



Jamaica

Andrew Holness
Minister of Education



The Honourable Andrew Michael Holness assumed responsibilities as Minister of Education in September 2007, when the Jamaica Labour Party won the General Election. Prior to his appointment as Minister, he was the Opposition Spokesperson on Education. He has also served as the Opposition Spokesperson on Land and Development (1999-2002) and Housing (2002-2005). Mr. Holness is the elected Member of Parliament for West Central St. Andrew, a position he has held since 1997. He holds a Masters Degree in Development Studies and a Bachelors Degree in Management Studies from the University of the West Indies.

Meeting the Challenges of Delivering Inclusive Education

The Government of Jamaica is firmly committed to the provision of inclusive education for its people, embracing the belief that children who learn together also learn to live together and help foster a cohesive society. Jamaica has universal access at the early childhood and primary levels of education, with full access for Grades 7-9 and 80% access at Grades 10 and 11 at the secondary level. Recently, the Government absorbed all compulsory fees charged for access to secondary level education, and made provision for students with special needs to access appropriate secondary education in selected facilities.

The Government of Jamaica is focused on providing the supportive framework necessary for a system that is able to successfully engage all learners. To this end, we are transforming our education system, in the areas of governance and management, curriculum, teaching and learning support, finance and stakeholder participation.

The transformation of Jamaica's Education System is guided by our philosophy that **Every Child Can Learn and Every Child Must Learn**. National curricula have been revised to accommodate the varying learning styles of students and the emerging needs of the society. Particular focus has been placed on improving Early Childhood Education and standards and targets have been established to guide reform in this area.

Making provisions for persons with a range of special needs is an integral component of our drive to deliver truly inclusive education. The Ministry of Education is aggressively pursuing initiatives to address various special needs issues. These include the development of a Special Education Policy, the strengthening of HIV/AIDS Programmes in schools, the engagement of a National Special Needs Project Co-ordinator and the expansion of training for special education teachers.

The successful delivery of inclusive education will require the enforcement of policies, and the implementation of appropriate programmes and services at all levels of the education system. Our Government remains committed to developing the potential of every individual by ensuring the fundamental right of Education for All.