



Ministerial Statement

By

Senator, The Hon. Crystal Caesar JP

Minister of Education

Bermuda Public School System (BPSS)

Stabilization and Transformation Update 2025

Monday, September 29th, 2025

Madame President,

My fellow Senators may recall remarks that I made during this year's Budget Debate regarding Education Reform:

“While I will continue to gain insights into what and how we are doing, I can state with certainty and confidence that we will be doing things differently.”

I made these comments after dedicating time to introduce myself to education stakeholders. I was able to listen to their interests and concerns, and reconfirm that transforming our schools and the Bermuda Public School System (BPSS) remains our top priority.

As the 2025/26 school year, has recently begun, it is fitting to give an update on efforts to simultaneously stabilize *and* transform our education system. Reform as an ideal has a certain simplicity about it. But, it is more than an ideal; it is a commitment and a promise that is being delivered. Its execution, however, is not simple; it is multi-faceted, involving all aspects of education, across all schools and school levels, the Department of Education and the Ministry Headquarters. Success also depends on planning, collaboration and co-ordination with partner Ministries such as Public Works; Finance; Health; and Youth, Social Development and Seniors.

To remind my colleagues about the breadth and complexity of reform, it includes: the introduction and ongoing development of parish primary, senior signature and the exceptionalities and alternative education schools. It also encompasses: the early years; special/differentiated education; curriculum development and delivery; assessment; governance; learning environments; professional learning; and school and system leadership, among many other elements.

Madame President,

The mention of education stakeholders and partners is important because public education is a shared Government and community responsibility, and together, we must continue to transform our schools, the system, and the education provided to our students. While we transform, we must also stabilize, and we will do this by strengthening our focus on improving teaching and learning. In fact, we have already started. We will also defer certain aspects of the education transformation programme.

To improve planning, programming, and coordination with partner Ministries, as mentioned, we have rescinded the timeline for school closures and openings beyond 2025. We will continue working on the master plan for Education Transformation and develop a realistic and deliverable infrastructure strategy. Although, schools under transformation have done an admirable job balancing their teaching and learning responsibilities while undertaking major building and operational changes, the Ministry will ensure that future infrastructure changes are completed before school openings and closings are announced.

We will intentionally pace and coordinate the infrastructure design and development work needed to support teaching and learning. Our goal is to give students, parents, and staff members adequate information and sufficient time to prepare for future changes.

Madame President,

This announcement does not mean that Education Reform will stop, but that we are adjusting our approach and how we will move forward collectively as a school system. There are a number of transformation projects underway, whose completion will be accelerated with fidelity and to a high standard. Specifically:

- Development work and transition planning for the Signature Learning Programmes at The Berkeley Institute, CedarBridge Academy, and Sandys Secondary School are ongoing with a continuing focus on the needs and interests of young people;
- Sandys Secondary School, which recently opened with its first Signature Learning Programme cohort, will plan for the transition of a second cohort for September 2026
- Francis Patton, Purvis, Harrington Sound, and Elliot Parish Schools will continue to phase in their parish school features and strengthen their learning communities; and,
- The Signature School for Exceptionalities remains a high system priority. A design team will be onboarded this term to begin the developmental work to shape the vision for this much-needed signature school.

Madame President,

The shift to stabilize our school system has already started. As a result of reassignments, resignations and retirements, a number of primary and middle schools were previously led by Acting Principals. After recruitment and other staffing changes, all primary and middle schools are now led by Principals who hold their posts substantively. This will provide consistency and stability for each school community.

Critical leadership and curriculum support vacancies are being filled within the Department of Education. This will increase supervision, support, and accountability for teaching, learning, and service delivery.

Within our schools, we will systematically refocus on improving the teaching and learning of reading, math, and science; improving the MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Support) process; and

improving school culture. All of these efforts aim to improve student outcomes across all year levels.

The "No Personal Electronic Communication Device Policy" will be more robustly enforced across all schools to help reduce distractions in class, combat social media addiction and mitigate disciplinary challenges.

A modern Code of Conduct has been rolled out, that incorporates restorative practices and appropriate disciplinary approaches. A detailed communications plan is part of the implementation efforts for the updated Code of Conduct. This is helping to promote awareness and compliance by students, staff, and parents.

Madame President,

Leadership is about many things, including listening and acting in the best interests of our students, families, staff. Just before school started for the 2025/2026 academic year, I again met with members of our school communities to announce the shift in focus and the need to balance long-term transformation with immediate stability in schools. The responses I received expressed understanding, appreciation, and support. I believe that this is because these decisions are sensible, necessary and will be welcomed by many.

We are now on a better pathway to build an education system that serves every child, every family, and every community in Bermuda.

Thank you, **Madame President.**