



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ministry of Education

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Outstanding primary school students earn Ministers' Literacy Award.
They are pictured with Mr. Lionel Sands Acting Director of Education; Minister of Education, he Honourable Carl W. Bethel; Ms. Sherrylee Smith, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education.

Twenty-four students from primary schools throughout The Bahamas were awarded for top marks in literacy at the 2nd Annual Minister's Literacy Awards ceremony held at The Church of God of Prophecy on Thursday, 30th April, 2009.

The students honoured were: Christal Adderley, David Johnson III and Treyvine Neymour, **Roker's Point Primary School**; Daunte Bethel, Shannon Albury, Micah Kelly, Tinisha Miller and Midjina Jose, **North Eleuthera Primary School**; Samantha Cash, **Hope Town Primary School**; Nnika Corbin, **Palmdale Primary School**; Derrica Ferguson and Khyree Rolle, **Oakes Field Primary School**; Ajah Higgs, **Walter Parker Primary School**; Ashlee Major, **Morrisville Primary School**; Cassidy Rolle and Brenton Taylor, **High Rock Primary School**; Kamrin Roker, **Hugh Campbell Primary School**; Shaquel Seymour, **Mabel Walker Primary School**; Alia Wilson, **Cleveland Eneas Primary School**; Asia Rolle, **Red Bays Primary School**, Richea Springer, **Uriah McPhee Primary School**; Dennison Underwood, **Spanish Wells All-Age School**; Paige Davis, **Garvin Tynes Primary School**; Cecelia Cartwright, **Lower Deadman's Cay Primary School**;

The students were among 11, 730 students from grades 2, 4, 5 who were administered the Rigby Reads Diagnostic Test to determine their competency in reading, comprehension, visual and audio discrimination, and letter and sound recognition.

Minister of Education, The Honourable Carl W. Bethel spoke at the ceremony and congratulated the honourees stating that they were among the “best and the brightest students” in the public primary schools.

Minister Bethel also highlighted the fact that Rigby Reads Diagnostic Test is an internationally-acclaimed standardized assessment tool used to evaluate students’ ability to read and comprehend. He noted that he was pleased the test allows the Ministry of Education to uniformly determine students’ reading levels from school to school throughout the country. The Ministry is also able respond to the individual needs of students and implement corrective measures that are expected to improve reading among reading primary school students.

The Minister also stated that last year the test identified Comprehension as the major area of weakness. Following this report, the Department of Education initiated certain steps to improve reading levels which included:

- A ten-week intensive reading programme launched in September 2008, requiring all public primary schools to dedicate at least ten contact hours a week for the teaching of reading comprehension skills in grades 2-5.
- Selected schools received the ‘Auto Skills’ software which provides instruction and practice in reading and related skills.
- The Read-to-Lead Bahamas Reading Mentoring Programme project in the 2008/2009 school year which was designed to inspire students in grades 4, 5 and 6 to read more. Over 400 volunteers read to students each Wednesday for a half-hour.

“We are certain that the three percent improvement in this year’s scores is as a direct result of these initiatives,” Minister Bethel stated.

This summer, the Ministry through the Department of Education plans to host special workshops focusing on developing strategies for teaching male students and teacher professional development for better classroom performance. The Minister noted that the scores from the past year and this year also reflected that female students outperformed male students at every level hence the focus on training to teach male students.

Amidst the accolades and statements made, the large crowd comprising Ministry officials, students, teachers, parents and supporters were entertained with a chorale speaking piece by C. W. Primary School students, Oakes Field Primary School

Marching Band and a crowd pleaser, the Claridge Primary School Boys' Choir. Sharonne King and Jabari Roberts, students of Oakes Field Primary moderated and enlivened the one and half-hour ceremony with their witty exchanges.

Public primary schools were also awarded for their students' overall achievement in literacy and success in the 2008/2009 scores in the Rigby Reads Diagnostic Test. Abaco, Cat Island and Long Island districts earned awards in the Grade 2, 4 and 5 Grades categories.

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