

**Statement by the
Chairman of the Board of Education
Mr. Darren Johnston regarding
Student Performance on External Examinations and Graduation**

Dame Jennifer, Minister of Education; PS Jones; Ms McDonell, Commissioner of Education; Dr Simmons, Director of Academic Services, members of the press, and public education stakeholders it is my pleasure on behalf of the Board of Education to congratulate our students for their graduation and testing achievements.

Students, we are proud of you! You have proven that we can generate positive outcomes even while we are undergoing significant change.

For those students who did not realize their potential in this past school year please know that we haven't forgotten your importance or needs. We continue to have high expectations that in the future you will also be honored for your achievements. Know that we remain committed to you and your success.

We have reached an important milestone for the country
We now know for certain that we are on the right path.
We now know for certain where we stand.
We also know where we want to be and how we are going to get there.

Where do we want to be? The Top tier of world rankings

How are we getting there? By improving teaching and learning via high leverage strategies

When we say high leverage strategies we mean strategies and actions that will have positive multiplier effects on student outcomes.

Let me give you some examples of high leverage strategies that we have already commenced:

1. We implemented international curricula and assessments for the core subjects of Math, English, and Science
2. We reduced the significant over testing that restricted time available for teaching and learning
3. We expanded the professional development of our teachers; and
4. We increased the autonomy of our principals

This year's high leverage actions will include freeing up our most senior educator, pairing her with a world renown turnaround specialist and having them spend significant time at school sites building teaching and leadership skills.

We will also be deploying Department of Education officers to the school sites to support schools directly.

We are confident these actions meet the test of being positive high leverage strategies and will move us closer to our vision of world class performance.

I am aware of the current environment and the increased temptation to find things we could be doing differently. Constructive views in that regard are welcome. However, let's not reduce ourselves to point scoring using our students as the vehicle....let's acknowledge that improvement in education is incremental and continue to push forward together to ensure we achieve our ultimate goal of realizing the potential of our people.

I started by congratulating our students, it is appropriate to end by thanking our educators; they are the frontline people who face difficult challenges every day and will be one of the most important determinants of our success.

Thank you.