



**Ministerial Statement**  
To The House of Assembly

By

**The Hon. R. Wayne Scott, JP, MP**  
Minister of Education

**Ministerial Statement**  
**School Facility Improvements**

Friday May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016

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**Mr. Speaker,**

Recognizing the importance of education, the Government believes that it is imperative that our students experience school facilities that promote learning.

Members of this House are aware of the *School Reorganisation Advisory Committee's Report of Findings and Recommendations* (SCORE Report), which outlined a number of challenges with our school buildings. In support of transparency, earlier this year, I made that report public, and at that time also made a commitment to students, parents, educators and other stakeholders in the education community, that this Government takes concerns about safety and health seriously. I was both adamant and confident that we would make the investments needed in our school facilities.

I am happy to provide members of this House with an update on the efforts undertaken both by the Department of Public Lands and Buildings within the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Education's Department of Education. These Department's must work in a co-ordinated fashion since both are required to support optimal school facilities. The Department of Public Lands and

Buildings has responsibility for the maintenance and repair of some thirty (30) Government schools including maintained preschools, primary and middle schools; whilst the Department of Education is responsible for minor works for these same schools. Ensuring that schools are fit for purpose and provide a safe and healthy environment is an ongoing exercise throughout the year and is managed by teams from both Departments.

In respect of the buildings themselves, the Buildings team from Public Lands and Buildings works closely with the Department of Education Facilities Manager to develop a planned maintenance program for each school by identifying and prioritizing works based on health and safety defects, infrastructure needs and school operations. These works are determined after inspections take place in consultation with Preschool Administrators and Principals, and are carefully planned to minimize disruption to school programs.

Many of our schools are dated and require extensive maintenance and repairs. They were designed and built for another era, one that did not envision air conditioning, computers and smart boards. Most maintenance works cannot be completed when school is in session for health and safety reasons and, frankly because they would be highly disruptive to learning. The majority of the works are therefore planned for and completed when students and school staff are out on vacation. The longest period being the summer holidays which begin at the end of June and run through to the beginning of September when the new school year begins.

**Mr. Speaker,**

For the financial year 2015/2016, the summer maintenance project began in April with crews inspecting and identifying maintenance and repair issues for each school. The scope of works for each school was then drawn up and agreed with the Facilities Manager from the Department of Education. The works were then planned to start as soon as the holidays began. Works which were deemed to not pose a risk to staff or students were started before schools closed for the summer. In addition, summer works had to take into account, and work, around summer programs that are run in some of the schools.

The planned works were extensive and involved **seven** (7) work units with over **one hundred and twenty** (120) staff, including HVAC crews, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, masons and painters. All staff of the Buildings section of the Ministry were fully engaged in these works right through the summer.

The scope of works and the tight timeframe required additional resources to assist with these projects. As such, contracts were awarded to companies to paint the interior and exterior of:

- Lyceum Preschool
- Lagoon Park Preschool
- Francis Patton Primary School
- Northlands Primary School
- Paget Primary School
- Port Royal Primary School
- Somerset Primary School
- Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy, and
- Clearwater Middle School.

In addition Public Lands and Buildings' own crews painted Southampton Preschool. Over \$1,100,000 was spent on painting the interior and exterior of some 10 of the schools.

Whilst **one million five hundred thousand dollars** (\$1,500,000) of capital funds were budgeted for school works for fiscal year 2015/2016 a revised estimate increased this to **three million five hundred thousand dollars** (\$3,500,000) as the works got underway and the scope of works increased. As the works were essential to ensure that the schools were open for the new school year, savings were made in other capital accounts. The goal was to ensure that critical works were completed before the start of the new school year and that no school would be unable to open for the new school year owing to maintenance issues. All schools had maintenance works done, some requiring more extensive works than others. That goal was met thanks to the Buildings team and the Facilities Management team who worked hard over the summer to ensure that schools were ready for the new year.

In addition to the extensive works during the holidays, there is a full time work crew of some 16 Public Lands and Buildings staff who work throughout the year carrying out maintenance and repairs on school buildings with additional works contracted out to a variety of local contractors. They also respond to issues that arise on a day to day basis, such as clogged toilets, dripping faucets etc.

The school works project for fiscal year 2016/2017 is well underway. Department's from both the Ministries of Education and Public Works are continuing to co-ordinate their efforts in response to findings within the SCORE Report. I, along with the Acting Commissioner of Education, our Facilities Manager and each school Principal (or designate) walked through each primary

school to identify the priority works. Over the Easter break, crews worked overtime to hit as many of the target works as possible whilst our students were on break. The remainder of the works will be completed during the school year where possible, and then in the summer holidays whilst the schools are vacant. Schools identified to be cleaned and painted internally and externally this year include:

- Devonshire Preschool
- Warwick Preschool
- St. David's Primary School
- Victor Scott Primary School
- West End Primary School
- Elliot Primary School, and
- Purvis Primary School.

Government schools continue to be a priority for the Government and both the Ministries of Education and Public Works. The Department of Public Lands and Buildings will continue to work closely with the Facilities management team at the Department of Education to not only continue with the planned maintenance program, but to identify and remediate any health and safety issues as they arise.

It is anticipated that over three million dollars (\$3,000,000) will be spent in this fiscal year by the Ministry of Public Works on Government schools maintenance and repair.

**Mr. Speaker,**

When I first released the SCORE Report, I made it clear that I was interested in looking forward – to solutions and progress. The information I have provided here today, on behalf of myself and the Minister of Public Works is evidence of this progress. However, I also think it is important for parents, educators and other

stakeholders of our education system to be engaged in the process of improving our school facilities.

That is why school principals of maintained primary and middle schools are informing their parents and staff of the works that will be completed for their schools. To take that further, I will ensure that the entire schedule of works on schools be publicly available on our website – [moed.bm](http://moed.bm) – and be updated regularly.

Whilst, this may seem like a simple thing, it is an opportunity for parents and educators to see what is being done and when, and in turn, they can – if need be – remind us of the commitments that we have made to our children, parents and school staff.

By working together, we are improving our school facilities to ensure that our children receive a quality education, in facilities that promote optimal learning.

Thank you.