



BRIEF REMARKS

by

**THE HONOURABLE T. DESMOND BANNISTER, M.P.,
MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

on the occasion of the:

***The Bahamas Primary School
Student of the Year Awards Ceremony***

at

**Golden Gates Assembly World Outreach Ministries
Carmichael Road
Nassau, The Bahamas
6:00 p.m.**

15th May, 2010

Salutations:

1. Mrs. Elma Garraway – Permanent Secretary
2. Mr. Lionel Sands – Director of Education
3. Dr. Keva Bethel –Patron & President Emeritus, The College of The Bahamas
4. Mr. Ricardo Deveaux –President & CEO
5. Mr. Greg Butler – Director of Youth
6. Mrs. Cindi Williams-Rahming –Chairman
7. Members of the Board of Directors
8. Members of the Pan-Hellenic Council
9. Colleagues of the Ministries of Education and of Youth, Sports & Culture
10. Administrators & Teachers
11. Parents
12. Students
13. Ladies & Gentlemen

Good Evening!

This evening, I am delighted to stand here in the presence of one hundred and six (106) outstanding boys and girls, and to be a part of **The Bahamas Primary School Student of the Year Awards Ceremony**. In this room you will find some of the brightest, most creative, logical, artistic and scientific minds housed in the little bodies that you see before you. Ladies and gentlemen, the onus is upon us to nurture and protect our children, and to expose them to positive opportunities that would assist those bright minds to grow and develop to their fullest potential.

When I look at the eager young faces of the seventy five (75) girls and thirty one (31) boys before me, I see endless possibilities and I'm given much hope for the future of our nation. I invite you to see these possibilities also and to join us at the Ministry of Education in the fight to promote the intellectual, emotional, social and physical well being of each child. Students, this evening you are our special guests and we want to let you know just how much we appreciate how hard you have worked not only in the area of academics, but in your extra curricular activities as well.

The Bahamas Primary School Student of the Year Awards Programme began under the leadership of Mr. Ricardo Deveaux, who in 1996 submitted the idea to the Nassau Bahamas Pan-Hellenic Council for acceptance. This idea turned out to be an excellent one as none of us could have foreseen that this programme which was designed to showcase the high scholastic and extra curricular achievements of outstanding sixth (6th) grade students in the Bahamian Educational System, regardless of colour, creed, nationality or religious affiliation, would have had the success that it has had to date. After this year, the Foundation would have presented over \$500,000.00 in scholarships since 1997, and recognized over 1,100 students. We commend Mr. Deveaux, the Foundation's President and Chief Executive Officer, his dedicated team and the Nassau Bahamas Pan-Hellenic Council for their vision. I am sure you would agree with me that our country would realize more success if we would all approach the building of our nation's youth as a community effort.

Students, your presence demonstrates that your diligence to your work has really paid off. Some of you are from New Providence, but many of your peers who are also considered

to be the *brightest and best* hail from our Family of Islands which include: Abaco, Acklins, Andros, the Berry Islands, Bimini, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Exuma, Grand Bahama, Inagua, Long Island, and San Salvador. You have had great role models to follow in the persons who have gone before you such as: Vashti Darling, Andrea Moultrie, Tiffany Moncur, Sasha Bain, Kenny Roberts, Zachary Lyons, Teneille Curtis, Saul Salonga, Shridat Jadoo, George Zonicle, Taran Carey, James Boyce, and Khes Adderley, all of whom I am certain continue to do well.

In preparation for this occasion, you have had to meet requirements that represent three (3) years of devoted work toward the achievement of a goal of academic excellence. I am told that you have had to:

- Write a 400 word essay;
- Submit copies of their report cards covering grades 4, 5 and 6;
- Submit copies of awards, certificates, and newspaper clippings;
- Submit 3 letters of recommendation; and
- Submit a portfolio of not more than 50 pages.

Boys and girls consider this good practice for the future. These requirements are laying a good foundation for you as future leaders. If you continue along this positive path, you will have to continue to: compete, learn more, network, study and pass exams, and be evaluated by others, just as you were in this competition. I am certain that you are aware that your extra curricular activities have counted toward you overall standing and it is important for you to involve yourselves this way so that you are well rounded and balanced. I encourage each of you to continue to challenge yourselves by always giving your best effort in all that you do.

We, at the Ministry of Education are looking forward to more successes coming out of this group in the future. You will be moving on to the junior high school level very soon we expect your grade point averages (GPA) to remain high, and look forward to at least five (5) Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC), and Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) exam passes from each of you. The Ministry of Education is here for you and we will do everything in our power to make every opportunity available

to you to *achieve your dreams through excellence in education*. Once you meet the requirements, we will lend support in the form of various scholarships, awards and grants for you to pursue tertiary level education.

Let me say that you are all winners having met the requirements of such a prestigious competition. You have been chosen from amongst your peers because you have excelled in all areas of student life and would have been recommended by your teachers because of this. I would call all of your names but we would be here all night because so many of you have met this standard. Instead, I will ask you to continue to be good role models to your peers, and to encourage them to work hard also.

Education is still the best means through which we may advance our country. As the Ministry forges ahead we look forward to many positive changes in our educational system. We invite feedback and ideas from all stakeholders as we put renewed focus on the **Three R's** of: *Reading, Writing and Arithmetic*, plus the values of *Respect* and *Responsibility*. To all principals and teachers who have played a major role in the lives of these students, I say thank

you. Parents, you deserve much of the praise also, as you have provided the tangible support that your children needed. I ask all parents to become actively involved in the educational lives of their children because parental support has a tremendous effect on growth and development. Once again, I applaud The Bahamas Primary School Student of the Year Foundation for your commitment to the children of The Bahamas, and I say congratulations to each of the nominees. Continue to progress and I wish you many more successes at the junior high, senior high, college levels and beyond.

Thank you.