



Education Innovation News for Cayman

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Introducing *Inform*

As the New Year started so did one of the most ambitious and worthwhile initiatives that the Cayman Islands Government has undertaken. The reform of Cayman's Education system is a priority for the Ministry of Education during 2006 and beyond. I am looking forward to a productive and fulfilling year as we all prepare to play a crucial role.

I am pleased to introduce this first edition of *Inform*, the newsletter from the Ministry of Education, whose purpose is to keep Cayman's teaching professionals and the community up-to-date with developments and progress in Education reform.

Since the Education Conference in September 2005, and the ensuing publication of the "National Consensus on the future of Education in the Cayman Islands", a considerable amount of work has taken place to implement the ten agreed strategies. This is summarized later.

Whilst we are off to a good start, the challenge before us is significant. Our success depends on the collective will of all major stakeholders to improve the current system. Reading on, you will see that much has already been achieved and much more is in the pipeline.

I hope that our news engenders a sense of momentum among Cayman's talented Educators, which in turn will inspire students and parents to participate fully in this most critical mission.

Enjoy the read!

Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin, JP
Minister for Education, Training, Employment,
Youth, Sports and Culture



Professor Stephen Heppell visits Cayman

Professor Stephen Heppell is coming to the Cayman Islands in February to meet with Cayman's education professionals. He is a highly respected world authority on schools and classrooms of the future, and the use of ICT within them.

The Minister is delighted that he is working with us to help ensure that our new schools, and the education they will provide, are world-class.

During his whirlwind visit, Professor Heppell's activity-packed agenda includes talks to a wide variety of audiences. He will give a public presentation entitled *Laying the Foundations Today for Tomorrow's Learning*, at Cayman Brac High School on Wednesday 22nd February at 7:00pm, and at the Mary Miller

Hall in Red Bay on Thursday 23rd at 3:30pm. Education professionals and the community are welcome and admission is free.

Additionally, the Ministry has already established links with a UK school currently operating with a "classroom of the future", a move which will help us learn from practical experiences, how to achieve the best out of this initiative.



Professor Heppell

New High Schools and Educational Facilities

Work on updating and finalising the design brief for new high schools is nearly complete.

The recruitment process for a Senior Project Manager to oversee construction is well progressed. The Ministry expects rapid developments in the following months, which will enable construction to start swiftly.

A working group from the Ministry, Education Department, Schools' Inspectorate and high schools is meeting regularly to consider curriculum issues impacting upon the design brief.

Additionally, work is underway for a new hall at EEPS and a new multi-purpose hall at CBHS, for school year 2006/2007.

The Education Innovation Oversight Committee

The *Education Innovation Oversight Committee* (EIOC) comprises representatives of key stakeholders in Cayman's Education system. Its brief is to oversee the progress and implementation of ten strategies for education reform as identified on pages 20-22 of the National Consensus document, which followed the Education con-

ference last year. A key priority is to ensure that progress in each strategy is in line with international standards whilst fulfilling the economic demands and HR priorities of Cayman. The committee, which has already met a number of times, is chaired by Ministry Chief Officer Mrs. Angela Martins. Also on the committee are

representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Schools' Inspectorate, the Department of Education, Government primary and secondary schools (including a representative from Cayman Brac), UCCI, Department of Employment Relations and the private sector.

Strategy Updates

Strategy One (page 20 of the National Consensus Document)

A review of the education system is well underway. A project plan has been approved and proposals for future and effective governance of the system will be presented in the next few months.

Strategy Two (page 20)

A review of the entire National Curriculum has started. The Task Force, chaired by Mrs. Helena McVeigh, Chief Inspector of Schools, includes representatives from a variety of stakeholders. It is crucial to provide a continuous and credible curriculum from Early Years through to tertiary and beyond, which is assessed to international standards and is relevant to our students and the Cayman Islands.

This will require high quality professional development for teachers prior to implementation, and will coincide with the opening of the new schools. The response from government school teachers volunteering has been excellent and the Ministry is greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of staff.

Strategy Three (page 20)

Senior Schools' Inspector Mrs. Kate Marnoch will chair a task force to review all aspects of Early Years provision. Kate's team will create the guiding principles, structure and operation of the new Early Years Unit during its conception.

Strategy Four (page 21)

The Human Resources (HR) unit within the Ministry has already been established along with the appointment of a Deputy Chief HR Manager, Mrs. Glenda Dilbert-Davis, who has made considerable progress, especially in the recruitment process.

For the first time, all Principals have been involved in interviews for new staff. All schools have identified existing and future staffing needs and the overseas recruitment process has begun - much earlier than in recent years. Job descriptions are under review to ensure consistency, as are a number of policies. A review of teachers' conditions of service, including salaries, will start in the near future. Mr. Conor O'Dea, Managing Director of Butterfield Bank, has been appointed as chair of this review body.

A task force chaired by Mr. Philip Jackson of Ernst & Young has convened to identify the guiding principles, structure and operation of the new HR Unit in terms of recruitment, retention, and professional development.

Strategy Five (page 21)

A project group is being established to recommend terms of reference and operating guidelines for all aspects of careers education and guidance. It will also ensure alignment of government scholarship offerings with the HR priorities of the Cayman Islands, and identify terms of reference for a new Education Council Secretariat.

Strategy Six (page 21)

A full review of the Education Department's financial processes has occurred and a report submitted, which includes recommendations on how to delegate greater financial autonomy to Principals. Training for Principals has already started. Newly delegated financial autonomy will be piloted in a number of schools from September with a roll out for all schools to follow on. This will give Principals increased flexibility and improve the efficiency of schools.

Strategy Seven (page 21)

This project group, chaired by the Ministry's Deputy Chief Officer, Mr. Stran Bodden, has started work on establishing the guiding principles of data collection alignment with internal agencies.

Strategy Eight (page 22)

This strategy deals with development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Its implementation will be guided by the curriculum group, the review of school priorities and further consultancy advice. Regional and international best practices will be examined and adapted to fit the needs of the Cayman Islands.

Strategy Nine (page 22)

The Ministry has announced plans for extensive capital investment for new schools. The task force for strategy nine is conducting a comprehensive review of existing maintenance arrangements, while building capacity for educational development projects. It will also prepare development plans for each educational facility. A Senior Project Manager is shortly to be appointed.

Strategy Ten (page 22)

Steps have been taken to establish the operating framework for a project group to deliver the provision of high quality initial teacher training as well as continuing professional development for all teachers, especially in the use of ICT.