



Ministerial Statement
To The House of Assembly

By

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Minister of Education

Ministerial Statement
Expanded Scholarship and Awards Opportunities

Friday February 17th, 2017

Mr. Speaker,

This morning I am pleased to share with my Honourable colleagues the work that has put in place to expand the Ministry of Education's pool of scholarship and awards offerings.

Mr. Speaker,

Post-secondary education helps to grow our small society by opening up the world to students through higher learning, training and exploration. Along with family and community, it is the investment in education that helps to develop our young citizens to be great contributors to Bermuda's social and economic success. It is this Government's vision, that all Bermudians be given the opportunity to attend post-secondary education, locally or overseas. However, we know that some students still face disadvantages, economic and otherwise, that make it difficult for them to attend college, university or other types of post-secondary programmes.

Mr. Speaker,

As the Minister of Education, I am proud to stand in the House this morning to share that this Government is providing much-needed opportunities to a wider group of our students. We have delivered on our 2016 Throne Speech promise "*. . . to diversify and increase scholarship and award opportunities for students who pursue post-secondary educational studies.*

However our focus on scholarships and awards for young people is more than a vitally important Throne Speech initiative. We know that funding scholarships and awards can change lives, especially for those students who simply need greater support for success.

We believe that we should foster the dreams and aspirations of our youth; not only as an investment in our people, but also an investment in the kind of Bermuda that we want to work together to create. We are therefore intently focused on providing more and more opportunities for young people to attend post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker,

The Ministry of Education already provides significant funding for scholarships and awards through the Bermuda Government Scholarships, the Further Education Awards, Mature Student Awards and Teacher Training Awards. We are grateful for the substantial funding provided by the Department of Workforce Development to ensure that educational and training opportunities are provided to Bermudians aged 18 and up.

We are also extremely thankful for the myriad of scholarships and awards offered by many local and international companies, charitable foundations and others. Many of these fund students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievements, those entering particular fields of study of importance to Bermuda, and those who need additional financial support to be able to attend college, university or other types of programmes.

We appreciate the contributions of the donor community that is helping more and more Bermudians - especially those in need – to achieve success. However, there is still a role for Government to play. So when considering how the Ministry of Education could better support more young people transition into adulthood, we decided to do more by focusing on students with great promise, but who also have great need.

Therefore, the Ministry of Education has introduced a number of new scholarship and award opportunities to promising students for both local and overseas studies.

These offerings cover a total of eight new scholarships and awards namely the:

- Minister's Achievement Scholarship for graduating public school students.
- Minister's Merit Scholarship for graduating senior school students in financial need.
- Minister's Technical and Vocational Award for graduating public school students or public school alumni attending Bermuda College with a strong interest in technical and vocational studies.
- Minister's Exceptional Student Award for graduating students or school leavers with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker,

The majority of these new opportunities will not only require that applicants demonstrate financial need, but will also consider achievement, excellence, talent, growth, perseverance, innovation, creativity, and an interest and willingness to give back to Bermuda. The Minister's Scholarships are for overseas study and will be valued at \$25,000. The Minister's Technical and Vocational Awards and the Minister's Exceptional Student Awards are for local or overseas study and will be valued at \$5,000 and \$25,000 respectively. All scholarships and awards are being advertised on BermudaScholarships.com and applicants are required to submit their applications via this website by March 31st, 2017.

Mr. Speaker,

I would like to thank Knowledge Quest, the Bank of Bermuda Foundation, the Learning Disabilities Association of Bermuda, various other scholarship providers, the Bermuda College, the Board of Education and its Scholarship Sub-Committee, Senior School Principals, Workforce Development and the technical officers in the Department of Education who provided extensive input and assistance in the development of these new scholarship offerings.

Mr. Speaker,

We want more and more young people – including those of diverse interests, and those who face challenges to success - to be optimistic about their future. These scholarships and awards are intended to increase opportunities and reduce barriers for students who aspire to post-secondary education. Over time, they may also spark hope and interest in students who thought higher education after senior school might have been out of reach.

Mr. Speaker,

These new scholarships and awards will make a difference in the lives of young people, their families and Bermuda as we help to support and develop our future leaders, our future innovators, and our future dynamic citizens.

**Thank you
Mr. Speaker**