out to our children can and do leave deep, lasting scars on our children.

Madam Speaker, we do not want any of our children abused, not a boy child, not a girl child. No one.



Here are some myths and facts about child abuse and neglect

Myth:

**It's only abuse if it's violent.**

Fact:

Physical abuse is just one type of child abuse. Child neglect, or sexual and emotional abuse can inflict just as much damage. Since the signs are not always as obvious, other people may be less likely to intervene.

Myth:

**Only bad people abuse their children.**

Fact:

Not all abusive parents or guardians intentionally harm their children. Many have been victims of abuse themselves and don't know any other way to parent. Others may be struggling with mental health issues or substance abuse problems.

Myth:

**Abuse doesn't happen in "good" families.**

Fact:

Abuse and neglect doesn't only happen in poor families or bad neighbourhoods. These behaviours cross all racial, economic, and cultural lines. Sometimes, families who seem to have it all from the outside are hiding a different story behind closed doors.

Myth:

**Most child abusers are strangers.**

Fact:

While abuse by strangers does happen, most abusers are family members or others close to the family.

Regardless of the type of abuse, the result is harmful. If you suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, it's important to speak out. Again, you can do so easily by dialling 211. By catching the problem as early as possible, both the child and the abuser can get the help they need.

The CPFSA is governed by the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) and provides services to children deemed in need of care and protection by the Courts, those who are awaiting the outcome of a court proceeding, and families having difficulties caring for their children. The CPFSA through the National Children's Registry (NCR), receives child abuse reports and refers them to internal and external parties for action as well as mobilizing a national response to the issue of missing children. Its work also entails the investigation of child abuse reports and the provision of needs-based intervention for these children and their families. The agency also regulates and monitors the delivery of service through the provision of alternative care spaces. Additionally, the CPFSA administers programmes and initiatives, designed to provide a stable and nurturing living environment for children.

There are 51 child care facilities islandwide, ten (10) of which are managed and operated by the Government of Jamaica. Over the years, the agency has placed greater emphasis on Living in Family Environment (L.I.F.E) Programmes, as an alternative to residential care. LIFE Programmes enable children to live in familial settings even as they are in the care of the State.

### **Child Care and Protection Act**

Madam Speaker, I also want to share that in 2021, in my first sectoral for the MoEY, I promised that we would amend the Child Care and Protection Act, 2004 to remove an aspect of Section 24 under which a court may make a correctional order in respect of a child brought before the court. I promised that aspect of Section 24 would be repealed and replaced with an option for the court to make a therapeutic order, thus finally ending the practice of labelling our children uncontrollable and placing them in penal institutions without charge.

Madam Speaker, today I stand before you and say confidently: "Promise made; promise kept!" We did exactly that and we went beyond simply amending Section 24. We provided, without too much delay, therapeutic centres (one residential and one non-residential) and even a sensory room to be able to handle those situations for which the court makes a therapeutic order.

### **Therapeutic & Psycho-Social Support for Children**

- Maxfield Park

Madam Speaker, I stand before you today with eyes wide open as I see on a daily basis through the many school and home visits exactly what is happening with and to our children and I am now more than ever, determined and committed to making it better for our children.

In June 2023 the Prime Minister opened a \$200 Million state of the art Therapeutic

Centre at the Maxfield Park Children's Home in partnership. The implementing agency was Jamaica Social Investment Fund, an OPM entity, and the Caribbean Development Bank through its Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF). The Centre provides medical treatment, social intervention guidance and psychological support for victims of child abuse.

Madam Speaker, before the opening there was no facility for the delivery of effective screening, assessment and therapeutic treatment for children who are exhibiting behavioural challenges. Thus, there was a gap in the diagnosis of children as the State is unable to effectively screen, assess and diagnose children who are displaying behavioural challenges, due to a shortage of resources. In addition to the infrastructural challenges, there is an ongoing scarcity of adequately trained social workers to provide clinical support to the agency where these issues are documented.

Overall, the centre is slated to benefit 4,491 Jamaican children who are in child protection placement (children's homes, places of safety and living in family environment (foster care, family reintegration) and need psychosocial or mental health intervention. It will also benefit 16,000 children and/or families who access the services of the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA) on an annual basis.

In terms of staff, 27 Social Workers employed to the CPFSA are trained and certified in Clinical Social Work and over 161 caregivers from 48 Children's Homes trained in skills to equip them for the workplace.



The Therapeutic Centre is geared at providing residential inpatient programmes, a day treatment program and outpatient counselling and psychotherapy services for children and their families. The building includes:

- 4 Consultation Rooms
- 4 Screening Rooms
- 2 Assessment Rooms
- 2 Assessment/Observation Rooms
- 4 Observation/Behavioural Assessment Rooms
- 1 Manager's Office
- 1 Reception Area
- 3 Playroom/Conference Room/ Training Room

Madam Speaker, while the therapeutic centre at the Maxfield Park Children's Home excellently serves those primarily located in Kingston, we must ensure that we extend these services to other parts of Jamaica. In November, a Sensory Room was launched at the Muirton Boys Home in Manchioneal, Portland. This space has been designed to enhance developmental assistance, to support stimulation therapy, offer assistive aids and educational support for children with special needs. Psychological services provided by the Agency typically involve diagnosis, evidence-based therapeutic interventions, proper screening and



Muirton Boy's Home



Muirton Boy's Home



assessment along with culturally appropriate solutions to meet the children's psychological needs at the individual level.

In just under a year of operation, here is snapshot of the work at the Therapeutic Centre:

exam preparation, managing anxiety and goal setting. For adults, topics included: trauma and childhood development, child rights, vicarious trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), suicide prevention, supportive play and creative movement, attachment and body focused interventions.

---

Children screened using various psychological tools that include the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and the Mobile Mental Health Screening Tool

**581**

---

Individual psychotherapy sessions held to support children who are experiencing emotional and mental health challenges across the island

**548**

---

Psycho-educational sessions held

**239**

---

The 239 psycho-educational sessions comprised 166 held with children and 73 with staff and management of the Homes (Glenhope Nursery, The Nest, Maxfield Park, St. Andrew Parish Church Home For Girls, Hope's House, Dare To Care & Martha's House, Annie Dawson & The Wortley Home). Some topics with children have included reality testing, career guidance, social and emotional learning, conflict resolution, peer cooperation, anger management, emotional regulation, grief management, stress reduction, self-soothing techniques, positive affirmations, assertive communication,

### Windsor Therapeutic Centre

Madam Speaker, I also bring to attention the Windsor Therapeutic Centre that has been in operation since November 2023. This is another safe, supportive and child-friendly service operation where children can be screened, evaluated, assessed and treated by a team of multidisciplinary child services professionals who develop guided interventions for children and their families.

The primary objective of the Windsor Therapeutic Centre is to reduce the likely occurrence of learning, behavioural and development disorders curtailing a child's development and possibly manifesting into mental health issues or more serious disorders in adulthood by ensuring early screening assessment, and treatment. There are currently nine clients residing at the dwelling to receive interventions over 3 - 6 months.

The following are some interventions being offered at the location:

- ▣ **Behavioural Therapy Programmes** – to help with behavioural, emotional, learning, and relationship problems as well as one-on-one counselling sessions and group sessions.
- ▣ **Family Therapy** – to foster reintegration

with client families. We address family matters such as Communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, blended family challenges, parenting guidance and stress management, life transition, etc.

- ▣ **Personal Development Sessions** – this covers soft skills and helps the client to grow personally and professionally.
- ▣ **Spiritual Awareness** – renewing of the mind to foster shifting thought patterns, directing their minds toward positive, uplifting, and Godly thoughts, while filtering out toxic thoughts and replacing them with truth.
- ▣ **Case Conferences** – are geared towards bringing awareness of the progress of the client, care plan, and treatment goals being achieved, resolving matters, and making recommendations.
- ▣ **Documentations** - Acquiring necessary documents for clients such as TRN, Passport, Birth Certificate
- ▣ **Educational Interventions** – Mathematics, English, Computer Studies, Social Studies and Science
- ▣ **Hospital Visits** – to ensure proper compliance of medications for clients who are diagnosed with a mental illness.
- ▣ **Staff Training** – is conducted to equip and sensitize staff in working with children with behavioural challenges.
- ▣ **Client Progress Evaluation** – This is ongoing, and it includes formal and informal assessments to track the progress of the client. Adjustment is made as necessary to deal with client shortcomings.

The CPFSA is in the process of identifying and retrofitting three other spaces to be designated as Residential Therapeutic Centres and at least two (2) Places of Safety

to activate the provisions for streamlining services to children with behavioural problems as set out in the amended Child Care and Protection Act.

### **Establishment of Diagnostic Centre**

Madam Speaker, we know that more needs to be done for our learners with special needs and we look forward to sharing updates with you in the upcoming year regarding the \$180Million Diagnostic Centre to be built at the College of Agriculture, Science & Education (CASE).

I am pleased to share that procurement for the completion of works commenced on March 20, 2024 and the deadline for submission was April 29, 2024. The estimated cost to complete the facilities is \$150 Million. Works are expected to commence in October 2024 following procurement activities.

Madam Speaker, the care and support of our children in schools, in state care and beyond is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education & Youth.

### **Transitional Living Programme for Children in State Care**

The Transitional Living Programme for Children in State Care is designed to assist children transitioning to adulthood and independent living. The programme consists of four components which include vocational and tertiary support for youngsters, mentorship, life and leadership skills training, and housing assistance. At the end of February 29, 2024, Madam Speaker, six hundred and nine (609) youngsters inclusive

of 203 males and 406 females are enrolled in vocational skills training and academic programmes.

These programmes are offered through HEART NSTA and other certified institutions. All the youngsters enrolled in the programme received stipends for participating in their respective programmes under the Transitional Living Programme for Children in State Care.

Additionally, three hundred and twenty-four (324) youngsters comprising 106 males and 218 females within the programme have benefited from life skills training sessions to help shape leadership and social skills that are relevant to the work environment and for navigating encountered issues. The topics of these sessions were centred on budgeting, career guidance, and conflict resolution.

Additionally, thirty (30) youngsters comprising 9 males and 21 females completed their respective programmes within the Transitional Living Programme for Children in State Care.

As of February 29, 2024, one hundred and ten (110) youths are benefitting from transitional living spaces and rentals across the island. It is important to note that

youngsters benefiting from this component of the programme are those who would have exited care, some without any form of independent housing arrangements, and are actively seeking employment, pursuing tertiary or professional development.

To further support young people transitioning out of state care and adulthood, the Transitional Living Week was organised and executed between July 17 and 21, 2023. The week of activities provided support for children who are preparing to exit through a series of sensitization and activities coordinated by the Agency. The event, which falls under the Transitional Living Programme (TLP), targets children 16 years and older and children's officers assigned to prepare the youngsters for independent living at age 18. The week of activities were executed under the theme, "Ready fi Life".

The activities culminated with the launch of an "exit profile" instrument which will be used by children and Children's Officers to answer questions about different aspects of life that youngsters may have to consider as they prepare to leave State care.

A summary of the events carried out during the week is highlighted in the infographic display below.

**TLP WEEK 2023**  
July 17-21, 2023  
*Ready fi Life*

**18** **“Ready Fi Life” Empowerment Session**  
A session for Transitional Living Programme (TLP) participants, 18 years and over. It is designed to help participants foster a growth mindset and improve their communication skills in preparation for success.

**19** **“Getting them Ready fi Life” TLP sensitization session – WR & NER**  
This session was developed for residential child care facility staff and select officers to ensure cohesiveness in our efforts towards preparing children to exit care successfully.

**20** **“Ready fi Life” – Transitional Living Expo**  
This event, hosted at the National Arena aims to engage youth 16 - 18 years; to provide them with information and access to services that will aid in their journey towards independent living.

**21** **“Getting them Ready fi Life” TLP sensitization session – SER & SR**  
This session was developed for residential child care facility staff and select officers to ensure cohesiveness in our efforts towards preparing children to exit care successfully.

**29** **“Ready Fi *enjoy* Life” Pool Party**  
A fun event for existing participants in our Transitional Living Programme (TLP), 18 years and over.

Listen out for the TLP Expo OB on Nationwide 90 FM or YouTube from 1 - 3 pm during DI SOUND OFF with Denyque and Triple Xi



## PILLAR 3

# TEACHING, CURRICULUM & TEACHER TRAINING

### Teaching, Curriculum & Teacher Training

Madam Speaker, I have spent some time in schools seeing first hand how a number of the interventions work and have been working as I posted last week to my social media, it was in fact the best feeling to see the Ministry of Education & Youth's Literacy Education Acceleration Programme (LEAP) in action.

LEAP aims to improve students' learning with the help of specially designed computer software called ARROW (Aural - Read - Respond - Oral - Write). This software focused on reading, spelling, dictation, speech and listening skills. This computer based learning applies the use of the learner's voice while reading that forms the basis of the multi-sensory learning approach.

Madam Speaker, when Olivia from Norman Manley High School can share that she feels more confident and eager to read instructions and so is better able to answer questions correctly, then I know that we are heading in the right direction.

This is not the only intervention in schools across Jamaica to drive our fundamental literacy skills, there is also Literacy 123 and the Lindamood Bell Seeing Stars and Visualizing & Verbalizing Programmes. Madam Speaker, these work by developing the component parts of learning and change the way the brain itself processes information, rather than trying to teach students compensatory strategies to access content. Compensatory efforts have all too often kept a student locked in an endless cycle of remediation, struggling to keep up or as we have seen, falling further behind.

Madam Speaker, I pause to state that in many instances these particular programmes help learners with needs such as dyslexia and other traditional learning challenges.

The idea is, if the brain can change, the behaviour can change. The programmes are based on a theory of cognition known as Dual Coding Theory that was developed by Allan Paivio. Mark Sadoski said, "Dual coding theory is an embodied theory of



mind in which all cognition consists of the independent activity of, or interplay between, two great mental codes: a verbal code specialised for language and a nonverbal code specialised for knowledge of the world in the form of mental images derived from experience.”

Madam Speaker these strategies are being employed by early childhood, primary and secondary educators islandwide.

But these are not the only things we have begun to employ in our efforts to strengthen the sector with the fundamental skills and knowledge needed.

Implementation of the Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education (APSE) Programme  
Madam Speaker, when we launched the Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education Programme in March 2016 we said that it was a new approach to education that was aimed at repositioning and customizing learning to make it more diverse, equitable, outcomes-based and inclusive in keeping with education trends across the world.

By way of update, the Ministry continues to make strides in this programme with the completion of training of all Education Officers across the seven Regions to improve their ability to monitor and support its implementation in schools.

Psycho-social educational support has been provided to 9,000 vulnerable students and 28 laptops provided for Pathway Coaches to support their efforts in secondary schools with students on Pathways II and III.

At present 112 schools, or approximately 20,000 students are participating in Pathways II and III.

### **The Jamaica Teaching Council (JTC)**

Madam Speaker, the Jamaica Teaching Council was established to regulate the profession, assure quality professional support, recognize and award excellence in teaching and to maintain a robust Teacher Management Information System (TMIS). I am very pleased to report that in keeping with this mandate, the JTC last did a highly commendable job in support of the professional development of teachers.

Madam Speaker, with regards to its proposed regulatory role, the Joint Select Committee of Parliament examining the Jamaica Teaching Council Bill has prepared its draft Report on the extensive review and dialogue on the Draft legislation. In short order, we will, Madam Speaker, present the Draft Bill before Parliament.

We know that teachers experience high levels of stress, especially as they manoeuvre the demands of work and home. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to share a special programme, The Return to Happiness that focuses on offering psycho-social support and also free Counselling support to our teachers. To date, 160 teachers have availed themselves of this service.

Teachers as you know, we continue through the Jamaica Teaching Council, to build capacity through:

- Mandatory Teacher Mentorship for beginning teachers.

- 3 Mandatory Professional Days (PD) Days yearly
- Trainers of Teachers (ToTs) to support all 63 Quality Education Circles (QECs) across the 7 Educational Regions
- Support for teaching boys
- Providing access to Open Educational Resources (OER) for teacher development.

Allow me to extend thanks to the OAS, ITEN, Commonwealth of Learning, British Council & UNESCO for giving us free access to these educational resources.

This means that ALL teachers have had access to at least 12 hours of professional development and continue to have that access. Madam Speaker, this is a big deal.

We are also happy to report, Madam Speaker, that a Beginning Teachers' Induction ceremony was held for over 1,200 teachers who will enter the system in September 2024. Over 1,000 mentors have been trained to ensure support for beginning teachers and boys' education.

Direct expenditure on in-service teacher education was over \$30 Million in the 2023/2024 Financial Year. This expenditure was buttressed by programmes made available to Jamaican teachers at zero cost to them. Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Education & Youth understands that teaching and learning is a critical component of the education transformation.

Through the Jamaica Teaching Council, teachers are now being registered at the end of their final year of college in an attempt

to ensure all 25,000 plus of our teachers are registered.

In collaboration with the European Union, the JTC is reviewing the ICT Competency Framework as it applies to the in-service and pre-service teacher education programmes, to ensure relevance and alignment with the needs of the system. Other partners, include the IDB, OAS, UNICEF UNESCO International Teacher Task Force, British Council, Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and CARICOM are facilitating teacher development through expert partnerships and exchange of ideas and experiences in such areas as STEM/STEAM, teacher leadership and teacher welfare. The JTC has established partnerships with local educational initiatives, among them One on One and Creative Language Based Learning.

Madam Speaker, among the highlights of the JTC's activities was the hosting of the Third Forum for Innovations in Teaching (FIT3) at the National Arena in January. It assembled educational institutions at all levels, and other key stakeholders in education. It brought to the forefront outstanding innovations in teaching and learning across Jamaica. It was really heart-warming and inspiring to see projects students were working on that demonstrated the practical application and implementation of the components of the National Standards Curriculum. This was most evident in STEM/STEAM projects, agricultural science and building technology.

We collaborated with St Lucia to provide training for their teachers in action Research, Leading Quality Education and "Educating

Boys". The Council is planning to host a Caribbean Conference later this year on the "Engaging Men in Education."

**National College of Educational Leadership (NCEL)**

The National College of Educational Leadership continues to focus on our school leaders through several programmes. In the last financial year there have been numerous

trainings that have impacted the practice of 450 leaders. The breakdown is as follows:

Principals trained & 5 assessed in the Effective Principals' Training Programme	<b>70</b>
Teachers trained under cohort 9 of the Aspiring Principals' Programme	<b>55</b>
School leaders trained in the Leadership and School Policy	<b>51</b>
School leaders trained in the Child Friendly School Leadership	<b>47</b>
Teachers trained under cohort 9 of the Aspiring Principals' Programme	<b>156</b>
School leaders trained in the Leadership and School Policy	<b>41</b>
Sessions delivered under the Customized Professional Interventions	<b>25</b>
Leadership Development Webinars in multigrade school leadership, school financial management, artificial intelligence and leadership research.	<b>5</b>





## PILLAR 4

# THE TERTIARY SECTOR

Madam Speaker, in an attempt to implement the recommendation for a streamlined governance framework for the Higher Education Sector the Ministry of Education & Youth is working on developing the Higher Education Act & Policy along with the Financing Higher Education framework.

Madam Speaker, we must begin to produce and analyse relevant data to support evidence-based decision making. To that end, the Ministry of Education & Youth has commenced the process for the development of the second phase of Tertiary Education Management Information System (TEMIS).

Notwithstanding there must be initiatives undertaken to reduce inefficiencies in the higher education sector. This is underway through the:

- Monitoring framework being developed to identify gaps
- Initiating the committee to start the review of the programmes
- Human Resource audit has been completed
- New structure has been developed
- Tertiary Human Resource Unit being developed within the Ministry to support HR transition

Madam Speaker, in order to guarantee quality assurance in a changing higher education market, the UCJ must have strengthened capacity. The Ministry is taking the necessary steps and has so far:

- Put a legal officer in place to help with the amendment of the UCJ Act
- Developed standards to quality assure micro credentials (stackable credits)
- Quality assurance training in institutions
- Developed a capacity development strategy with support from the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) to enable the UCJ to assist institutions to implement and promote the UCJ distance education standards.
- Developed a training guide entitled: Implementing the UCJ's standard for Distance Education: Case Studies.

I continue to share that in regards to the operationalization of the National Qualifications Framework, the Concept Note for the National Qualifications Systems Policy has been developed and guidelines for the JCATS have also been developed and consultation sessions held. The maintenance of the Qualifications Registry is ongoing.

Recently CAPRI put forward some ideas regarding funding of tertiary education. We have been exploring.

## YOUTH

### The Prime Minister's Youth Awards

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Education & Youth's efforts also serve to improve the lives and livelihoods of our youth. Former United Nations General Secretary, Ban Ki-moon, said that "youth engagement is not a nice-to-have, it is a must-have" and we believe so too. This is why we were deliberate in bringing back the Prime Minister's Youth Awards for Excellence in 2017 and why we have worked to expand the categories since then so that a wider cross section of our youth can be recognized and celebrated for their hard work and outstanding contributions to national development.

Since 2018, the award categories have expanded to a total of 12 categories with the inclusion of the following categories:

- Nation Builder
- International Achievement
- Innovation in Science & Technology
- Environmental Protection
- A Youth Development Practitioner (Youth Worker)
- A Youth Serving Organization
- A Social - Media Influencer

In 2021, we introduced the category "Prime Minister's Special Award for a 15 -29 year old" who has excelled exceptionally in his/her field of work or study and whom the Prime Minister deems worthy of national recognition, embodying the true meaning of resilience, innovation and excellence.

In this past year, 76 applications were received of which 50 were shortlisted and interviewed across 12 categories plus the addition of the Prime Minister's Special Award Category. We had 25 awardees. The 2023 ceremony event held on April 20, 2024, attracted more than 1,800 patrons, mostly young people.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to extend my heartfelt condolences to the family of Ceejay Cunningham, a 2022 Prime Minister Youth Awardee who was killed.

### Youth Innovation Centres (YICs)

Madam Speaker, our youth deserve the best. And we are happy to share details of the Youth Innovation Centres as safe spaces designed to provide holistic empowerment for young persons and also for at-risk and unattached young persons aged 15 - 29.

### There are currently 9 active YICs:

Parishes	Locations	Parishes	Locations
St. Ann	<b>01</b>	Manchester	<b>01</b>
St. Mary	<b>01</b>	Clarendon	<b>01</b>
St. James	<b>01</b>	St. Catherine	<b>01</b>
Westmoreland	<b>01</b>	Hanover	<b>01</b>
St. Elizabeth	<b>01</b>	Portmore	<b>01</b>



Our aim is for there to be one YIC per parish and I am happy to report that we will see the re-opening of two more Youth Innovation Centres in Hanover and Portmore later this year.

Madam Speaker, we are keen on a diverse offering to and for our youth. We now have our entrepreneurship training through the Jamaica Youth Business Trust and we have re-launch the Sports, Arts, Recreation & Creativity (SPARC) programme of which the recording studio in St. Catherine is a big hit.





## PILLAR 5

# TVET IN JAMAICA

Members of this Honourable House are no doubt aware, Madam Speaker, that the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) was transferred to the portfolio of Education and Youth. I am pleased to announce that the NCTVET completed its transition to the Ministry on August 2, 2023, continuing its authorization of awarding individuals who have demonstrated competence in and vocational skills required for the workplace.

During the transition, administrative due diligence included seeing to the completion of Surveillance and Internal Audits per the International Organization Standardization (ISO) certified Quality Management System. Meanwhile the NCTVET remained fully engaged in the ratification of assessment results, the accreditation of new applicants or new programmes for, and the reaffirmation of accredited training institutions.

Additionally, Members of this Honourable House are no doubt aware, Madam Speaker, that the government has been placing special emphasis on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In this regard, the certification programmes in various skill areas provided by the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) continue to bring significant benefits to our people

by giving them entry level qualifications in areas such as Cosmetology, Food Preparation and Bartending, Customer Service, Nail Technology and Motor Vehicle service industries. In addition, their programmes ensure quality standards, build professionalism and solidifies economic growth with a skilled workforce. The skills acquired through NCTVET are relevant and in-demand, ensuring the potential for individuals to secure job placement or entrepreneurial opportunities within these industries.

This year 34,940 certificates were awarded to deserving students in NVQ and CVQ qualifications including those who completed On the Job Assessments. An additional 3,119 online certificates were issued, making the total number of e-certs issued since 2021 to date 15,333.

Key initiatives for the fiscal year 2024-25 will include but not limited to:

- Increased certification by expanding access to assessment services in new and emerging skill areas to include the expansion of the online modality.
- Expanded assessment services across regional territories, i.e. certification in the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) for the portability of skills towards the Caribbean Single Market Economy (CSME)

- Strengthening the quality assurance mechanisms within the MoEY schools towards becoming an approved TVET centre.
- Capacity building of MoEY teachers in assessment and quality assurance mechanisms in TVET through collaboration and facilitation towards increased impact on MoEY outcomes.
- Maintaining Quality Management Systems of the NCTVET to facilitate the ISO Recertification under the MoEY for the continuation of the issuance of the National Vocational Qualification of Jamaica/Caribbean Vocational Qualification (NVQJ/CVQ) certificate awards.
- Promulgating National Vocational Qualification of Jamaica/Caribbean Vocational Qualification (NVQJ/CVQ) as the award of choice.

Madam Speaker let us pause to congratulate the staff of NCTVET for a job well done.

**Vocational Training & Development Institute (VTDI)** is now also in the portfolio of the Ministry of Education and Youth and being established as a public educational institution. VTDI trains our teachers for our schools in TVET education. TVET equips our students with the technical and professional skills needed for socioeconomic and industrial development of our country. TVET has 10 qualification levels all the way to a PhD. Last year on a study tour with the IDB to Germany, it opened my eyes to a country that has integrated TVET into its society and has tightly integrated industry and its schools.

I join with the Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with Oversight for Skills and Digital Transformation, Senator Dr. the Hon. Dana Morris Dixon, in urging parents to encourage their children to pursue careers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training.



As we plan for a secure and prosperous future, world-class education and training is perhaps the single most determining factor in empowering Jamaicans to achieve their fullest potential. Among the Ministry's priority areas of focus are the Infusion of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the school system as well as Science, Technology, Education, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)



## PILLAR 6

# INFRASTRUCTURE & TECHNOLOGY

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Education & Youth through the National Education Trust (NET) has committed to improving the infrastructural needs of the education sector. It is against that premise that we continue to de-shift our schools.

Under the Primary & Secondary Infrastructure Programme (PSIP) through the National Education Trust (NET), school expansion and electrical upgrading and construction of security fencing managed by the Technical Services Unit (TSU) we have:

- Broken ground at Exchange All Age in St. Ann, Bridgeport High School in St. Catherine for additional classrooms, Holmwood Technical High School in St. Elizabeth, Cedric Titus High School in Trelawny, Jonathan Grant High School in St. Catherine

- Opened a new block at Black River High School in St. Elizabeth de-shifting the school after more than 30 years on shift.

- Opened inclusive classrooms at Bethabra Infant School in Manchester, Jamaica China Goodwill Schools in Olympic Way, St. Andrew and in Morant Bay, St. Thomas and Hoolebury Primary & Infant in St. Ann.

We have public-private partnerships established or in progress with Christel House and INNOVA

We continue to focus on building our Ramps & Railings in our schools.

We have to continue our effort to deal with the rising temperature in our classrooms. Recently, the CHASE FUND donated 1,752 fans to 338 ECIs. Thank you CHASE.

Critical Maintenance efforts continue in earnest as well.

### Technology

Madam Speaker, in tandem with the demands of this 4th Industrial Revolution is the great need for technology in education

to address issues of inclusion, access, equity, and quality education.

Broadband infrastructure (that includes Wi-Fi and other access points) have been deployed by the MoEY across the island and more than 663 of all our public schools (approximately 66%) of all schools and places of safety have been connected to the National School Network, which ensures that these locations are receiving fast, reliable and secure broadband internet services. This is an increase of 16% since October 2023. Madam Speaker, the work continues to connect remaining schools to the network.

Working with our implementing agency, e-Learning Jamaica, 10,000 computers have been distributed to high schools supporting the upgrade of each school's IT labs. We have done this in record time in one school year. Madam Speaker, it is the good policies of this government and the consistent good performance of revenues that has created the budget space to allow us to take on these massive technology upgrades and broadband connectivity across the length and breadth of the education sector. Let us not divorce what we have been able to provide to our schools from the consistent excellent budget figures of this government.

### **Own Your Own Device**

Through eLearning Jamaica, some 25,700 teachers have received e-vouchers to procure a laptop. Of this number 24,000 teachers have redeemed their vouchers bringing us

closer to the target of 26,000 e-vouchers. I implore the teachers who have not yet redeemed their vouchers to do so quickly.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Education & Youth is committed to a fit for purpose school learning infrastructure. And as such continues to develop policies/ guidelines for the safe and secure use of online learning platforms, including guidance for schools on discipline and decorum in the online learning platforms, including guidance for schools on discipline and decorum in the online learning space.

Madam Speaker, the National ICT in Education Policy has also been circulated and the implementation guideline has been drafted for approval.

The Curriculum Framework for training of teachers is in place.

Madam Speaker, the ICT attainment targets are integrated in the National Standards Curriculum including Digital Citizenship. This covers ethics, legal and social implications for using ICT.



## MOEY 2024 CHARTING THE COURSE FOR JAMAICA'S EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION



Working with our implementing agency, e-Learning Jamaica, 10,000 computers have been distributed to high schools supporting the upgrade of each school's IT labs. We have done this in record time in one school year.

Through eLearning Jamaica, some 25,700 teachers have received e-vouchers to procure a laptop. Of this number 24,000 teachers have redeemed their vouchers bringing us closer to the target of 26,000 e-vouchers.



## PILLAR 7

# FINANCE

This Pillar of Transformation calls for an adjustment of the funding model for schools to facilitate greater flexibility in the allocation of resources to schools. The Ministry Of Education and Youth must implement a funding model that re-calibrates the allocation based on the needs of the school in order to ensure equitable treatment. Four working groups are currently being established (one at each level of the system) to do a deep dive into the needs of schools and appropriate funding responses guided by research. The recommendations will be made public by the end of this calendar year.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, at the tertiary level, we have to put our collective efforts in figuring out how to make tertiary education more accessible and affordable for our students. I know the Student Loan Bureau has been innovative with its programmes, corporate Jamaica has also provided assistance in the form of scholarships and the diaspora is assisting as well. For these significant contributions, we say thank you on behalf of our students.

As I speak with our tertiary students, I know there is a greater effort needed. While we focus our minds on that, I am pleased to note, and as announced recently by the PM, the allocation of \$3 million each to Members of

Parliament to provide tertiary scholarships, up to \$200,000 per tertiary student.

We know that when individuals attain a higher level of education, they benefit from better employment prospects, higher salaries, a greater ability to save and invest, and a better opportunity at social mobility. We want to open access to tertiary education to significantly more than the 10,000 students or so annually.

### **Teacher Education Institutions**

I could not end without speaking to our very long tradition of teacher education institutions: Church Teachers College, Moneague College, Shortwood Teachers College, St. Joseph's Teachers College, The Mico, Bethlehem Moravian, Sam Sharpe, Vocational & Technical Development Institute (VTDI), College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) plus the faculties at UWI and UTECH.

There are many entities that provide services to the tertiary sector. The agencies (except for JBTE, which operates under the UWI) were designed to serve in partnership with the Ministry's Tertiary Unit. However, as the agencies grew and evolved, duplications and overlapping functions developed. Recent changes in demand for service in

the sector, including that for increased distance offerings, improved service to adult and employed learners, and more choices in programme and course offerings, have highlighted the importance of strengthening responsiveness to the diversity of needs in the tertiary/higher education sector in the country and emphasised the need to re-examine and streamline the respective roles of these entities to improve service to their clients.

These entities include JTEC and University Council of Jamaica. Legislative work is in

train with the Council of Community College of Jamaica and our Teachers Colleges.

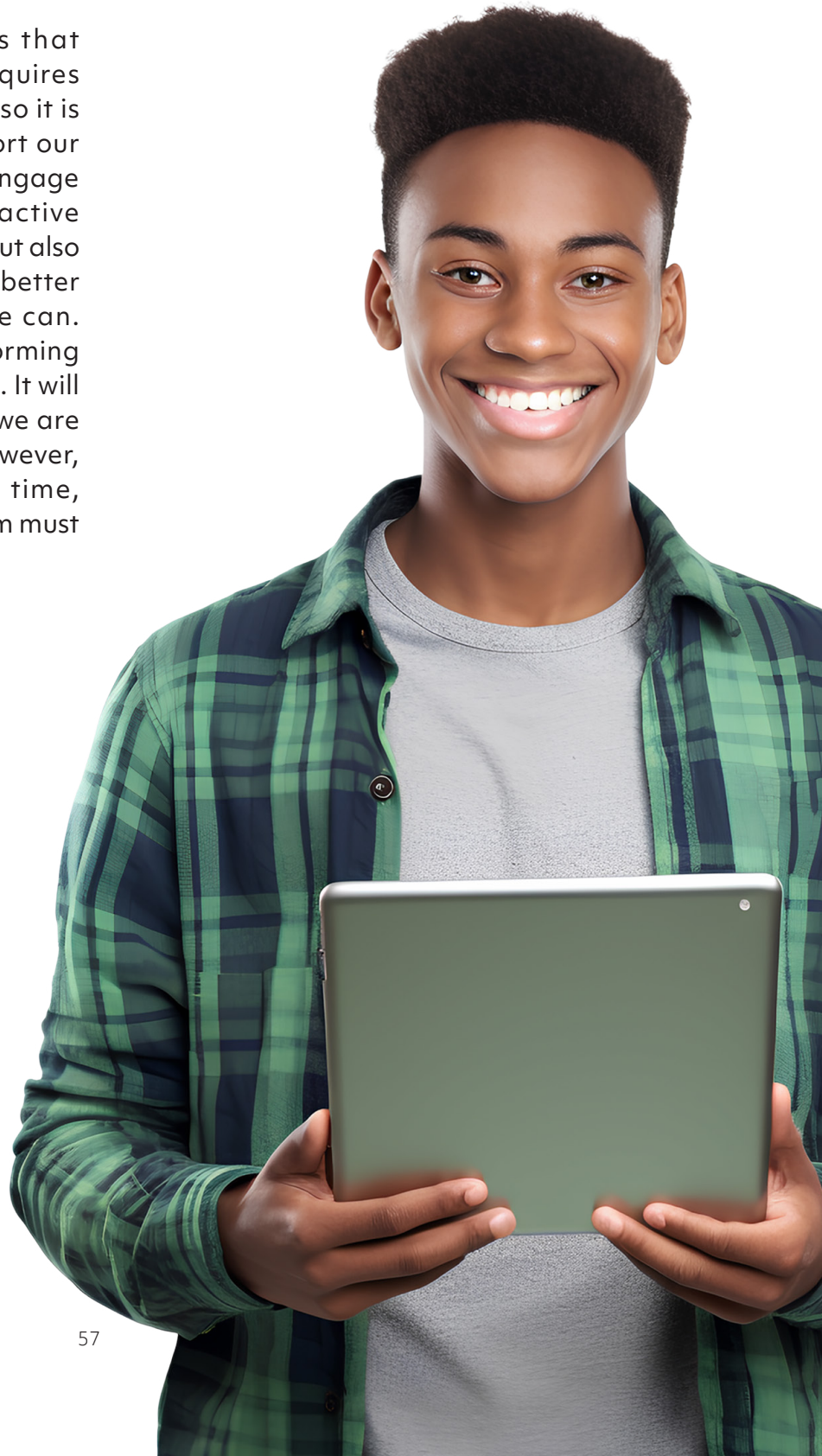
I could not end without thanking National Products Limited (NPL) for the consciousness with which they provided breakfast and snack items for our children. They continue to innovate and to ensure that our children consume less sugar in the products that NPL produces.



## Conclusion

In closing, I remind all Jamaicans that transformation is a process that requires an all hands-on-deck approach and so it is our collective responsibility to support our teachers, to invest in our schools, to engage our children and youth to become active participants in not only their learning but also in making our country and our world better and more sustainable. Together we can. Together we are; TRENDing (Transforming Education for National Development). It will take time to see the results because we are dealing with changing mind-sets. However, we are resolute that this time, this time, transformation of our education system must happen.

Thank you.













Designed and Printed  
by Jamaica Information Service  
**May 2024**