



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To give consistent service is only possible with constant selfless support from

- *Staff both at the Ministry and in my constituency office. To them I say thanks!*
- *from colleagues – to them I say thanks!*
- *from constituency workers - to them I say thanks*
- *from family who are asked to understand the constant absences, the odd hours of work, the innumerable phone calls even at those special family times. Many who have preceded us finally realised that when it is all over, all that remains is your family. So my husband, my daughter and my parents – all of whom are here this afternoon – I DO NOT TAKE YOU FOR GRANTED. A million thanks for your unflinching support.*

The Realities of Political Representatives

I have learnt that whatever else I may have done before, there is nothing like representational politics. The demands are legion; the capacity and ability to meet them are wanting. Therein lies the dilemma. It is the classical management mismatch between authority and responsibility. Constituents expect representatives to be proactive - to meet their needs and demands even prior to their arising.



In their view, a good MP, by having a maintenance plan, must ensure that the road does not deteriorate; ensure the school is in good physical and academic condition. SOLUTIONS are what constituents want. Unfortunately, they do not wish to hear about the limitations of the budget of the National Works Agency; the capacity of the National Water Commission or any such thing. The question is how do you meet these expectations and needs on a timely basis?

There is a disjuncture between resource availability, the responsiveness of government agencies to the specific requests of the MP on the behalf of his/her constituency and the very legitimate demands of constituents. In times like these the only resort an MP has is to use the SESP. Some call it pork barrel. I believe it is an enabling Fund. Without it, an already dissatisfied electorate could find no relief and the MP would be fully condemned for non-PERFORMANCE. I welcome the opportunity to make the Fund more transparent with a higher degree of accountability to ensure no leakage or its use for corrupt purposes. It is not beyond us to arrive at an arrangement to ensure tight controls, and checks and balances are what we need. A member of parliament needs a constituency fund to give effect to even minimal representational requests.

What we are about must be the sustainable development of our people. This is our role as representatives.



INTRODUCTION

THE VISION

Mr Speaker: Education is the great enabler of development. As the Minister responsible for education, I am here to account for my stewardship.

I wish to use as the backdrop to my presentation, the vision, courage and determination of Nehemiah, the King's cupbearer who later became Governor of Jerusalem. Although the temple had been rebuilt, there was a challenge to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which had repeatedly been breached. The task to rebuild the wall and remove the breaches was a formidable one. There were 'naysayers,' cynics and outright opponents. Yet Nehemiah knew his responsibility was to motivate, mobilise and harness the resources he had. He returned to Jerusalem and challenged the people: **WE WILL RISE UP AND BUILD.**

He had a plan; he had faith and he engaged in energetic action.

Today, education is on the mind and lips of almost everyone. This I see as a positive, not a negative.

Since I was appointed Minister of Education, Youth and Culture in 2002, there have been articles, letters, and commentaries on education in the print media. Many of these articles commend the advancements of the education sector.



Some spoke of developmental plans for the sector; of commendations to teachers; of additional funding for basic schools; of a revised school curriculum.

Too many however, were expressions of dissatisfaction with the outcomes and outputs of the system. In a nutshell, the society was calling not only for **'more'** but also for **'better'** education.

The Education Review Task Force

It is against this backdrop that the Honourable P J Patterson in February of this year established a 14-member Task Force to review and initiate a transformation of the country's education sector and to present an action plan consistent with the creation of a world class education system geared toward generating human capital and producing the skills required for competing successfully in the global economy.

In announcing the Task Force the Prime Minister captured the sentiments of the majority of our people, both at home and abroad. Two of these sentiments are as follow:

1. Jamaicans hold a passionate belief in the value of education as a tool of social mobility and the key to economic empowerment.
2. As an independent nation, we have made significant strides in the provision of education for our people. However we need to fast-track the achievement of quality education for all.



This review is identified as the first step in the thrust to transform the system. By this we mean radical and fundamental changes on a rapid yet sustained basis.

Round Table Talks

Mr Speaker: If this transformation is to be solid and sustained then the people must be engaged in constructive dialogue. This we did through a series of eight roundtables held between February and March of this year. Those who participated were forthright, engaged, vibrant, positive and forward-looking. They did **not** only talk but made their individual commitments to improving the system. These ranged from establishing community homework centres to involvement in information solutions in the delivery of education. Many have started already. What was clear from these discussions is that – just as in the days of Nehemiah - the people have a mind to build.

I read to you the vision statement that emanated from these roundtable discussions. The Jamaican people said they want an education system in which:

Each learner will maximize his/her potential in an enriching learner-centred education environment with maximum use of learning technologies, supported by committed qualified competent effective and professional educators and staff.



The education system will be equitable and accessible with full attendance to Grade 11. Accountability, transparency and performance are the hallmarks of a system that is excellent, self-sustaining, resourced and welcomes full stakeholder participation.

The system produces full literacy and numeracy, a globally competitive, quality workforce and a disciplined, culturally aware and ethical Jamaican citizenry.

The findings of the roundtable are now being fed into the Task Force Review Team to be consolidated into a programme of action.

I have received a sneak preview of the findings and recommendations of the Task Force, Mr Speaker, and the Prime Minister will shortly receive an advanced interim report.

I believe the Task Force has come to terms with its mandate. It will take deep political will and active public support to implement these recommendations. I am confident that I speak on behalf of the Prime Minister when I articulate his commitment and that of his administration and I believe this Parliament, to this transformational journey.

To transform education will require a re-design and re-work of its building blocks and a change in our mindset. It will require motivation and creation of a new kind of student; the production of a new kind of graduate through a new kind of teacher, using the revised curriculum. We will need to institutionalise new and more effective teaching methodologies.



None of this can be delivered without the involvement of the stakeholders – the more engaged parent, an active and positive community and newly forged partnerships.

The NEW student – our first building block - must be a curious learner; given a solid academic foundation capable of becoming that new graduate who can think strategically and solve problems; be self-assured and confident; be a life-long learner; be able to live and learn in a world of uncertainty, change and technological advances.

This kind of student can only be created by that teacher who is actively committed to quality; who has knowledge, skill and is competent; who recognizes that his/her role goes beyond just delivery of content but extends to character building, positive attitudes and value formation. Such a teacher will be convinced that

each child, each student learns that everyone has value,¹ has a unique skill or talent that will enrich the whole and that co-operation and sharing are in their own best interest and should be a natural part of the way they operate...In this Education system, you learn that everyone has the right to ask for help and you have a duty to give help. There are no 'slow' or 'stupid' students and community and the extended brotherhood of mankind are intimate realities to each and every child...

(Dr Andrae Gordon, 1997)

Many such teachers already exist in the system. We want to ensure all have these qualities and convictions. Teachers are critical building blocks.



The Education Officer

We agree that supervision, inspection and remediation within the system must be more targeted. The Education Officers must have a high degree of accountability and demonstrating competencies in transformational leadership, change management, negotiations and communication. These will be officers who will work with their constituents in providing solutions to the challenges that confront them. Mr Speaker: Education Officers are an indispensable building block.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture

Mr Speaker, all of this must be led by a Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture that succeeds in shaping our future; that learns well, efficiently and constantly. Such learning is critical, because competing in rapidly changing environments means that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture must be able to track its environments, identify changes, and adjust to these changes.

Mr Speaker: At the level of the Ministry, as decision makers, we are determined to learn to think outside of the box; we will encourage risk-taking and constantly strive to ensure that communication throughout the organization and between our publics will be improved, increased, and repositioned.



A culture that nurtures a learning community will be developed and leadership will need to redefine itself. Core values of efficiency, accountability, integrity, accessibility and transparency will be promoted. We are foundation building blocks, Mr Speaker.

THE PROCESS

Significant quality interventions – programmatic and institutional have already been introduced into the system. My predecessor, Senator Burchell Whiteman initiated some of these.

We now are re-honing, reforming, restoring and re-thinking as needed. And since we are building from the bottom up, let us start with a litany of **NEWS** for the entry point of the sector:

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Let us examine these from the very foundation.

Mr Speaker: From the early childhood level, we are guided by the principles of access, quality, relevance and equity. In terms of access, we now have 98% of the age cohort in **some kind of institution**. I have deliberately said ‘some kind of institution,’ Mr Speaker, because the quality is very variable. However interventions now being undertaken are aimed at building quality.



Early Childhood is a **specialist** sector. It requires persons with specialist knowledge and techniques – hence the establishment of the Early Childhood Commission with individuals with the varied relevant special skills and knowledge.

The Early Childhood Act will empower the Early Childhood Commission, which has become fully operational, assuming responsibility for the continued development of the entry point in the education sector. The Policy and Standards Document, which forms the basis of the regulations governing the care and development of the early childhood sector, has also been developed and the Commission is now occupied with putting these into action.

This will reinforce the policy of integration, bringing under one institutional umbrella, policies, standards and regulations relating to day care and early childhood.

Mr Speaker: I am convinced that both the Early Childhood Commission and the Early Childhood Act will advance the creation of an early childhood system that gives our children an early solid and sustainable start, empowering them and enabling them to compete with their peers anywhere in the world.

Mr Speaker: Our **levels of access are in keeping with international standards:** Early Childhood education enrolment, particularly in the age cohort three to five has expanded rapidly from 75% in the 1980's to 98% in 2003 now aiming for 100% by the end of this year.



Quantity however is not quality.

Quality of access is what we are striving for. The Ministry is now conducting a needs assessment to plan for physical plant upgrading to bring our over Two-thousand (2, 000) early childhood institutions up to standard. This plan will include provisions for in-door and out-door play equipment as well as appropriate furniture.

The Ministry has allocated just over fifty-seven million dollars, (\$57.4M) through the Early Childhood Fund for renovating and equipping fifty schools.

Under the Fund, a total of 49 basic schools are to be upgraded. Contracts have either been completed or in progress at thirty-four (34) schools. Tendering procedures are at various stages of completion at the others.

In the meantime, twenty-nine (29) infant schools have been completed, playground and equipment have been installed at 26 of those schools, while the renovating and refurbishing of facilities for housing the infant departments of 41 primary, all-age, primary and junior high schools have started at a cost of \$50M

The North West Jamaica Schools Project will be constructing five basic schools at a cost of \$230M by July 2005. (Lucea, Hopewell, Falmouth, Rosemount and Green Pond basic schools.)



The Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) has undertaken to build twenty-seven (27) new schools at \$182.1M of which four are already completed and handed over, with six currently in progress.

And that is not all Mr Speaker: The Enhancement of Basic Schools Project (EBSP) - which has a 3 ½ year life-span and jointly funded by the Caribbean Development Bank and the GOJ to the tune of US\$15.8M - has a civil works component to design and construct twelve (12) model learning environments inclusive of furniture, indoor and outdoor play equipment as well as to upgrade the physical plants of eleven (11) resource centres.

The project has four components:

1. Development of Model Learning Environments
2. Strengthening Institutional capacity
3. Qualitative improvement
4. Public Education

The aim is, therefore, not just to provide quantity spaces for our young ones, but also to provide quality environments, conducive to effective learning.

The Curriculum

Mr Speaker: The National Early Childhood Curriculum has been reviewed to include the age range birth to five years. In this regard, the national integration policy seeks to emphasize the development of the whole child and improve efficiency and adequacy of provisions for the children birth to three years.



The integration accounts for the advances in health care for this age cohort on the one hand and the gap in provisions for appropriate stimulation and nurturing on the other.

Every effort has been made to build in the early childhood curriculum, methodology and content that will foster the spirit of enquiry and problem solving and engender a spirit of confidence, self-esteem, love and patriotism in our children so that the psychological foundation for social cohesiveness may be laid.

Mr Speaker: To engender a spirit of cooperation in our young ones, the new early childhood curriculum, like the revised primary curriculum, will provide for tasks, which need to be tackled together and which call for mutual interdependence for their successful implementation

Similar approaches will be used to engender notions of work ethic as both a means of personal satisfaction and personal investment. Economic growth and development cannot be sustained by negative work attitudes Mr Speaker.

Children love doing things with their hands. During the early childhood years then, we must seize the opportunity to help them develop a love for learning and a love for work, recognizing the resultant satisfaction that learning and work provide for the human mind, body and soul.



Training of Early Childhood Teachers

Mr Speaker: We recognise the need to empower our teachers at the Early Childhood level, by allowing them key roles in school-based management and providing them with appropriate, recognition, rewards and incentives as well as opportunities for professional growth and development that will motivate them to be consistent in their outputs of the system.

We are training and deploying some of the best-trained teachers for basic and infant schools. The commitment of this administration is to place at least one college-trained teacher in each early childhood institution. Already, just over 230 such teachers have been placed.

Meanwhile, HEART Trust /NTA through its NCTVET programme now provides competency-based training and certification for Early Childhood practitioners.

To date over 5, 000 practitioners have been certified at level 1 and some 200 are currently participating in level II programmes. The aim is to train, by the end of this year, 850- Level II caregivers.

Under the Enhancement of Basic Schools Project (EBSP) plans are full speed ahead for the training of 480 - Early Childhood practitioners to access NCTVET level II certification, this summer.

This will be a residential course provided in collaboration with four teacher - training colleges and forms the first of a two-part training course that will be concluded in the summer of 2005.



Coupled with this, Mr Speaker: the Early Childhood Fund assists a number of practitioners every year, to access tertiary level training at two teacher-training colleges and one university. Funding (EBSP) has also been provided for four fellowships in graduate and post-graduate training at the University of the West Indies.

During this academic year, twenty practitioners have been assisted to pursue the diploma in early childhood development and eleven (11), the degree programme that is offered in Early Childhood Education – a collaborative effort of Shortwood Teachers' College and the University of the West Indies.

Approval has also been given for the establishment of the Shortwood Early Childhood Institute, which will spearhead professional development, consistent with the policy for the holistic development of the child; and consolidate efforts in research and documentation for the early childhood sector.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

At the Primary level, Mr Speaker, we have approximately 94% of the children in this age cohort registered in schools. The quality imperative has been addressed partly through a system-wide implementation of a Revised Primary Curriculum. The Curriculum was introduced over two to three years on grade basis to allow for appropriate training and monitoring.

The revised curriculum integrates thematic strands of citizenship, rights and responsibilities, cooperation, conflict resolution, self-esteem and self-worth as well as the essential features of Jamaican culture, representing one strategy in



contending with the upsurge of violence in the society. Aesthetics is also at the very heart of the curriculum both as vehicles for learning the other areas as well as the development of important intelligences.

The curriculum also reflects a vast range of more authentic methods of continuous assessment to include a combination of performance and product. The integrated approach used for Grades 1- 3 better reflects the real world experiences of the children. Having completed its phased introduction, textbooks and other materials to support this curriculum are now being introduced and will be completed by 2005.

Readiness Interventions

The very vexed issue of literacy and numeracy has to be placed in context of a student's readiness to learn. This is one basic objective of Early Childhood activities. The Grade I Readiness Inventory completed by over 90% of the institutions has provided us with actionable information on the readiness of our Grade I primary school students. Based on the findings, interventions have been done, while others are currently being targeted to effect remediation in twenty-three (23) primary schools.

We are aware of and are concerned about the low levels or complete absence of literacy in many Grade 7 students. Issues of automatic promotion and remedial interventions from Grade I must be raised. However, given where we



are and the need to cauterise the levels of illiteracy in Grade 7, an intervention is being piloted in twenty (20) schools to address under-performance in numeracy and literacy among students entering secondary schools. The action plan already developed, will see full implementation of both interventions come September.

In addition, The Jamaica Library Service continues to play its part in facilitating literacy through a series of initiatives including:

- Collaboration with principals of schools for the effective repositioning of school libraries as pivotal entities in fostering reading.
- A special project to improve libraries in nine schools
- Mobile Library Service resuscitated with the Commissioning of six (6) new vehicles donated by the Japanese government thus bringing to 529 , the number of mobile Public Library points

In an effort to link the school and community by providing services to both home and school, the Jamaica Library Service has increased by 48, the number of Libraries now offering ICT services. The total of 92 host libraries now enable the public to have access from 311 computers.

Support Services

Research undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture has led to the development of a strategic response including planned increase in the number of Guidance Counsellors in Primary Schools.



A comprehensive programme of Culture in Education has also been introduced in several schools with plans for expansion during this year. This is being used as a vehicle for learning and transmitting positive values and attitudes, Mr Speaker.

The year 2004/05 Mr Speaker, will see the introduction of a Special Education Policy aimed at guiding the development and implementation of programmes to ensure access, equity and relevance for students with special educational needs throughout the system, with emphasis at the early childhood and primary levels.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

At the Secondary Level, Mr Speaker, we have coverage of 76% to Grade 11, with plans in place to achieve Universal Secondary Education beginning with those who entered the system at Grade 7.

Expanded Secondary programme

Mr Speaker: There has been a demonstrated need to provide a broad-based education for all secondary school students with established minimum standards and levels of attainment. The first phase of the Expanded Secondary Programme for Grades 10 – 11 will be implemented in September in Nine (9) Schools, with system-wide implementation in 2006.



This programme will ensure a general education for all students, by including preparation in subject disciplines based on a common curriculum and other experiences. Students will receive standardised certification and transcripts expressed in a High School Diploma on successful completion of five years of secondary schooling

All students will be required to pursue a compulsory core of six subjects, including Information Technology, Math English Language & Literature, a natural science and a social science and a set of activities constituting an expanded school experience. The core subjects for special education schools are to be determined by these schools and technical/vocational schools will be advised as to their core subjects.

In addition to the core subjects, students may choose one of four options:

- The Science
- The humanities,
- Technical and vocational subjects
- The Visual and the Performing Arts

The expanded school experience will allow for the inclusion of

- Personal development
- Guidance and Counselling
- Physical education
- Clubs and Societies

Additionally, there will be new courses to satisfy the need for the expanded school experience such as: Civic responsibility, Work ethic, Values and attitudes and Community service.



Lessons will be student-centred and performance/competency based and will support the student acquiring, developing and applying skills in the real world context.

An assessment plan is being developed and will be effective during the first phase beginning September 2004. The methods of assessment will vary and will incorporate non-traditional and continuous strategies that allow the students to demonstrate their knowledge and competence in a variety of ways other than pen and paper tests.

Mr Speaker: Our goal is to have every child leave the secondary system with adequate certification, by the year 2006.

EMPOWERING THOSE OUTSIDE THE FORMAL SYSTEM

High School Equivalency programme

Mr Speaker: We are concerned about those who have already exited the system with very little to show for it: Arising from this concern we have introduced the High School Equivalency Programme (HISEP) intended, through the utilization of independent learning methodologies, to provide additional opportunities for adults 18 and over to earn a high school diploma, outside of the formal educational system.



The programme came on stream in 2003 September. Three-Hundred (300) learners were selected for a Pilot in ten (10 centres). Computer training facilities in locations near pilot centres have been contracted and 158- learners have completed their 6-week programme of computer instruction

In June 2004, HISEP learners will be given course materials in Mathematics and Society & Citizenship, and facilitators for these subjects employed. Materials in the other subjects will be introduced on a phased basis. Learners will need enough time to work through the course content in all the subject areas, so that a complete review can be done.

Full implementation of HISEP is expected to begin by September 2005. Prior to this, discussions will be held with employers, employer groupings, providers of education and training at the secondary level, and other interested parties, with a view to entering into partnerships for the delivery of HISEP. A national promotional campaign for HISEP will be launched soon. All this Mr Speaker, to marshal us toward the goal of full literacy by 2007.

Empowering Upgraded High Schools

An important initiative targeted at newly upgraded high schools to improve quality and equity is the **Secondary Enhancement Programme**. This programme involves the provision of funds to specified schools to undertake strategic, developmental actions detailed in a School Development Plan. This is targeted at specific areas.



Under this programme, a sum of \$200M was allocated to 21 schools that had submitted approved School Development Plans. Each school received between \$6M and \$9M and made full use of their allotments. In the second phase – September 2002 to March 2003 a sum of \$75M was allocated to 17 schools from all six regions. The targeted areas of the second phase were the same except for the addition of cultural initiatives. For the third phase – September 2003 – March 2004, an additional 21 schools have been brought on board to undertake similar activities.

Inner-city Enhancement programme

Mr Speaker: An analysis of data from several sources revealed that many inner-city schools were challenged in the areas of infrastructure, parental support and curriculum delivery.

Consistent with the Government's emphasis on the overall improvement of facilities in the Inner-city, a special programme of intervention was developed to treat with the physical infrastructure, furniture and equipment, training of teachers for more effective delivery of the curriculum; training for principals in instructional leadership and school management and provision of additional staff where necessary in the areas of Guidance and Counselling, Literacy and Numeracy.



To this end a special supervisor was recruited to give special attention to the improvement of schools in the inner-city communities through the development and the implementation of customised school improvement plans for an initial 23 schools, comprising 14 Primary, All Age, Primary and Junior High and nine Secondary schools.

Under the programme, principals and teachers have continued to receive training and the schools have been provided with a special grant to facilitate the implementation of the School Improvement Plans.

Specialised materials have been provided to support the Grade 1 and 7 interventions in those areas. The schools have also been exposed to a programme of culture as well as to acceptable modes of conflict and dispute resolution.

At least 18 of the 23 schools have effectively implemented their SIPs, while the others are progressing at a satisfactory pace. Charlie Smith, Trench Town and Spanish Town High for example have effective programmes in place.

At Seaview Gardens primary, parents are also making good use of library facilities and schools such as St. Michael's, Whitfield A/A, and Trench Town Primary have solicited and gained tremendous support from the Private Sector in effecting their improvement plans.



Mr Speaker: We intend to transform this programme into one that treats with schools island-wide that are challenged in the areas cited previously.

Equity Through ICT

Mr Speaker: Emphasis will also be placed on providing quality and equity through the use of information and communication technologies. During this year therefore, we have devised a comprehensive programme for Grades 9 –11 which will see among other initiatives, the selection of our best teachers and best teaching strategies being shared by all through distance teaching, the Internet, cable television and other such media.

E-Learning Project

Meanwhile, Mr Speaker, we have in hand - as a commitment to using ICT to drive the education sector thus speaking to the imperatives of quality and equity - a draft **E-Learning Project** of the Government in collaboration with the International Telecommunications Union and other Partners. This Mr Speaker is in support of the vision to create a knowledge-based society to support sustainable development.

Mr Speaker: The project will seek to achieve this goal by utilising instructional technologies to provide access to the instructional materials generated under various programmes being targeted at improving levels of student attainment at Grades 7-11.



The target audience for these programmes include learners in and outside the formal education system who are seeking opportunities to achieve a High School Diploma, High School Equivalency and or passes in CSEC.

Mr Speaker: Five subjects have been identified for the first phase of the project: English Language, Math, Integrated Science, Social Science and Information Technology. Instructional materials will be converted to electronic formats that can enhance learning. Teachers will be trained in fifteen (15) schools to deliver materials in the first phase.

The materials will be developed to facilitate teaching methodologies, which draw heavily on modern ICT and facilitate distance teaching and learning using the Internet, the Cable television, interactive television and multimedia technologies. Course materials will be posted on websites, recorded on CDs/DVDs and support cable programming will make basic high school knowledge inexpensive and widely available to contribute to the vision of creating a knowledge-based society.

Irrespective of age, Mr Speaker: Learners will get access to high school knowledge and have the opportunity to improve their academic qualifications.



EMPOWERING TEACHERS

There are several teachers who will go beyond the call of duty to hone high-performing students. We see them every day and marvel at their energy, enthusiasm and commitment. Mr Speaker we take time out to salute them and thank them.

We have already acknowledged Mr Speaker that there are gaps in the system in terms of teacher performance. There are two very popularly cited reasons for low performance: one is the matter of training and the other a matter of attitude.

We should not however underplay the importance of appropriate teaching supports including materials in some instances and the less than comfortable and stimulating learning environment in others. They too have a significant impact on motivation and performance.

In-Service Training

Through training, mentorship and coaching, the Government is providing assistance to facilitate the professional development of teachers.

We now have a draft Professional Development Protocol comprising a conceptual framework of strategies, resources, references and materials to support professional development for In-service teachers at **all** levels of the system.



A beginning teachers' induction and mentorship programme was implemented at the start of this academic year and will continue to provide new teachers with a systematic structure of support to assist them in better understanding their professional responsibilities. In addition, Mr Speaker we anticipate that the new teacher, armed with the vision of the outputs of the system will take the initiative to pursue their own personal and academic development.

The Ministry in collaboration with several partners have facilitated a rich scholarship programme for eligible teachers.

Additionally, Mr Speaker: Our willing partner and stakeholder – the Jamaica Teachers' Association – constantly seeks to provide training in leadership, management, computer education and teaching strategies for its constituents at all levels. We are assured of their commitment to continue this trend Mr Speaker as they too have been **powered** and driven by the vision.

Pre-service Training

For the pre-service teacher **Mr Speaker:** We have embarked on a rationalisation programme of our nine teacher training colleges to make them more relevant to the needs of the teacher and subsequently the students. Out of the rationalisation process, the curriculum is being revised for strategic alignment with the curricular of the early childhood, primary and secondary levels.



An outcome of the rationalisation and upgrading processes will see these institutions becoming degree granting, by forging linkages with established universities locally and internationally.

Several Teacher Training colleges have already run with the initiative and are now offering in collaboration with an established university, degree courses in Early Childhood Education, Distance Education, Special Education and Guidance and Counselling in addition to leadership and management degrees for principals.

Monitoring

Mr Speaker: Underpinning the quality performance expected of teachers is the Teacher Performance Evaluation (TPE) system to be implemented system-wide come September. The first phase of the programme has already started in 32-schools randomly selected from Regions One and Five.

Developed in tandem with the Jamaica Teachers Association, the Teacher Performance Evaluation System will invariably improve quality, by helping teachers to realise their full potential, while executing their professional responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Although the system is designed in accordance with the guidelines of the Private Sector Modernisation Performance and Appraisal system, it has recognised the peculiarities of the teaching and learning environment.



Mr Speaker: The Teacher Performance Evaluation (TPE) will recognise the achievements of teachers and help them identify ways in which they can improve their skills and general performance; provide remedies for deficient performance that fail to add value to the system and empower principals and boards to use the results to make informed decisions about deployment, promotion, retention and separation in their management of teachers.

Mr Speaker: We have to review consistently and introduce measures that evaluate the professionalism of teachers.

EMPOWERMENT OF PRINCIPALS

A good principal makes all the difference to an institution. Such an individual is not only the instructional leader but also a motivator, a mobiliser of resources. He/she is results oriented and to do this he/she not only looks inwards but beckons outwards.

The Education Regulations emphasises the role of the principal as instructional leader, ensuring curriculum is effectively delivered; that there are lesson plans; that teachers attend classes punctually and regularly; that teaching and learning takes place. These, Mr Speaker, are inarguably the responsibility of principals.

Currently, many principals are immersed in administrative activities that leave them very little time to carry out their prescribed duties.



Much of their pre-occupation with administration is legitimate. However, we have to find a way to release them from some of these administrative duties to allow them to be instructional leaders. During the course of the year, we will be piloting a system of clustering schools to facilitate shared services. The detailed approach will be developed in collaboration with the stakeholders.

Mr Speaker: We recognise that regardless of and in addition to any innate talents, principals need to be trained. Under the Primary Education Support Project and ROSE II our principals - starting with those at the primary level will be exposed to training in leadership and management disciplines.

Last year fifty (50) Primary Schools Principals were trained at the Mt Saint Vincent University in a comprehensive programme equipping them with skills in human resource management; transformational leadership; change management; financial management, ICT and culture reengineering, developing effective schools; evaluation and supervision.

We have fifty more principals currently enrolled in the same programme Mr Speaker, while **179** were trained at teacher-training campuses in Jamaica by the same university, last year. Starting July and October of this year there will be similar local training offered to another set of **260** Primary School Principals under the same programme. By 2006 all Primary School principals will be trained.



Subsequently, the training will be institutionalised by Mt Saint Vincent through St. Joseph's Teachers' College, so that new and aspiring principals may avail themselves of the training in school management. It is envisaged that the management capabilities of the leadership of primary schools will be enhanced by this training geared towards the ultimate improvement of the education system in Jamaica.

Meanwhile, under ROSE II, starting this academic year, we have trained 50% of the 198 secondary schools' principals targeted for the project, in school improvement planning, empowering them to mobilise their stakeholders; and work with them in identifying developmental needs of their schools and subsequently devising a plan of action to address the critical needs. This Mr Speaker is underpinned by financial assistance provided by the Government.

As a matter of priority, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture provides induction training every year for new principals and vice principals in all regions.

Mr Speaker: The historic Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Government and the Public Sector also makes provision for the training needs of principals at the secondary level to be identified, with a view to providing the relevant training to ensure that they can do their jobs more effectively.



EMPOWERING THE STUDENTS

We have reviewed and re-launched the National Secondary Students' Council. Increased financial and institutional support is being given to this student organisation and to the Jamaica Union of Tertiary Students to promote student governance and to assist the more responsible in providing cohort leadership for those not so responsible.

The Minister of State in the MOEY&C who has responsibility for youth will expand on this subject when he makes his contribution the debate.

EMPOWERING SCHOOL BOARDS

We have also recognised the need to strengthen the leadership capacity of the school boards. In addition to clear codal guidelines, school boards now receive training through the National Council on Education in leadership and school management and finances. They are now empowered with a thorough understanding of the Education Act and Code of Regulations; the relevant audit regulations as well as skills in industrial relations.

EMPOWERING THE NEW PARENT

The home is a critical factor in child's education. As a part of our broad-based approach to providing quality, we also intend to increase parental involvement and awareness through public education. Public education campaigns to inform parents that differentiated expectations for boys and girls can affect their future aspirations will be mounted.



Already our Guidance Counselling Unit has been working with parents through seminars, discussion fora and Parent Teachers' Associations to educate parents about their role in child learning; to impress upon them the need to discourage absenteeism; provide money for book rental and creating a more conducive environment at home.

We intend to commit parents to a programme of mandatory parenting education administered through the schools Parent Teachers Association. Schools, such as St Elizabeth Technical High, have started the process and we intend to replicate this best practice in all our schools.

COLLABORATING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Since assuming office, I have been greatly heartened by the buy-in of the Private Sector into the education system. This genuine partnership being forged is not only based on financial contributions but on real attempts to be part of improving the system. We welcome this.

We want willing partners who will sponsor the building of Research and Development expertise and capability, which will enable us to compete internationally through effective use of our intellectual capital.

HEART/NTA

Mr Speaker: HEART as the National Training Agency has displayed a determination to give life to its vision statement; that is the creation of: -



A Jamaican workforce trained and certified to international standards, stimulating employment-creating investments, contributing to the improved productivity, competitiveness and prosperity of individuals, enterprises and the nation

One of the institution's most recent feat is the introduction of a new technical and business model for the training system called, "Unit Competency Standards," that enables more flexibility and portability of qualifications, while increasing opportunities for part-time study and certification of the existing workforce. This new framework will allow for an increase in both HEART-financed enrolments in training, and the participation of other training providers in a new national qualification framework for employment.

Mr Speaker: The following outlines some of the achievements of the HEART Trust/NTA:

- Enrolment moved up from 34, 649 in 2002/03 to 42, 490 in 2003/04 – an increase of 22. 5%.
- Twelve new important partnerships to expand access to training and certification were developed including new agreements with the Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica; with the TPDCO to provide Team Jamaica training in the tourism sector; with Northern Caribbean University; the Creative Production Training Centre; the Master Builders Association of Jamaica and other major stakeholders and partners.



- The Trust convened significant conferences on Lifelong Learning with the cooperation of the World Bank, and held a Stakeholder's Consultation in the health sector.
- Twenty-one (21) new community-based and other projects were approved by the Board of Directors in nine (9) parishes, with a total value of \$20.8M. These projects will create 650 new training spaces and finance higher-level training scholarships for 200 persons.
- New initiatives in Early Childhood, Education and Development created 870-spaces in this important and timely area of national concern.
- New Unit Competency Standards were developed in twenty (20) areas across 13 industries and over 100 new qualification profiles were developed. Meanwhile, 179 Learner's Guides were completed for eight sectors.
- The completion rate for persons in training is 94.2%, the certification rate is 85.8%
- A Total of 22 institutions were accredited to offer training programmes within the new framework.



Mr Speaker: for the coming year 2004/05, the HEART Trust/NTA aims to achieve the following:

- Continued roll-out of programmes refashioned into unit-competency standards enabling a further expansion of enrolment in the training system. This should result in an increase in enrolment from just under 42, 500 to 57, 500 persons
- We anticipate that 38, 000 learners will achieve full certification and 14, 100 persons will acquire unit competencies
- A major project with JAMALCO to assist with the development of the contractor workforce for the expansion of the JAMALCO plant via a partnership to operate the Breadnut Valley Training and Certification Centre near May Pen. This should involve training 400 individuals this year and a further 1,500 in the future in mostly higher-level construction skills
- New scholarships for Information and Communication Technologies through new project with the Ministry of Commerce, Science and Technology totalling \$180M over five years to benefit 750 higher-level ICT software developers and network specialists
- New partnership with CHASE Fund to finance low-cost training for 850-Level two early childhood caregivers
- Further accreditation of 50 training institutions and firms as training partners
- Increase in the number of skill assessors in the system from 230 to 750



- Introduction of a new Internet-based Learning Management System available to participating training providers and
- Increased participation of training providers, firms and existing workforce in the certification framework of the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET)

TERTIARY SECTOR

The support to create a quality tertiary sector is a *sine qua non* of building a quality education system. When we speak of tertiary, it is not confined to the universities. It covers the span of community colleges, teachers' colleges, professional development, distance education opportunities and our universities.

There is a process of rationalization taking place across the sector. The aim is to have articulation, even as we recognize that there will be some overlap. Through the University Council of Jamaica, institutions will have their courses accredited to ensure they are comparable to similar courses in the most advanced academic jurisdictions. The UCJ has, through the credit system, also started the process of establishing equivalencies to facilitate lateral movement of students from one institution to the other, thereby not losing any academic gains as they move. This is a landmark achievement.



There is need for massive capital and organizational investment in our teacher training and community colleges. Both sets of institutions provide the key to really creating wider access and flexible lifelong learning opportunities. These are the tertiary institutions to which the Government must give primacy in terms of real investments.

I have already spoken of the rationalization that is taking place in the teacher-training sector of the movement toward becoming degree-granting institutions and of diversifying their offerings. Similarly, the community colleges are treating their mandate seriously creating extra-mural campuses. EXED for example, now has a campus in Eastern St Thomas and one in Woodford Park, Kingston; Knox now operates in Mandeville and Southern Clarendon, while Moneague and Montego Bay are offering several new and innovative outreach options. They are “taking education to the people where they are.”

CULTURE IN EDUCATION

One of the most important building blocks of this great nation has been its culture. It sums up the national psyche as well as our potential to conquer all challenges and must be engaged in any process or plan to advance the cause of the building of this nation.

The National Cultural Policy, approved by Cabinet last year is now being distilled into a plan of action. The Philosophy guiding this plan of action is that of creating a people who have a clear national identity and national pride.



In this regard, the Cultural Policy is based on three areas of cultural endeavour: promoting national cultural identity and diversity; promoting our transnational identity and fostering and developing cultural industries.

The plan will aim at allowing Jamaica to carve out its niche of cultural industries in the global marketplace.

In the area of promoting cultural identity and diversity, Government will continue to encourage more cultural input in the education of our children. We believe this is crucial to creating a citizen who knows and is comfortable with him/herself; who takes responsibility for and is committed to the goals of national and regional development; a citizen who is aware of the history, culture and heritage of Jamaica and the Caribbean and is equipped to participate in the global environment.

The Culture in Education Programme aims at fostering such cultural identity.

Through this programme, we have been seeking to re-construct the underpinnings of educational offerings in order to ensure that our students have a better sense of self, greater confidence and an appreciation of their Jamaican cultural identity. We are using various strategies to achieve this.



One such is our ***Jamaica Day*** programme. Each term we identify one day as Jamaica Day, establish a theme for the day and allow each school to interpret that theme in whatever format they conceive.

The activities in the CIEP are implemented by a Culture Agent in each school. This Agent is a Senior Teacher and works with a committee of other interested and culturally competent teachers, parents and other community representatives to ensure that the schools' curriculum is grounded in cultural context and content. They also have responsibility to plan a series of activities to ensure that students experience the excellence of Jamaican culture and develop greater pride in self and country.

Another important element of the CIEP is the promotion of cultural industries and entrepreneurship. The Jamaica Cultural Development Commission and the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts must play a signal role in achieving this..

Over the years, these institutions, in particular the JCDC, have been responsible for providing large numbers of our people with opportunities for cultural expression. Through the JCDC, for example, we have been able to recognize our culture bearers and transmit the culture to our children. In this regard, we have sought to provide further opportunities to mainstream these activities for the benefit of the wider school population. Such programmes as



the Primary Integrated Arts Programme come to mind as one of those that have been established to make learning more dynamic for our children, producing thereby innovative and critically thinking young people.

In the coming year, JCDC plans to increase its coverage by ensuring that entries in the Festival of the Arts rise by at least 40% in all areas. Contiguous to this is the plan to expand and develop the products for greater economic advantage to participants through a partnership with the Jamaica Business Development Centres. We are in a global environment where the demand for Brand Jamaica is great and we must strive to respond to that demand as we seek to become more prosperous.

We have proof of this demand. Last year Kingston High School Drummers was invited by the Northamptonshire County Council to conduct drumming workshops in schools in that area of the United Kingdom; Clonmel Primary and Junior High, noted for their traditional folk offerings represented us well in Florida and later in Birmingham, England.

Our thrust then, is to strengthen the capacities of the JCDC and the Edna Manley College to lead the way in the development of the cultural prowess and excellence for which we have been known over the years.



We are also faced with the challenge of responding to the vast number of young people whose interest in the music industry continues to be stymied by lack of preparation and understanding of the business. We salute HEART Trust/NTA through its Vocational Technical Development Institute (VDTI) in responding to the demands of the music industry by establishing both short and diploma courses in Entertainment Management.

At this point we must underscore the role of the Institute of Jamaica and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust in the preservation of our national and natural heritage for our people. This is another area in which the CIEP has been focused, to bring to our children the various sites and monuments, the heritage concepts that have served us well as a people. Only last year we reopened Liberty Hall, which will play a major role in the restoration of Downtown, as centre for reasoning, research and presentations.

Of course, work continues on the Maima-Seville Heritage Park even as we celebrate the achievement of the Moore Town Maroon community in having their musical heritage proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. We invite you all to the Presentation Ceremony at the Institute of Jamaica on June 9, 2004 at 11.00 a.m.



In all this, the Ministry is aware of the importance of Intellectual Property and other important cultural constructs such as cultural diversity, especially as they relate to culture and trade issues, in the process of national development through culture. For this reason, we have been involved both regionally and internationally in the deliberations and actions in these areas as we seek to ensure that our people receive due reward for their capacity for cultural expression.

We are actively involved in such activities as the revamping of the Caribbean Festival of the Arts (CARIFESTA) as a major market and exposition for our cultural products, the promotion of new and vibrant local festivals even as we recognize the strength of the festival economy and the development of training solutions for our people in culture and the arts. We laud the work of EXED Performing Arts Department, the Philip Sherlock Centre of the Performing Arts, the Jamaica Business Development Centre's ***Beyond*** and other programmes in arts endeavour

The process that I have sought to define will require coordination and monitoring. In this regard, we have set in motion strategies for greater and deeper interaction among cultural agencies to ensure more cohesion and coherence in cultural programming, while seeking to position culture as an important vehicle for integrated planning in the national development thrust.



It is the intention of Government to formally establish the Inter Agency Committee which brings all our cultural agencies together regularly for information-sharing and collaborative planning. At another level, it is also considered that we re-establish the National Council on Cultural Affairs so that Ministers responsible for Ministries with a cultural remit could meet regularly for integrated policy initiatives as well as policy evaluation.

We have established the CHASE Fund through which so many of our artists and practitioners have been able to create new images and promote new voices.

The challenges are great yet the opportunities are endless and can be achieved by a people united in the vision to rise and build. And so I reflect on a vision constantly asserted by Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey:

There is a world of opportunities awaiting us, and it is for us through unity of will and purpose, to say we shall and we will play our part upon the great human stage of activity... We shall cause men to regard us as equals in achievements, in industry... commerce.. Politics ... science, art and education. We shall make of [Jamaica] a mighty nation and ... cause our children to call us blessed.



CONCLUSIONS:

THE COMMITMENT

Yes! The task before us is a formidable one. Like Nehemiah, we have to plan, motivate, mobilise and organise to remove any and all the breaches to build the wall of education.

- ❑ We have to build students who are well-rounded with agile minds and able to adjust to different situations.
- ❑ We have to build teachers who are committed, qualified, competent effective and who believe in the God-given potential of each child.
- ❑ We have to build the curriculum at each level to ensure relevant education.
- ❑ We have to build quality learning institutions at all levels of the system
- ❑ We have to build appropriate content and methodology through re-ordered and well-equipped teacher training colleges.
- ❑ We have to build parents who nurture and support their children.
- ❑ We have to build communities that actively care for our children and their learning institutions.

All these are the building blocks of a quality society with quality citizens who are confident in their ability to confront the new world.

Mr Speaker: **THE PEOPLE HAVE A MIND TO WORK. SO – as in the days of Nehemiah- LET US RISE AND REBUILD.**