



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

A CALL TO ACTION

Sectoral Debate 2013-2014

Contributed by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE.....	3
2. PARENTS	6
3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	9
Special Education	11
4. PRIMARY EDUCATION.....	12
G-SAT and Primary Exit Test.....	15
Textbooks.....	17
Behaviour Management Programme	18
Civics Programme	20
5. SECONDARY EDUCATION	20
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).....	22
The Shift System.....	23
The Career Advancement Programme	24
6. TERTIARY EDUCATION	25
Grants to Universities	27
7. ADULT EDUCATION.....	27
8. TEACHERS.....	28
9. NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP	32
10. NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT	33
11. TABLET COMPUTERS	34
12. MAKING THE MINISTRY MORE EFFICIENT	35
13. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) AND ELIMINATING SHIFT SCHOOLS	35
14. ENERGY	36
15. KINGSTON LOGISTICS HUB	36
16. LEGISLATIVE AGENDA	37
17. SUMMATION	38

1. PREAMBLE

- Mr. Speaker, this presentation is a collaborative effort of many of the Departments and Agencies of the Ministry of Education. It is not a one-person creation.
- Since National Development and personal growth cannot succeed without educational transformation, all of us, parents, teachers, students and employees of the MoE must contribute to policy and action and all of us must therefore take a share of the responsibility.
- Improvement in Education takes money and it also takes committed individuals, and a willingness to change. Government, business, families, Church, people of goodwill here and abroad, spend massive sums on Education each year.
- 75 billion dollars from the budget is invested annually in Education, perhaps double that if one includes the expenditure of parents and the private sector.
- Nearly seven hundred thousand (700,000) children and young people are in schools; 69,000 in tertiary institutions, 44,330 registered in our 13 publicly funded tertiary institutions (2011-12 data). Almost one thousand and twenty five (1,025) public schools, six hundred (600) private ones, three thousand (3,000) basic and infant. Of the forty five thousand (45,000) employees in the public education sector, twenty

seven thousand (27,000) of them are teachers, in the pay of, but not the control of the State.

- The returns on all this investment are not good enough. We cannot continue to accept mediocrity; to be satisfied with so-called graduations at all types of schools where half of the students have not attained the required standard. This is a call to action.
- Last year was for assessment. This year is for change. If all play their part and contribute to the success of education then we will have enough resources to take decisive steps which would produce more qualified and better adjusted citizens. The parents paying auxiliary fees, teachers and educators paying greater attention to their students, savings from better use of resources by the sector, and private sector partnerships.
- It would be foolish to deny that much scope for national decision making has been eroded by our debt-burden. What the IMF is requiring of the Education Sector is largely what we need to do for ourselves.
- We can determine how to spend the Education budget more purposefully; to avoid the systematic waste, and to change entitlements that we cannot afford. This is a call to action.
- Our task is to achieve what we have to, with what is in our hands.

- And this is a bi-partisan effort. I rely on regular and helpful consultations with the Opposition Spokesperson. In addition, I work closely with the Jamaica Teachers' Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, the Churches and the business community. The media are also partners in this enterprise. The state and importance of Education in Jamaica cannot countenance divisiveness. There are those who think our natural state is to be fighting each other for turf or prominence. We must all stop blaming each other, take charge of the change in our sphere and hold ourselves accountable. This is a call to action.
- Recently, several hundred student leaders from the new High Schools travelled from all over the nation to "Rap with Ronnie". In their scores of questions and suggestions, I was impressed by their earnestness and sense of responsibility. They understand that quality education and the surge towards a knowledge society has to be the most important priority of every conscious Jamaican. I want to ensure that their hopes and plans for the future can be realized.

2. PARENTS

- This administration believes that change towards quality in Education has to start from birth. Home and Community come before school in every child's life, and parents are critical.
- All children require at least one caring parent-preferably two. God Bless the mothers who fathered many of us, but being a lone parent places an intolerable burden on many of our mothers. This is a call to action.
- I met a brilliant 16 year old from a Non-Traditional High School who electrified an audience of his peers by simply telling that his only contact with his father was a photograph he had seen a few months ago and that when he was two years old his mother had left for England to look life. He had been left with an unrelated woman called "Auntie" who is raising him to be who he is becoming.
- Despite the acute sensitivity, we have to talk straight to ourselves about casual-child bearing.
- Absentee parents, particularly fathers place a child at a disadvantage in school. The worst legacy of slavery was the destruction of the African Family traditions. Now our post-modern, pseudo-American culture is the opposite of the Protestant Ethic which some say gave

rise to the spirit of Capitalism and perpetuates family looseness in these times.

- It is hard when a man is not working and cannot give his child anything. We have to encourage him to turn up anyway and share anything he has, even one finger of banana rather than leave his child to the street-corner or the step-father. (Sir Clifford Campbell with Old Harbour stories) Many elements of popular culture are fighting against education.
- The National Parenting Commission is budgeted for this year and will be under the Chairmanship of Lady Rheima Hall.
- There is money in the budget, courtesy of UNICEF and USAID to establish one hundred sixty (160) Parent Places across the nation this year to educate parents in best practices. We look forward to a range of parenting initiatives already being undertaken by organizations like the National Parent-Teachers Movement, the Coalition for Better Parenting, The Mothers' Union and other NGOs being coordinated to offer parents support, connection with social services, counseling about behavioural problems, mentoring and financial assistance.
- The Ministry paper laid today sets out this Administration's clear policy that it is an obligation for school officials not to shun or scorn pregnant school girls but to reintegrate them in the original or another

school so as to continue their education, to connect them to the Women's Centres, to assist them with their added responsibilities, to insist that baby fathers mind their children and if underage, to assist the Police in prosecuting Carnal Abusers. This is a call to action.

- The education system acknowledges that many children are initiated into sexual activity during their classroom years. Some of the mass media, the Carnival Culture and confused family values are among forces which have weakened the truth that premature sex is the thief of true love.
- A positive, value-laden and age-appropriate Health and Family Life Curriculum has been revised by a broad-based working group for required use in all schools.
- This Government lifts up to our children the ideal of faithful love and marriage between a man and a woman as the basis of a family even as we insist on tolerance and love for those who are disposed towards homosexuality.
- Let it be clear, we will not be grooming children towards same sex unions and we will not be distributing condoms in schools.
- Guidance Counsellors and their counterparts in the School and Community Health Care Systems must know what to do when a student is in danger of sexual abuse.

- School is not a ‘romping shop’. Restraint must be taught by example and precept. Sex education, yes. Condoms, no.

3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- In times past, roughly 3% of our Educational resources has been dedicated to Early Childhood and Special Education, despite our knowledge of how crucial the early years are and that we know also that a significant percentage of our school population fall somewhere on the wide spectrum of educational disability. We also know that more than 30% of those who move from Early Childhood Institutions to Grade One, cannot satisfy the Grade One Individual Learning Profile. They are on an escalator of failure from six years old unless something is done. This is a call to action.
- This year, government’s expenditure on Early Childhood and Special Education, that is pre-primary to grade 3, is 14.6% of the recurrent Education budget or eleven billion dollars (\$11.01).
- Mr. Speaker, this is how it is going to be spent:
 - a. Some 179 primary schools which have space for infant departments have been identified. We will begin this year merging an average of 3 Basic Schools into each of these new

- infant departments, on the basis of proximity, availability of trained teachers and whether the Basic Schools are considered unviable.
- b. This summer, specialist training in early childhood and Special Education will be offered to 500 under-deployed teachers who are already in the system.
 - c. A common curriculum will emphasize social habits, character formation and learning skills will be reinforced in partnership with Crayons Count – generously supported by National Continental Corp, the Gleaner and other private sector partners.
 - d. An increase of \$122 million in the allocation for nutrition grants to Basic Schools.
 - e. We aim to offer a breakfast snack as well as lunch. The plan is to use local fruits and produce in increasing proportions. The pilot for this project will target Corporate Area schools in September and will be expanded to other Regions as lessons are learned and finances allow.
- In addition More of the fifty (50) Food for the Poor Infant and basic Schools will be built, staffed, and equipped.
 - If we follow this pattern, the result will be an early childhood sector which is better equipped with appropriately trained teachers and better

nutrition. We are also setting a target of 10% more readiness for Grade One each year going forward. This is a call to action.

Special Education

- Many of our children needlessly endure the cross of poor performance in school due to a lack of cognitive, social and emotional assessment and treatment.
- Most challenges are treatable if diagnosed early, before they become full-blown pathologies in later years at huge personal loss and societal cost. This is a call to action.
- This year we will train about 400 teachers to diagnose cognitive, social and personal challenges. Special education must become a respected professional career path.
- By 2016 with first emphasis on the Early Childhood Sector, we plan to have a trained special education teacher in every school, full-time or part-time.
- For years, MICO CARE has been the only fully equipped and staffed diagnostic and treatment centre. You have to wait months and travel far to get help.

- The Budget provides for the establishment this year of three (3) new diagnostic and care centres. They will be situated at Church Teachers' College in Mandeville, Sam Sharpe Teachers' College in Montego Bay and the College of Agriculture Science and Education in Portland with appropriate staffing and training facilities for Special Education teachers.
- There is also a programme for gifted children in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University.
- So there will be no more less-care of the weak, the challenged, and the exceptional. Our care defines our character.

4. PRIMARY EDUCATION

- 40% of the education budget sustains some 792 primary schools. Over 200 of these are significantly under populated and therefore overstaffed. There are 79,000 un-used public school student places from the early childhood to secondary level, or the equivalent of about 79 schools. There are even a few country schools with almost as many teachers as students. This is not sustainable.
- About 70 schools are at the other extreme. They are on shift, overcrowded and understaffed. We will rationalize this situation. We

know the value of the community school but we have to make better use of our facilities. This is a call to action.

- Establishing Infant Departments in underused facilities is part of the answer. Some of the underused Junior High Departments like Bellevue in Trelawny and Avocat in Portland will become full Secondary Schools. We are asking our teachers for flexibility in assignment in the interest of our children's upliftment. This is a call to action.
- In Grade One, the instruction to all teachers is to use as much of the first term as is necessary to understand each student, to connect with parents, and get the students to learn the basics of literacy. This is a call to action.
- The primary education school curriculum is undergoing renewal to be completed by 2016. If the task at the pre-primary level is to instill the habit and love of learning, the compelling purpose of the primary school is to achieve the required levels of literacy and numeracy.
- Last month, I attended the launch of a preparatory school in, of all places, Marthae Brae in Trelawny. There we heard ordinary Jamaican children, ages 5 and 6, reading polysyllabic words fluently. Their facilities are good but not that much better than most of our primary

schools. Compare that with the thousands who leave school after 9-10-11 years of instruction unable to read. This is unacceptable.

- This year Government will place at the disposal of schools, more than thirty (30) specialists in literacy and numeracy. Principals, teachers, it is no shame to call on them for help. The target is to improve Grade Four (4) results by at least ten per cent (10%) each year. This is the most important benchmark of all. If we do it right the first time at this level, a lot of what follows will adjust organically. This is a call to action.
- We are beginning a pilot with LMH Publishing Limited to explore the use of the Singapore method to teach mathematics in 12 schools. Eighty (80) teachers and Numeracy Specialists will be trained and 1,200 students will be involved.
- Teachers and Guidance Counsellors, I encourage you to check the attendance of primary students and go for them when they don't come. Going to school three (3) or four (4) days a week is no longer acceptable. Those on PATH will benefit from the food subsidy every school day and they will be assisted by the transportation subsidy promised by the Ministry of Finance. This is a call to action.
- Let the message go forth to all:
 - Children must go to school every day.

- Read to them and have them read to you regularly. Monitor carefully the quality and quantity of their exposure to television.
- This is a call to action.
- If you invest your interest, time and resources in the primary school nearest where you live, the likelihood is that your child will do as well as when you bus them forty (40) miles to a school you have heard is better.
- Minister of Transport, please heed the call of the teachers, parents and Minister of Education to cut out the music in the buses, remove the tints and train the crews to deal with ‘schoolers’. The experiences on the buses and on the street have a direct effect on what is said and done in school. This is a call to action.

G-SAT and Primary Exit Test

- The G-SAT examination results are expected in June. Parents are encouraged to accept high school placements near to where the children live. The examination is in gradual transition from one based largely on memory skills to a Primary Exit Test by 2016.

- Review of all subjects of the national curriculum is underway and will be rolled out in September 2015.
- The contents of all subjects are being revised with particular attention to Science and Social Studies, and with more emphasis on Civics and Jamaican History.
- The revision of the GSAT will be completed by June 2013 to emphasize higher order thinking and a component of in-school assessment. The revised test will be piloted for full implementation by May 2016.
- The Alternative Secondary Transitional Education Programme (ASTEP) was designed as a two year transitional programme to provide a safety net for children who, at the end of primary level, do not possess the requisite literacy skills and competencies to successfully access secondary education.
- The Ministry of Education will be repositioning secondary education to cater to the diverse needs of all relevant students through the reorganized Alternative Pathways to Secondary Education Programme, which includes the traditional pathway and two (2) alternatives to address students with special needs. (See Ministry Paper for details.)

Textbooks

- Preparations for school books start from November of the previous year. We could not catch it this year but we are determined to print the workbooks and some other materials locally starting next year. We must try to keep as much of that nearly one billion dollars for school books locally to create jobs and revive the printing industry. The target is 10% local production next year. The Book Industry however has to get with the programme. We need local material, we don't have the foreign exchange and ebook technology is fast overtaking their territory. This is a call to action.
- A printing industry committee, is recommending a policy approach that would seek in the first instance to manufacture those books and other printed materials that are owned by the Government of Jamaica. In the medium and longer term, the Committee proposes a strategy that would, over time, incrementally add titles to the list reserved for local printing, focusing in the next phase on those books for which the copyright owners are Jamaican publishing companies. The private sector, not the state, controls publishing rights to the majority of material.

Behaviour Management Programme

- The 2012 statistics report from the MNS Safe Schools Programme show 1,288 reported incidents, of which there were 915 fights, 160 robberies and 3 murders. School Resource Officers (SROs) seized 1288 weapons, including 431 knives and 486 pairs of scissors. Illegal substances were seized on 164 occasions. Actions taken by the SROs included 201 students arrested, 2,361 cautioned and 1,109 monitored.
- If children are hungry, or if though fed, are malnourished; if they are emotionally disturbed from abuse, neglect or untreated psychological trauma; if they are forced into child labour, trafficked, or are displaced; then their ability to learn will be impeded. This is a call to action.
- We are behind schedule in the establishment of uniformed groups in our schools. However, I can now report that Major Lincoln Thaxter is co-ordinating this effort.
- The evidence shows that children who are part of clubs, Scouts, Brownies, Guides, Pathfinders, Boys' Brigade, Cadets, Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance Brigade; those who go to Sabbath or Sunday School, are more adjusted, less rebellious, better students than those who do not have such experience.

- School sports, arts and culture contribute to positive behavior and fair competition. Schools need voluntary coordinators. We will require each school to indicate willing teachers, parents and past students to offer themselves for service. This is a call to action.
- The Churches, the largest, organized body of people of good will have agreed to re-engage with the more than 50% of our schools that they own or sponsor. It is not to serve narrow denominational purposes.
- Their core business is to spread positive values and attitudes: to mentor, to befriend, to correct, to indicate by example even more than by word what the standards of the good and purposeful Jamaican life are.
 - Responsibility for oneself – not dependency and ‘leggo beast’
 - Love for neighbor – not selfishness and greed.
 - Acceptance of self – not bleaching and exhibitionism.
 - The joy of faithful and loving relationships – not careless breeding, casual sex and broken lives.
 - The value of effort and work – not entitlement, idleness and complacency with under – productivity.
 - Simplicity and creativity – not extravagance and bling.

- These are among the values of our fore parents. They are among the values which can take us out of the economic and social slough of this time. These are the things which our children need to learn to live by. The churches with whom we have met have accepted this responsibility. This is a call to action.

Civics Programme

- Garveyism is now fully established in a revised civics programme. In the next academic year, material on the Right Honourable Norman Washington Manley and the evolution of Constitutional governance will be included. Other National Heroes will be added in the following years.

5. SECONDARY EDUCATION

This year about 90% of all 13-18 year olds will find a place in a high school. This is a significant increase in one generation. We must now add uniform quality to this access, because the outcomes are a disgrace to the 34% of the Education Budget or approximately \$26b spent on High Schooling annually by the state.

- 20% of the cohort leaves the All Age and Junior High Schools after grade 9.
- Only 50% of those students who make it to Grade 11 are entered for 5 subjects.
- Of those sent up for CSEC, 52% passed English and 38% Mathematics. As a percentage of the whole cohort in 2012, those passing CSEC English were only 38% and those passing Mathematics was only 20%.
- Approximately 50% of the cohort or 22,000 leave with a certificate of attendance and a pretty picture on cap and gown. They are not certified for work. Most knock on the doors of HEART Institutes where 75% cannot be admitted because their literacy and numeracy do not reach the modest Grade 9 level.
- This is a disastrous situation. We must not hide from it. We are determined to fix it. This is a call to action.
- The following changes are deemed necessary:
 - As of this September, schools will be instructed to assess all incoming Grade 7 students using their individual GSAT profiles, and where there are literacy and numeracy deficiencies, suspend other elements of the curriculum and bring them up to

- Grade 7 standard. Otherwise, those students, and they constitute probably 40% of the cohort, are on a treadmill of failure.
- The same must be done for those placed by the Grade Nine Achievement Test (GNAT).
 - Technical competencies and skills training must be given equal status with academic studies, otherwise it is pure prejudice. The local and international workforce demands this and so do the aptitudes of many Jamaican students. The person who has the skill to multiply food production, the one who can maintain an aero plane/ship to operate safely is often more useful than a Rhodes scholar.
 - By 2016 all Grade 11 students will be required to sit CSEC and/or CVQ examinations as a basis for earning a High School Diploma (HSD). Each student will be required to have acquired at least one marketable skill. This is a new call to action.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

- The Ministry of Education (MoE) has identified the integration of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the schools' curricula as a priority for 2013. (See Ministry Paper.)

- This year, the HEART Trust/NTA will invest over \$80 million to upgrade the laboratories and workshops in the newer High Schools to enable them to improve their offerings of Levels One and Two Skills.

The Shift System

We plan to eliminate the shift system. Consequently, the MoE is undertaking the following initiatives:

- Expansion of existing schools, making use of existing privately owned educational institutions (expanding and linking with established “brand name” schools) and refurbishing other existing facilities to provide additional places at the secondary level. We will be completing two schools. One at the primary and the other at the secondary level. One new high school for 1,000 or so students costs about \$800 million.
- Provision of between 10 and 15 new blocks of 8 modular classrooms. In most cases, an 8 classroom block costing J\$40 million can move a school from shift to an extended day programme with great benefit to teachers and students.
- This year, in addition to new schools at Montpelier, Cedar Grove, and the expansion of Belair, subject to fiscal space and the refinement of

the protocols for Public-Private Partnerships, we have the funds and the interested investors to advance this project year after year.

- 28 pit latrines were replaced with flush toilets in 2012 and another 30 to be done in 2013.
- It is heartening that so many investors are volunteering investments in Education. Ministry of Finance, Development Bank of Jamaica, please clear the way for the National Education Trust to eliminate the shift system over the next five years. This is a call to action.
- We must encourage private investment in Education. We have had an offer from Turkish investors to erect a high school in Montego Bay.

The Career Advancement Programme

- The Career Advancement Programme (CAP) was introduced in 2010 to provide opportunities for some young Jamaicans aged 16 – 18 for continuing education, skills training and preparation for the world of work. Our review found that 75-80% of the students who applied for the programme left high school reading several levels below Grade 9.
- At the end of school year 2012, the results for two (2) years indicated that the programme was woefully short in producing its intended outcomes. This was due in part to: a high dropout rate, very high

absenteeism from examinations paid for by the Government, deviation from the planned programme, and extremely poor examination results in TVET. The NCTVET examination results showed only 8% (631) of the 7,813 who were registered for the exams, obtained certification in Levels 1 and 2. This is a call to action.

- Reorganizing of the CAP started in the 2012-13 school year. This involved placing students reading several levels below Grade 9 in a programme designed by the Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) to improve their literacy and numeracy in order to better prepare them to access further educational opportunities.
- Students reading at the Grade 9 level or upwards were placed in the technical programme leading to certification in the CSEC and Levels 1 and 2 NVQ/CVQ examinations. This approach will continue under the restructured programme. It will be accompanied by greater quality assurance, monitoring, and reporting thus producing better examination results and better value for money.

6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

- In recent years, Jamaica has experienced a burst of offerings for diplomas and degrees. There are 17 public universities and colleges offering programmes. The number of students in public and private

tertiary institutions has moved from 22,000 in 1991/92 to 69,000 in 2011/12. Our target should be to double this figure yet again by 2020.

- We are encouraging students to enroll only in those programmes which have Approved Programme Status and/or accredited by the University Council of Jamaica so as not to face disappointment. The line in the advertisement which says “registered with the Ministry of Education” is not good enough.
- Also, when you are choosing, don’t only consider what is easiest, or cheapest, or what you think you like. Choose a programme that is most likely to fit you for an available job or a range of occupations.
- Right now in the Education Sector and even more generally, there is a huge mismatch between certified graduates and available jobs. For now, we have enough nail technicians, lawyers, guidance counseling graduates and international relations experts. We need science and mathematics teachers, dentists, nurses, and persons with maritime and aviation skills. This is a call to action.
- Up to date workforce information must inform tertiary choices and investments. This will help to guide priorities for student funding as well.

Grants to Universities

- The tradition has been for Government to give large annual grants to UWI and UTech. The amount ear-marked this year is approximately \$8.5 billion dollars or 11% of the Education budget.
- These Universities, one the Regional, the other the National, are worthy of continuing support. We are in discussion to do it differently from now on.
- Rather than a straight grant, we feel the taxpayers' contribution should be related to specific research and instructional programmes and projects which add focused value to Jamaica at this time.
- Discussions are underway with the Universities to identify and cost those programmes which government can support. It is necessary for us to avoid unnecessary duplication among state funded entities.

7. ADULT EDUCATION

- The out of School population will also have the opportunity to access a High School Diploma Equivalent (HSDE) that will start this September in schools, CAP and JFLL centers. Literacy for all Jamaicans, the passion of Michael Manley, must recapture the imagination of us all. This is a call to action.

8. TEACHERS

- Whatever Jamaica has achieved educationally has largely been brokered by the contribution of generations of dedicated teachers. Each one of us in this Honourable house is living testimony to the success of our teachers. The legacies of teachers; Edwin Allen, Edith Dalton James, Aubrey Phillips are all around us today.
- Research tells us that some 80% of a child's progress in Education is inculcated by interaction with teachers. The future of effective educational transformation will rest with the quality, efficiency and dedication of our teachers.
- This year despite wage restraint, teachers will receive :
 - Another tranche of their 2008 7% award. Outstanding allowances are scheduled to be paid. I am anxious that we settle with those we owe the refund of 50% of their tuition costs. It is not fair to keep them waiting.
 - The special grant of \$25,000 each and for those who are adjudged to be performing well, there will be the usual 2½ percent salary increase. The increment will not be automatic from here on but based on performance.

- Nearly \$55 billion of the Education budget is spent on remuneration. This is as it should be but we have to make sure the public gets value for this huge spend.
- First, we have to reallocate funds to correct the injustice of paying qualified Early Childhood teachers less than other qualified teachers. We will undertake action on this not this year but next year.
- Under the 1980 Code of Regulations, a teacher who performs satisfactorily for one year in a clear vacancy becomes tenured, virtually for life, in that school. This is unsustainable. The probationary period has to be extended to a longer period to be negotiated; in the short run, teachers are being asked to be open to reassignment where the need arises.
- To the detriment of our children, there is a mismatch involving several thousand teachers, qualified in one discipline while teaching another, while you have excess or inadequate capacity in another school 10 miles down the road. We must cooperate to change this. There must be legislative authority to transfer teachers from one school to another to meet children's needs.
- Teachers are entitled to longer periods of paid leave than workers in the private sector. Long leave of 4 months with pay is prescribed after every five years of service.

- On an annual basis, a teacher employed before September 2003 can apply for 52 days leave on full pay, and another 40 days more half pay; those teachers employed after September 2003 can apply for 40 days leave on full pay, and another 28 days more half pay. These are subtractions from the prescribed 190 school days.
- A teacher, after 2 years' service, is eligible to one year fully paid study leave. Leave may be granted for up to another year without pay.
- Without rancor or ill will, these arrangements are no longer affordable. \$574M is owed to schools for substitute teachers. The paid-for courses of studies are often in areas unrelated to school needs. The cost of study and vacation leave to the Government is 2.5 billion dollars per annum. This is now unaffordable.
- Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, it must be clear that the Ministry of Education is taking all legal steps to enforce repayment of outstanding bonds.
- This year, we are kindly inviting teachers who wish to do further studies to do so by pursuing courses during vacation time and by part-time and distance education. Study leave requiring absence from the classroom will not be approved except in special circumstances.
- To compensate for the suspension of this privilege, whenever a teacher enrolls in a course of study directly relating to his or her area

of teaching or to meet systemic need, the Ministry will underwrite one half of the tuition cost and if satisfactory progress is maintained and there is no reduction of good performance in the classroom, the Ministry will pay out the portion due at the end of each academic year rather than waiting until the completion of the course.

- When the Code is revised later this year, in consultation with the JTA, the matter of accumulating long leave and the articulation of leave entitlements will be treated.
- The Regional Directors in collaboration with school Principals have determined that in a large number of our schools there are more teachers than there ought to be when compared to the teacher student ratios. There are at least 1200 such public school teachers costing billions of dollars in compensation each year. This long standing problem requires collaboration from the schools, the regions and the teachers union. This is a call to action.
- This year we are beginning to address this using teachers already employed but under deployed to replace those teachers going on vacation and study leave. In one region alone the savings will be ninety million dollars. (90 mil). These savings will be ploughed back into the system to allow more of our teachers to upgrade themselves. All our schools and regions must find and realize such savings. This is a call to action.

- Members will note that under the IMF letter of intent, those teachers who have reached retirement age will be retired this year, and before they are replaced, efforts will be made to find underdeployed persons already in the service to fill their places. The projected savings from not replacing those who are to be retired is approximately \$223 million over the next two (2) years.
- Every year, our 10 teacher training institutions and our Universities are graduating nearly 2000 qualified teachers at great public and private cost; the majority of whom cannot find work in the public education system. Some teacher training institutions are already multi-disciplinary institutions. This year, a careful assessment of the functioning of the teachers' colleges will be undertaken to encourage closer articulation with local universities and to better align offerings to national need. This is a call to action.

9. NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Last financial year the National College for Educational Leadership (NCEL) facilitated the training of three (3) cohorts of school leaders comprising Principals and Education Officers from the six regions across the island. A total of two hundred and seventeen (217) school administrators have been trained.

- This year we will train three hundred (300) Principals and Education Officers.
- NCEL training will soon become a requirement for promotion to the position of principals and vice principals.

10. NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

- School feeding involves a challenge to the agricultural and food processing sectors. There is just over \$4 billion dollars available this year to feed our school children. Over half of these children are on PATH and by definition will need most of their daily diet while at school. This is a call to action.
- Right now we are offering 136,000 bulla and bag juice daily. In addition, we spend nearly \$3 billion buying foreign dry goods.
- We feel we must do much better:
 - Communities need to come forward with credible projects to feed school children using local products wherever possible. We will consider giving them grants to help. The example of North West St Elizabeth shows it can be done. This should open up huge opportunities for small community enterprises and voluntary inputs.

- Priority will be given to Infant Schools.
- All the Ministry of Education wants to know is that the nutrition is adequate, no needy child is denied and there is accountability for the money. This is a call to action.
- In addition, Nutrition Products Limited will increase its volumes and diversify its offerings to include muffins with sweet potato, carrot or banana. We have made provision to use local eggs instead of imported butter oil.
- We must use local fruits in increasing proportions to manufacture a nutritious drink. This is a small business opportunity. This is a call to action.

11. TABLET COMPUTERS

- Tablet computers give our students a fighting chance to develop and compete on the global stage.
- Appropriate content to improve learning will be our most important concern.
- We will be very careful in distributing the 30,000 tablets that will be available this year. We will begin with the range of schools from early childhood to teacher training institutions.

- We will train 400 or so teachers, principals and education officers this summer. Potential participating schools are now being assessed for their readiness. This is a call to action.

12. MAKING THE MINISTRY MORE EFFICIENT

- In 2013, we will require Agencies of the Ministry to cut cost by sharing facilities, expertise and to earn revenues wherever possible.
- We will create “Service Bureaux” for ICT, Accounting, HR, Communications and PR to serve several of our agencies and so cut our costs. We will deploy “Account Executives” in PR to cover two or more Entities where the workload does not justify full-time Officers.
- We plan to cluster schools in groups and provide accounting personnel and software to improve financial management and timely accounting.

13. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) AND ELIMINATING SHIFT SCHOOLS

Given budgetary constraints we continue to pursue PPPs as essential to expand education.

The following are partnerships already under way;

- Media, free to air and IPTV educational transmissions paid for by local private sector.
- Gifts of high quality school furniture from a Diaspora Foundation and more from Courts Jamaica LTD.
- We have ten (10) offers to build schools. It is taking too long for approvals to be granted. This is a call to action.

14. ENERGY

- By internal conservation measures we commit to a saving of 20% of the Central Ministry and Administrative Offices water and electricity bills.
- We are urgently pursuing solarizing schools and retrofitting with LED. This is a call to action.

15. KINGSTON LOGISTICS HUB

- MOE fully supports this growth initiative and is making preparations to train the labour force to meet the demand.

- The Machado Complex was recently acquired and will be developed by HEART Trust/NTA, Caribbean Maritime Institute and the Overseas Examinations Council to train industrial professionals. This is a call to action.

16. LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- National Parenting Support Commission Act was passed in 2012-2013.
- The Jamaica Teaching Council Bill, which will regulate and professionalize teaching, will be tabled in Parliament later this year.
- The Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission Bill, which will regulate the quality of tertiary-level education, is being drafted.
- The revision of the Education Code is under way.

17. SUMMATION

- In revising my contribution to last year's sectoral debate, I am struck by how long it takes and how difficult it is to effect significant change in education. The demands of keeping the system going wage heavy pressure against efforts at innovation. But we are moving in the right direction.
- Truth demands an acknowledgement that we have achieved less than what Jamaicans need of the sector, but we are moving in the right direction.
- Much more is needed for Early Childhood and Special Education. This year there is eleven billion dollars (\$11.01); a workable plan for 179 more Infant Departments, more food, a strong curriculum, and clear targets. That's moving in the right direction, to do it right the first time.
- In Special Education, 200 already trained teachers will be reassigned to use their skills more effectively. 200 more will be trained and three more diagnostic centers will be established. Plenty more traction is needed but for the first time in special education, we are moving in the right direction.

- We have a serious parenting defect which it will take a massive culture and economic change to solve but at last, we have a commission that along with pledged support from churches and parents will advance the long march. This wasn't here before. We are moving in the right direction.
- We have a clear strategy for the rationalization of primary education including the use of technology, the provision of expertise, realigned teaching, more food, a fresh focus on literacy and numeracy, and a sound strategy and timetable to improve the exit assessment. It is not going to happen in one year, but we are moving in the right direction.
- There is a big deficit in quality High School places but this year we will add 5,000 new ones, plus that and more brand name spaces next year. We will whittle down the shift system and bring up the quality of the newer schools by offering better and higher skills training. Plenty more to go but we're moving in the right direction.
- Teachers have been and are the foundation of the education system and good and dedicated teachers deserve and will get every consideration. This year we are requiring them to embrace information technology in their classrooms, labs, workshops and in their own study patterns. This year Jamaican teachers will achieve professional status. We are moving in the right direction.

- It will take some time to produce, process and distribute enough Jamaican food to efficiently feed our schoolers but using more local juice, eggs and produce this year, supporting local farmers and increasing aggregate demand; doing more with what we have – that’s moving in the right direction.
- Care will have to be taken to achieve security and effectiveness in the use of the Tablet computers in schools but the knitting of the best technology as a means of knowledge acquisition is a huge move in the right direction.
- Stitching together the possibilities for shared services among all elements of the huge educational juggernaut will take much ingenuity but the hundreds of millions which we will be able to free up for more teaching and learning, must mean that we are moving in the right direction.
- The realignment of the HEART-Trust/NTA to seamless relationship with overall educational policy, the integration of level 1 and 2 into the High Schools, the workforce Colleges for Advanced training and the close link in business, all this is moving in the right direction.
- I said as I began, if we all rope in, we can be optimistic about the present and future of education. It is a privilege to play a part in moulding the human person, the finest creation of the Almighty.

Honourable Rev. Ronald Thwaites

Minister of Education

May 15, 2012