



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
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GOVERNOR, EASTERN CARIBBEAN CENTRAL BANK
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(Antioch Baptist Church, St Kitts and Nevis)**

“Our greatest national resource is the minds of our children” ~ Walt Disney (Slide 1)

Principals and teachers, not only is the greatest national resource in your hands but your immediate challenge is to shape the minds of our children in the midst of a pandemic. What a grave responsibility! What a wonderful opportunity!

I recognise:

Hon. Jonel Powell, Minister for Education,

Mr. William Hodge, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education,

Dr. Debbie Isaacs, Chief Education Officer

Other education officials

Principals

Teachers

Media

Good morning.

Introduction

I offer my commendation to the Minister, his team and the entire education sector for your diligent efforts to secure the physical reopening of school at this time. Please give yourselves another round of applause.



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How many of you are looking forward to this academic year with great expectation and excitement?

Not everyone.

Despite all the consultations and preparations, some of you do not feel fully ready. Many of you are somewhat anxious.

Truth be told, some of you are really not looking forward to teaching in this new norm. If you feel that way, today, you are not alone.

The reality is that we live in “covidous” times and we must live with this dreaded disease until an effective vaccine becomes available.

This is a special moment for education in this Federation.

Indeed, for the education sector, it is a legacy defining moment.

And each of you will be judged by how you respond. Of course, this is equally true for each of us at the Central Bank.

With your legacy in mind and on the line, permit me to offer you three suggestions:

Suggestion No. 1 - **Decide Now What Story You Want To Tell This Year (Slide 3)**

In deciding on your story, never forget the purpose of education. What is that purpose? To prepare for life, work and citizenship.



Every school. Every principal. Every teacher ought to decide **now** what story you want tell this year. Here are some storylines:

- Will you go through the motions delivering the bare minimum?
- Or will you descend into a rut of anxiety, negativity, low energy and low performance?
- Or will you rise to the challenge, meet this moment and deliver high quality and fun-filled education in the midst of a pandemic?

Which will it be?

The decision is yours. I urge you to decide now what story you want to tell this year. Having decided, be intentional from day one. And day one is today.

It is your response to this new norm (not the adversity itself) that will become your story and define your legacy.

2. Adopt a Growth Mindset (Slide 4)

This pandemic is not of our choosing. Indeed, none of us had any control over its origins and occurrence. But each of us has control over our response.

A growth mindset will serve you well on this journey this year. Indeed, from the outset of this pandemic, I have repeatedly made the point that its challenges are unprecedented but so are its opportunities. And I have encouraged all to adopt, a growth mindset, to seize these opportunities. You see, a growth mindset reframes problems as opportunities and seizes them. Consider the contrast of a growth mindset and a fixed mindset **(Slide 5)**.



Now here is a recent example:

As a consequence of the pandemic, the resultant lockdown and the necessity for physical distancing, our schools were forced online. It has been a steep learning curve for many (students and teachers) but some countries did in 5 weeks what they have threatening to do for the past 5 years.

As you return to the physical classroom, I make a special plea to teachers not return to “chalk and talk” but instead embrace the blended approach - a combination of face-to-face and digital instruction. This approach would leverage and help reinforce the newly acquired skills of both teachers and students. Moreover, our children will find these skills very useful at university and in the world of work.

I truly believe that the most important criterion for success, in this new normal, is a growth mindset by all involved in the education sector. And let me hasten to make the point that this mindset must apply not only to your pandemic response but to all the reforms now underway or envisaged in your strategic plan. As someone once observed: **“you cannot start the next chapter if you keep re-reading the last one”**

Teachers, make no mistake. Our children, your students are watching you, now more than ever. You have an opportunity to model a growth mindset, to showcase your adaptability and to cultivate in them, a commitment to lifelong learning. But it all starts with you.

Years from now, we may all look back and come to the pleasant conclusion that this pandemic may have helped save our education system by propelling it to more relevance in its methods and resulting in more effective learning outcomes and higher student achievement.



3. Let Love Be Your Highest Goal (Slide 6)

My dear mother, a retired school principal and educator extraordinaire always says to those who wish to teach: do it out of love not for money. Why? Because teaching is not the most lucrative profession but it is a noble profession and one of the most fulfilling.

My mother's counsel is grounded in the Word of God located in I Corinthians 14.1 where you are exhorted to **“let love be your highest goal!”**

I recall Jesus asking Peter the question: do you love me? He asked him this question not once but thrice. Peter replied, yes, each time. After the third reply, Jesus commanded him to “feed my sheep”.

Principals and teachers, follow the way of love and “feed our children”. This year perhaps more than ever you are called upon to make some sacrifices for the students of the Federation. For example, some schools are required to do a shift system and your hours of work will be longer. If your path seems more difficult, it is because your calling is higher (**repeat**).

So I appeal to you to “let love be your highest goal”. And I offer you the most important scripture in my professional life. It has guided in times of adversity and even personal attack – Colossians 3.23 (**Slide 7**).

Sir Derek Walcott in his 1993 play “The Odyssey” wrote and I quote: **“The future happens. No matter how much we scream”**. (**Slide 8**)



The Future of Jobs Report 2018” asserts that the jobs of the future include data scientists, robotics specialists, innovation professionals, social media specialists and digital transformation specialists (World Economic Forum, 2018). Consequently, the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields are now in greatest demand. In this regard, I applaud and encourage your current efforts at curriculum reform and hail the success of Dr Ricardo Neal and his team in the field of robotics.

Mr. Minister, I urge you to expedite efforts to teach coding in our schools as this will prepare the Federation’s students for work and global citizenship thereby equipping them to leverage the opportunities of the 4th Industrial Revolution, now underway.

Conclusion

This pandemic will eventually be in our rearview mirror, just like hurricane Georges (1998) or September 11 (2001) or the Global Financial Crisis (2008).

Principals and teachers, the future of our children and the future of this Federation is at stake and largely in your hands. Consequently, we must ensure during this period that no child is left behind. To that end, I welcome, Mr. Minister, the policy focus on equity in education as articulated in Education Strategic Plan.

(Slide 9)

Officials, Principals, teachers, if you determine now, what story you want to tell; adopt a growth mindset; and follow the way of love, you will look back, one year from now, and be pleasantly surprised by all you have accomplished. Indeed, you could well have a “corona” (crown) legacy of which you can be justifiably proud.



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As you toil and till the soil of our young minds, “**may the favour of our Lord rest upon you and establish the work of your hands**” (Psalm 90.17). And may He crown all your efforts with tremendous success.

I thank you.



EDUCATION FOR ALL

***Embracing Change,
Securing the Future***

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“
**Our greatest natural
resource is the minds
of our children**
~ *Walt Disney*”



KEY SUGGESTION NO. 1

***Decide NOW what story
you want to tell***

3



KEY SUGGESTION NO. 2

***Adopt a
growth mindset***

4



The Contrast of Mindsets

Fixed Mindset

- Avoids challenges
- Gives up easily
- Sees efforts as futile
- Avoids/ignores criticism
- Feels threatened by success of others
- Stagnant and in a downward spiral of negativity, mediocrity and even non-performance

Growth Mindset

- Sees challenges as opportunities
- Perseveres even with obstacles
- See efforts as path to success
- Learns from criticism
- Celebrates the success of others and learns from them
- Growing and in an upward spiral of even higher levels of performance and fulfilment

~ Source: Dr. Carol S. Dweck ⁵



KEY SUGGESTION NO. 3

***LET LOVE BE YOUR
HIGHEST GOAL***

(1 Corinthians 14.1, NLT)

6



MY LIFE VERSE

Colossians 3.23, NIV

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters”

7



“

The future happens, no matter how much we scream

~ Sir Derek Walcott

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Summary of KEY SUGGESTIONS

- 1. Decide now what story you want to tell**
- 2. Adopt a growth mindset**
- 3. Let love be your highest goal**