



**Address by
The Honourable T. Desmond Bannister, M.P.
Minister of Education**

**At
Grand Bahama District Spelling Bee
Competition**

Thursday, 4th February, 2010

At

**The Foster B. Pestina Hall
Freeport, Grand Bahama**

9:20 am

Salutation:

Mrs. Elma Garraway, Permanent Secretary;

**Mrs. Mary Cooper, Acting Director of Education –
Grand Bahama;**

**Mr. Hezekiah Dean, District Superintendent, High
Schools;**

**Mrs. Sandra Edgecombe, District Superintendent,
Primary Schools;**

**Ms. Yanick Toussaint, Discovery Cruise
Representative;**

**Mr. Donald McCartney (DPS – Department of Public
Service) Chief Judge;**

Ms. Coralee Kelly, Pronouncer;

Principals

Teachers; Administrators;

Contestants and Coaches;

Distinguished guests;

Good morning.

It is a pleasure for me to be here this morning to speak to all of you, and specifically to offer words of encouragement to our competitors in this Spelling Bee Competition.

I am always pleased when I see young persons, particularly students using their talents and abilities in competition and events representing the best of themselves, their school and their communities.

It is these endeavours that reward and motivate me as Minister of Education, to continue to see education in The Bahamas as a glass that is more than half-way filled. All throughout this country, there are boys and girls who are applying themselves to learning their lessons and engaging in activities which build their character. It is these students that we must continue to champion, and not allow to slip through the cracks in our quest to bring all into the fold.

It is therefore important that our curriculum offers varied and stimulating opportunities such as the Spelling Bee for students to acquire new learning methods that will assist them now and throughout their lives.

It is a proven fact that children learn more when they enjoy what they are doing and so we must be creative and innovative in our teaching practices to improve our literacy levels in our schools.

Other benefits of this Spelling Bee are the fact that it brings together students from Independent and Government schools in friendly competition. All of you I am certain will walk away from this moment more disciplined and determined to succeed as a result of the long, arduous hours of study. You will also have gotten to know at least one person that you did not know before, and regard them a friend or an acquaintance.

I am told that Grand Bahama **owns** the National Spelling Bee having won seven of the twelve Bees to date. New Providence has won three and Abaco; one. Interestingly, two Grand Bahama winners have both actually won the national competition two consecutive years (a total of four victories for Grand Bahama).

Your past successes make Grand Bahama a heavy favourite to win this year's tournament or to make it as far as last year's first runner-up, Safa Shariff of Bishop Michael Eldon High School did. I believe that the teachers, coaches and parents who continue to play a role in preparing the students for these types of events deserve a tremendous round of applause.

I wish to thank Discovery Cruises represented by Ms. Toussaint for being the major sponsor this event and all of the local corporate partners who given to ensure the success of this event.

I also wish all of the competitors tremendous success and hope to see the two district finalists in New Providence very shortly for the 13th Bahamas National Spelling Bee.

Good morning.