



**Ministerial Statement**  
To The House of Assembly

By

**The Hon. N. Cole Simons, JP, MP**  
Minister of Education

**A Strategic Plan  
for  
the Bermuda Public School System**

**Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

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**Mr. Speaker,**

This morning I am pleased to share with my Honourable Colleagues the various activities that have taken place and organized, leading to the development of a new direction and Strategic Plan for our Public School System.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Members of this Honourable House are aware that in June 2015, the Strategic Plan 2010-2015, Blueprint for Reform in Education expired for the Bermuda Public School System. As legislated under the Education Act, 1996, the Board of Education makes recommendations regarding a statement of vision, values and strategy for public education. In this regard, the Board of Education has embarked upon planning and steering the development of a new multi-year community-owned strategic plan to drive the future delivery of public school education.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Last week I informed this Honourable House about the launch of the Parental Involvement Committee and emphasized that we expect great things ahead for our public education system. At that time I invited parents, as well as other stakeholders to be part of this vision and future of parental engagement and involvement.

**Mr. Speaker,**

This week I call upon the entire community in Bermuda to join with the Board of Education and be a part of this strategic planning process. The goal of the Board is to have a transformative public education strategy that is developed by Bermudians for Bermudians, as the success of public school education affects everyone.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Let me first share some background information. The birthing of this strategic planning course of action took place last year April 2016 by a core sub-committee of the Board of Education. The agreed objective was to develop a strategic planning approach that was transparent, inclusive, engaging and most importantly, community driven. The Board of Education has mandated that the strategic planning process will establish the next generation of core beliefs, values, vision and mission for the Bermuda Public School System.

The overall intent is that once completed, the strategic plan will be the overarching guideline to determine the scope, direction, resources and financial needs of the Department of Education and ultimately drive a progressive, sound, credible public education experience for our children.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The Board of Education has engaged the professional services of Dr. Jeremiah Newell, CEO of Jeremiah Newell and Associates to help support the steering of the strategic plan. Dr. Newell has significant experience in designing and leading strategic planning processes for public school systems. He specializes in transforming public education agencies into high performing, learning-focused organizations.

For more than a decade, Dr. Newel has worked in diverse, large and complex education systems to drive strategic change and improvement. Dr. Newell and the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Freddie Evans will work closely together to lead out on this strategic planning project during the upcoming months.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The Board of Education is intent that this strategic planning effort will be based on truly hearing the voices and aspirations of the broad community through small group, community held conversations on the future of public education in Bermuda. Thus in support of this, last week Wednesday and Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, a series of information meetings were held with the Ministry of Education's key internal stakeholder groups, to inform them about the strategic planning approach that will be taken to develop a new Blueprint for the Bermuda Public School System.

**Mr. Speaker,**

On Wednesday morning, both Dr. Evans and Dr. Newell engaged the Board of Education members in a reflective discussion, on the initiatives that were implemented in the public school system stemming from the 2010-2015 Blueprint, and what approach will be followed moving forward in the development of a new Blueprint. Dr. Evans shared that emanating from the 2010-2015 Blueprint there were a number of initiatives completed, some of which included:

- Adoption and implementation of the Cambridge Curriculum;
- Implementation of an internationally recognized preschool curriculum – the creative curriculum 'Inquiring Minds';
- Establishment of the Bermuda Educators Council for licensing all educators;
- Establishment of a gifted and talented programme;
- Implementation of a National Mathematics Strategy; and,
- Implementation of a National Literacy Strategy.

**Mr. Speaker,**

An afternoon information session was later held at the CedarBridge Academy for Pre-school Administrators, Deputy Principals, staff at the Child Development Programme and Bermuda College Representatives. This was followed by an early evening information session for school PTA Executives, School Parent Councils, members of school Boards and community partners.

**Mr. Speaker,**

On Thursday, a total of five information sessions took place. The two morning sessions were held with Ministry and Department staff, and then with Department senior managers and Bermuda College representatives. These meetings were held at the Ministry Headquarters in Southside, St. David's. The afternoon sessions engaged the executive members of the Bermuda Union of Teachers Unions and then teachers in the public school system. The evening session ended with a training session for persons who expressed interest in becoming a Facilitator of community conversations that will be hosted across every parish in the Island.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Each stakeholder group session was provided with an outline explaining the methodology that will be used over the next few months to develop the new strategic plan. The core elements of the strategic planning approach include:

- training volunteers for community facilitators
- identifying community leaders to serve as hosts for community conversations
- authentic community engagement through small group, community held conversations;
- administering a survey to gather island-wide community input on public education; and,
- establishment of an Ambassador Design Team - a diverse group of strategic planning writers

**Mr. Speaker,**

Two final stakeholder information sessions are scheduled for the first week in April that will include representatives from our private schools and the business sector, and then the public community at large.

**Mr. Speaker,**

We are excited about the commencement of this strategic planning process and look forward to the months ahead in developing the plan. The Board of Education has mapped out a timeframe of six-months to complete the Strategic Plan for implementation in September 2017. There is a lot of work ahead but we are committed to see this come to fruition.

**Mr. Speaker,**

I solicit the support and input of the entire community – parents, students, teachers, principals, guardians, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, small and large business owners, business professionals, retirees, churches, sporting clubs, everyone who cares about the future of Bermuda - to participate in the upcoming community conversations that you will be hearing more about. Additionally, for those who may not be able to attend a community conversation, an on-line survey is currently available on the Ministry of Education website at [www.moed.bm](http://www.moed.bm) to provide your input. We have over 200 responses to this survey already. This will be a strategic plan based on the input from the community.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Let me close by thanking the members of the Board of Education under the Chairmanship of Mr. Curtis Dickinson for moving this Strategic Planning initiative forward. I particularly want to acknowledge the core strategic planning team – Mrs. Jo-Ann Pulley, Board Member and Ms. Lisa Smith, Policy & Project Officer at the Ministry of Education who have been meeting regularly since last year, inclusive of weekend meetings to map out, organize, design and report out to the Board membership a way forward. Their diligence, commitment and personal sacrifices made to ensure the front end success of this initiative, is greatly appreciated.

**Mr. Speaker,**

I look forward to working with parents, all educators and the broader community towards the common goal of elevating public education in Bermuda; through the development of a community-led and a community-driven strategic plan that will steer the success of public school education and our children.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**