

Fourth Meeting of the 2015/2016 Session  
of the Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly

---

***Statement Highlighting Professional Development Achievements of  
School Leaders***

By the Honourable Tara Rivers, JP, MLA  
Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2015

Madam Speaker,

I am happy to present this statement in recognition of the recent professional development accomplishments of some of our public school leaders in both primary and secondary schools throughout the Islands. Strong leadership and management at the school level are identified as key components of school success, and this was underscored in the recent baseline schools inspections and the education governance review which took place during the 2014-15 academic year.

Although school leaders had been and are provided with professional development opportunities, upon taking office as Minister it was identified that there was a need to provide targeted professional development specifically aimed at strengthening school leadership and management, and that no such professional development opportunities were being provided locally at that time. Hence, the International School Leadership (**ISL**) Certificate programme was introduced in the Cayman Islands during the 2014-2015 school year. The ISL Certificate is an internationally recognised programme offered by the Ontario Principal's Council (**OPC**) that provides excellent support for current school leaders as well as preparation for future leaders. The framework used for delivery of the Programme in the Cayman Islands is based on international best practice and was contextualised locally as a member of the OPC team worked with a group of principals, Department of Education Services (**DES**) and Ministry staff to ensure that it addressed local needs.

The ISL Certificate programme is comprised of two parts, with the first part spanning 9 months and including 6 modules delivered in face-to-face sessions and via online seminars.

The 6 modules completed in Part 1 of the Programme are:

- Module 1: Principal Leadership for School Improvement
- Module 2: Characteristics of Effective Schools and Systems
- Module 3: Building Relationships and Developing People
- Module 4: Setting Goals and Expectations Using Data Informed Decision Making
- Module 5: Leading Improvement in Classroom Instruction: Meeting the Needs of All Learners
- Module 6: Instructional Leadership Project Proposal Development: The Application of Theory to Practice

During the first year in which the Programme was launched locally, 14 school leaders across the various primary and secondary schools have successfully completed Part 1 of the Programme. On November 12, I had the distinct pleasure of awarding certificates commemorating the completion of Part 1 of the ISL Certificate programme to 10 of our school leaders here in Grand Cayman. The leaders awarded were Chabienauth Samaroo of John Gray High School, Delton Pedley of Red Bay Primary, Elvie Clarke of East End Primary, Gloria Bell formerly of Prospect

Primary now Senior School Improvement Officer at DES, Jane Kelly of John Gray High School, Joseph Wallace of Sir John A. Cumber Primary, Kimberly Litrico-Watler of Bodden Town Primary, Lyneth Monteith formerly of John Gray High School now Acting Chief Education Officer, Richard Wildman of John Gray High School and Vickie Frederick of Red Bay Primary. In addition, the Ministry has just received confirmation on Tuesday of this week that Yvonne Law-Gonzales of Prospect Primary has completed her final assignment and has successfully completed Part 1 of the Programme as well.

Three additional school leaders in Cayman Brac – namely April Tibbetts of West End Primary School, Devon Brown of Layman E. Scott Snr. High School and Margaret Juman of Creek and Spott Bay Primary - have also successfully completed Part 1 of the certification.

On behalf of the Government, I congratulate each and every one of them.

I am also pleased to report that a second cohort of leaders is scheduled to begin Part 1 of the Programme in December 2015, while the leaders in cohort 1 who have successfully completed Part 1 are scheduled to begin Part 2 in January 2016.

In keeping with and pursuant to the Plan of Action developed in response to the recent schools inspections and reviews to strengthen school leadership and management, all current government school leaders are expected to have completed this ISL certification by the end of 2017. This is also in keeping with the National Priorities Plan of the Independent Members of the Government, which sets out the aspiration to “establish the Cayman Islands as a centre of educational excellence” by, among other things:

- facilitating and implementing continuing education requirements for teachers’ professional development; and
- establishing an appropriate accountability mechanism as it relates to each school’s performance.

Since taking office in May 2013, the work undertaken in the Ministry of Education has centred by in large on examining our education system with the goal of identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses, and ways to improve the system by working to address the gaps identified. One such gap identified was the absence of a formalised Professional Development Policy, which has been developed and formally adopted during the 2014-2015 Academic Year as a result. In addition, one of the recurring themes identified was the need to strengthen and improve leadership and management within the schools; and a large part of the strategy to achieve this is to offer strong, relevant professional development opportunities, and to ensure that they are completed at a high level by the relevant persons. I am happy to report that our school leaders are not only receiving the opportunities to improve their leadership and management skills, but are excelling in these professional development pursuits. I look forward to bringing continued news of their progress, and trust that the children in our system are already beginning to reap the benefits of school leaders and teachers receiving and taking advantage of strong and relevant professional development opportunities provided.