



Ministerial Statement
To The House of Assembly
By
The Hon. Diallo V. Rabain JP, MP
Minister of Education

Ministerial Statement
Preparations for the Introduction of Signature Learning Programmes in
September 2022

Friday, July 1st, 2022

Mr. Speaker,

I rise this morning before this Honourable House to keep my Honourable colleagues and the general public informed about the exciting work that continues in support of Education Reform, and more specifically about the introduction of Signature Learning Programmes in September 2022, for our two senior schools The Berkeley Institute and the CedarBridge Academy.

Mr. Speaker,

This will be a first time ever for our students, a first time ever for our schools and a first time ever for Bermuda. A milestone indeed and we are very proud of the work that has been undertaken to-date!

Mr. Speaker,

The last time I provided this House with an update on the signature learning programmes for our senior schools was in May 2022. Since then the work has intensified.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I want to share with my Honourable colleagues the Education Reform Work during the past weeks as it relates to:

1. The Experience of of our Students
2. Professional Learning Days for School Staff
3. New School Transformation Teams
4. Good Governance

Quite a bit **Mr. Speaker**, but as I said the work has intensified however, it has also proven to be a work of excellence. First, let me start with:

The Experience of our Students

In the previous Statement I read in the House in May this year, I shared that in September 2022, incoming S1 students entering The Berkeley Institute and the CedarBridge Academy will be educated in a way that has never been done before. The incoming S1 students will, in addition to their Core Curriculum, have access to a Signature curriculum which is relevant for our children, for Bermuda and globally. Our S1 students will experience a model of teaching and learning which incorporates authentic, real-world learning experiences and meaningful projects, attentive to the differing needs of each and every child.

The graduation requirements will ensure that children who leave with the Bermuda Signature School Diploma have the necessary experience, skills, knowledge, values and relationships to take up jobs or apprenticeships in their chosen profession or trade and contribute to the requirements for entry into colleges and universities

Mr. Speaker,

I am very pleased to share that all of the prerequisite work to prepare us for a successful launch for September 2022 is on solid ground. The Board of Governors and the School Leadership of both senior schools have confidently stated that they are ready to receive young people in September 2022, and provide them with 21st century learning experiences and opportunities.

Mr. Speaker,

Every journey worth taking, begins with a critical starting point to get to the end goal. There has been a journey for the adults in the education system to help us achieve our desired future state. I have shared on many occasions in this Honourable House, the work of the adults in system transformation.

Mr. Speaker,

It is equally important for this Honourable House to understand the student experience in this journey to get them ready to select their desired signature learning programme that supports their passions and interests. In preparation for September 2022, programming was created to engage current M3 students and parents in a Taster Programme that took them through a journey of self-reflection into their own passions and interests, and exposure to the opportunities and careers of the Signature Learning Programmes on offer at our two senior schools. Through regular communication and sharing of resources and activities with M3 teams and families, conversations and research into the various signature tracks went beyond the classrooms. At home, parents were able to talk with their children about the opportunities ahead.

Mr. Speaker,

The involvement of parents engaging their children at home was critical. In the end, the response to the Taster Programme from both educators and students was very positive. Educators found it particularly helpful for the young people to have the opportunity to discuss their talents, interests, values, passions and strengths and learn more about who they are as an individual. For the students, there was excitement at how their current interests could translate into a wide range of career options. In fact, the process was most inspiring for some.

Mr. Speaker,

Let me share comments made by some of our M3 students that's extremely encouraging. One M3 student stated, *"This made me want to look into going away to university which I was unsure about before."*

Another M3 student shared, *"By doing a taster, I found out some new things about myself that lead to interest in new careers. This was very helpful as I was able to learn new things about digital marketing/sales manager/interior design which interest me."*

Yet another M3 student shared, *"Prior to the Taster Programme, I had my mind made up that I was going to do a particular career. However, the Programme opened my eyes to different career paths."* This comment encapsulates the ultimate goal for our young people as it pertains to the process of selecting their signature pathway.

Mr. Speaker,

A longer, more comprehensive Taster Programme is currently under development. The positive and constructive feedback we have received from our students has allowed the School Choice team to refine the work for the next set of M3 students.

Mr. Speaker,

As a result of the collective hard work of the staff at the Department of Education and the School Choice working group, I am pleased to celebrate that out of the approximately 300 incoming S1 students enrolled for September 2022, over 90% have selected a signature learning track. The remaining students, while having selected a general track, will still be immersed in the new features of learning and schooling.

Mr. Speaker, I will now share about:

Professional Learning Days for School Staff

In May this year, I announced the early school closure for the 2021/22 school year. The rationale being to continue to engage each and every teacher across the island in professional learning on the features of our transformed system. The continued transformation of our school system is a complex and challenging undertaking that requires the engagement of every educator. The extra three days at the end of the term allowed our schools to work with undivided attention, ensuring that we are even more prepared for the next design and implementation phases.

Mr. Speaker,

Our currently established senior school signature transformation teams and subject teachers, had the opportunity to refine and finalise curriculum,

scheduling and other features for the Signature Learning programmes in September 2022. At the same time, the remaining senior staff members were engaged in professional learning communities where they gained more insight into the major features of Signature Learning that have been under development for the last two years.

Mr. Speaker,

Simultaneously, our preschools, primary and middle schools engaged in professional learning to expand their knowledge around high impact teaching strategies. Over the three days, they took the opportunity to determine implementations of these best practices in their buildings when school commences in September 2022.

Additionally, our two new parish primary school transformation teams along with their entire school staff worked rigorously to begin development of our transformed parish primary schools set to be opened in September 2023.

Mr. Speaker, I will expand a bit more on the

New School Transformation Teams

The Ministry of Education has now onboarded the second wave of School Transformation Teams to participate in the designing, prototyping and implementation of new models of teaching, learning and schooling for September 2023. These School Transformation Teams will bring together education professionals, parents, business and community members who are passionate about redesigning Bermuda's public schools to best prepare young people for a purposeful and thriving future.

Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to share that we received nearly 100 expressions of interest from educators and community members to work towards transforming our first set of parish primary schools (at the Purvis Primary and Francis Patton School Sites) and designing our next signature school to implement Hospitality & Tourism and Education Services tracks. The past few weeks of

onboarding and early stages of designing and co-creating has set the stage for development of this next phase of transformation.

Mr. Speaker, the last topic I want to share about is

Governance

Research shows that lessons from high performing education systems look beyond teaching and learning to focus on ensuring the policy, governance and operational systems are in place to ensure the success of all educators. Plan 2022 recognised and called for a review of the systems current structure; and, Bermuda First called for the introduction of an Education Authority in their 2019 Future State Report.

Mr. Speaker,

There needs to be good governance to sustain and support reform. Governance that is not subject to day-to-day political interference. Governance that has the independence to be flexible and agile in ensuring that the needs of Bermuda's children, economy and community are best, and efficiently, served.

We all acknowledge that the relationships of schools and School Boards with the Ministry and Department of Education are not, and have not been, as free flowing as we would like. The establishment of an Education Authority will be the opportunity to reset, renew and clarify these relationships. We need to learn from the past to create a better future.

Mr. Speaker,

An Education Authority is needed to take the politics out of education and make public education nimbler and responsive. The Authority will be responsible for all aspects of public education in Bermuda and hold a dual focus of equity and accountability.

Mr. Speaker,

The work to create an education authority and continue towards education reform and school transformation is well underway. Currently the education authority working group is creating the framework for what the Education Authority would look like. They are currently receiving feedback from the Department of Education, existing school boards, and other relevant stakeholders. The working group will continue to meet and collect data to help formalize the proposals as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker,

Some of the critical action steps taken have been:

1. Meetings with schools to understand the strengths and weaknesses of school boards;
2. Scanning governance arrangements in some high-performing systems with some characteristics of an Education Authority;
3. Reviewing research on the governance and leadership of successful 21st century learning systems;
4. Reviewing relevant Private and Government Acts, and Memoranda of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and schools;
5. Exploring management structures and practices in 21st century learning systems; and,
6. Developing and agreeing on revised roles and responsibilities for school boards.

Mr. Speaker,

The Education Authority Working Group has much work ahead and is progressing steadily to see this Governance structure come to fruition for our public school system.

In closing, **Mr Speaker,**

and casting my mind back over the past 28 months, the transformative work has been challenging, fast paced and rigorous with little time to rest for those involved in Education Reform. At this time, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has committed and participated collaboratively in “co-designing” the learning experiences of excellence that we have in place for our young people. I await September 2022 with great

anticipation to see our young people start a journey of exploration and growth as they experience our first ever Signature Learning Programmes.

Thank you, **MR SPEAKER.**