



Ministerial Statement

To The Senate

By

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Junior Minister of Education

Ministerial Statement

"Summer Professional Learning Activities for Educators"

Date: Wednesday, July 7th, 2021

Madam President,

This morning I rise to share with my honourable colleagues and the community at large the summer professional learning activities that the Department of Education has planned for Educators during the months of July and August.

Madam President,

An excerpt from a report on professional learning released by the OECD, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, states that "Effective teaching is at the heart of a successful education system and there is a growing recognition that supporting teachers' professional learning from the beginning to the end of their career is critical to improve student outcomes. Teachers' professional learning enables them to develop the knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to be effective educators, support their peers, contribute to the collective improvement of the profession and gain the trust, status and self-efficacy to carry out their work with a high degree of professionalism."

Madam President,

Teacher quality is at the core of student learning and this is supported by research that consistently highlights that the quality of teaching is a key determinant of variation in student achievement. Research also affirms that engaging teachers in high quality professional learning is the most successful way to improve teacher effectiveness and by extension, improve student outcomes.

Madam President,

This summer, like many teachers around the world, our teachers and educators in the Bermuda Public School System will take time during their summer vacation, to participate in a variety of professional learning activities of their choosing, in an effort to deepen their learning, and expand their skills. The Department of Education will be funding targeted professional learning activities for teachers which are focused on 3 areas of 21st Century learning:

1. the Creative Curriculum;
2. Project Based Learning; and,
3. Blended Learning.

Madam President,

Some of our P1 teachers have expressed an interest in piloting the Creative Curriculum for Kindergarten. These teachers will have access to independent learning around teaching the whole child within their zone of learning and development. They will be learning more about using a personalized learning approach for students that integrates content and developmental domains around project based learning and this is aligned with our vision for learning for students.

The P1 teachers who participate in this summer professional learning activity will delve into foundational areas such as social emotional and physical development. They will learn to meet students where they are in language, literacy, mathematics and science and be exposed to balancing intentional teaching with student led learning.

The concept of social science and the arts as integrated in all areas of Project Based Learning will be introduced. Here it is noted the social science and the arts add to the cultural relevance of the learning experiences for children even while students learn about the world beyond Bermuda.

Madam President,

The P1 teachers will be taking advantage of the opportunity to improve their teaching by being continuous learners themselves. This opportunity for summer professional learning will give them a jump start on 21st Century deeper learning for our young students through creating learning environments that support skills

like critical thinking, collaboration and communication through exploration and inquiry learning.

Madam President,

I will now share about the summer Project Based Learning activity. Plan 2022 Strategy 1.1 calls for teachers to deliver high quality instructional practices that are rigorous and foster knowledge comprehension, critical and creative thinking, application and communication. Project-Based Learning is one of those high quality instructional practices.

PBLWorks (a US Institute for Education that supports high instructional practices) states: “In Project Based Learning, teachers make learning come alive for students. Students work on a project over an extended period of time that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. Students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. Project Based Learning unleashes a contagious, creative energy among students and teachers.”

Madam President,

Additionally, the Project Based Learning Network states that project-based learning is a powerful way to engage students in rigorous, authentic learning. It will enable students to understand content at a deeper level and retain it for longer; get them excited about learning; engage them in solving real-world problems and real audiences; and to exercise their creativity by working collaboratively while mastering key learning targets.”

Madam President,

During July and August, a group of 25 teachers and technical officers will participate in a six-week Project Based Learning Curriculum Developer Certification programme, offered by the Project Based Learning Network. These officers and teachers will engage in a self-paced five-module programme which focuses on high performance project based learning; how to dig deep to inform and inspire a rich project based learning unit; and how to frame a project based learning unit from start to finish.

Throughout the course our officers and teachers will have access to high-quality resources; one on one coaching and support from international coaches; access to an international project-based learning network community where they can share ideas, ask for feedback, and get connected with resources. By the end of the course officers and teachers will have to produce a project based learning unit that will be reviewed by local and international peers and they will also publish that unit. They will be learning the same way students will learn—by working on an authentic project and sharing the final product with real audiences.

Madam President,

Lastly, I am also pleased to report that another thirty (30) teachers will participate in the Schoology Blended Learning Leader Academy this summer. The Schoology Blended Learning Leadership Academy was developed to help transform teaching and learning. It is aligned to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Educators, and received the ISTE Proficiency Seal of Alignment. The Findings Report of the ISTE Seal of Alignment Review states: "The Schoology Blended Learning Professional Development is grounded in research-based strategies and collaboration to enable educators to master and apply new learning in their own educational context."

Madam President,

Plan 2022 Strategy 1.1.3 calls for teachers to use innovative learning experiences that will ignite student engagement and motivate learning. Blended Learning will create this type of learning experience for our students as it is a combination of face-to-face and online learning. The face-to-face time happens in the classroom where students have direct access to the teacher. The online learning can be done at school or at home. There is also the independent study time of which all can be combined differently. In-person learning happens during school hours, but the online learning could be a video to watch for homework, a lesson prepared by the teacher, use of online sources at school, some type of digital curriculum, or assignments and discussions carried out on a learning management system. The learning management system for the Bermuda Public School System is Schoology.

Madam President,

In a blended learning setting students shift away from the traditional classroom and begin to focus on where and how technology can enhance the learning. A project might be a multimedia presentation where students have to research and incorporate multiple sources. It might also include using social media to add to their background knowledge. With blended learning, the imagination is the only major limit to learning within the classroom.

Madam President,

This Schoology Blended Learning Academy includes nine sessions. Teachers will be introduced to the concept of blended learning; they will learn about how to communicate in a blended learning environment and how to facilitate a powerful community of learners online. There will also be sessions on asynchronous learning and collaboration; and how to drive instruction with digital assessments. They will experience what blended learning looks like in action and plan for flipped instruction; and, design transformative lessons.

Madam President,

All of these professional learning activities which I have shared, will equip our teachers with 21st century knowledge and skills; and also empower and equip them to provide the best learning experiences for students. In closing, let me say that Education Reform continues during the summer months as these groups of teachers 'sharpen their saw' in preparation for 21st Century teaching and learning.

Thank you **Madam President.**