



Ministerial Statement

by:

The Hon. Diallo Rabain, JP, MP

Minister of Education

2026 Educational Scholarships and Awards

Friday 4th September 2026

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide this Honourable House with an update on the Government of Bermuda's 2026 Scholarships and Awards programme and, more importantly, to recognise the outstanding Bermudian students who have been selected to receive financial support as they pursue post-secondary education and training.

Mr. Speaker, education remains one of the most important investments that we can make in Bermuda's future. Our scholarships and awards are not simply financial contributions.

They represent an investment in our young people, in our future workforce and, ultimately, in the social and economic development of our country.

The Government has steadily increased its investment in scholarships and awards, with the annual value of scholarships and awards now reaching approximately \$2.15 million with an additional \$450k budgeted for the College Promise Program for a total of \$2.6 million in total support being given.

This investment is part of our commitment to expanding access to tertiary education and reducing the financial barriers that can prevent Bermudians from pursuing further education and training.

Mr. Speaker, the demand for assistance remains significant. During the 2026 Scholarships and Awards season, the Ministry received four hundred-ninety-nine (499) applications across its scholarship and award programmes.

This year, we have increased scholarship funding across the board, enabling the Ministry to support more Bermudians in pursuing their educational and career aspirations. As a result, just under one hundred (100) students will receive

scholarships and awards in 2026, representing a significant increase in the number of students receiving support.

Our scholarship portfolio has been deliberately designed to recognise academic excellence while also expanding opportunities for students who may traditionally face barriers to accessing post-secondary education. This includes public school graduates, students pursuing technical and vocational careers, students with exceptionalities, mature students, aspiring educators and students who require assistance to continue undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

Mr. Speaker, at the highest level of our scholarship programme are the Bermuda Government Scholarships.

These prestigious scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement, leadership, community service and a commitment to contributing to Bermuda.

Each Bermuda Government Scholarship provides funding of up to thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) per year for as many as four years, representing a potential Government investment of up to one hundred forty thousand dollars (\$140,000) in each recipient over the life of the scholarship.

This year, six (6) Bermuda Government Scholarships have been awarded.

I am pleased to recognise our 2026 Bermuda Government Scholars:

- **Zavia Doyling**, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Biology at Jackson State University;
- **Ayr Cannonier**, who is pursuing Business Economics at the University of East London;

- **Kaelyn Fleming**, who is pursuing Biomedical Science at the University of Brighton;
- **Ava Moreno**, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance at Marymount Manhattan College;
- **Leona Trott**, who will pursue Civil Engineering at Louisiana State University; and
- **Kenya Robinson**, who will pursue Biological Science at Howard University.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly wish to highlight that two of this year's Bermuda Government Scholarships have been designated to support study in health sciences and the arts, reflecting our desire to align educational opportunities with Bermuda's workforce and cultural development needs.

Mr. Speaker, our investment extends well beyond the Bermuda Government Scholarships.

The Minister's Achievement Scholarship supports graduating students from CedarBridge Academy and The Berkeley Institute pursuing overseas post-secondary education. These scholarships are valued at up to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) annually and are tenable for up to four years.

This year's recipients are Shernae Smith-Laws and Citayo Outerbridge of CedarBridge Academy, and Sioma Rudo and Nazari Mienzer of The Berkeley Institute. Their chosen fields include actuarial science, electrical technology, business and health science.

The Minister's Exceptional Student Award provides support of up to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) annually for overseas study, while the Minister's Technical and Vocational Award similarly provides up to twenty-five thousand

dollars (\$25,000) for overseas study or \$7,500 for local study. These awards can be held for up to four years.

We are also continuing our investment in Bermuda's future educators through the Teacher Education Scholarship, valued at up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) and tenable for up to three years. This year we are supporting Jaiden Manders, Armani Brandy, T'syi Showers and Kamali Tucker as they pursue qualifications in areas including elementary education, secondary physical education and physical education.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most significant areas of expansion this year is the Further Education Award.

This programme assists students who are already progressing through college or university as well as those undertaking postgraduate study. The award provides up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for one year.

For 2026, 50 (fifty) undergraduate students and twenty (20) postgraduate students will receive Further Education Awards.

That means that seventy (70) Bermudians will receive assistance through this programme alone, helping students to continue and complete the qualifications they have already worked so hard to pursue.

Our scholarship programme also recognises that education does not follow the same path for everyone.

Through the Non-Traditional Student Award, we are supporting mature students aged 25 and over who have made the decision to pursue post-secondary education. This year's recipients include Destiny Minors, Akim Johnson, Kiantae Smith and

Malia Bell, who are pursuing studies in business, physical education, nursing and occupational therapy respectively.

We are equally pleased to continue the Caribbean Students Award, supporting Bermudian students pursuing undergraduate and graduate education within the Caribbean. This year's recipients are Dymond DeSilva, Nia Daily and Calais Darrell, all of whom are pursuing medical degrees.

Mr. Speaker, there is an important story behind these numbers.

Our scholarship recipients are pursuing studies across a broad range of disciplines; from medicine, nursing and biomedical science to civil engineering, electrical technology, actuarial science, education, occupational therapy, business, the arts and many other areas.

These are areas that matter to Bermuda.

When we help a student pursue a qualification, we are not only investing in that individual. We are developing the teachers who will educate the next generation, the healthcare professionals who will care for our community, the engineers who will contribute to our infrastructure, the business leaders who will drive our economy, and the artists and cultural practitioners who will enrich our society.

Our objective must therefore continue to be twofold: to expand access to education and to ensure that our investment in education contributes to the future skills and workforce needs of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognise the families behind these students.

For many Bermudian families, supporting a child through university or college represents a significant financial commitment. Tuition, accommodation, books, travel and everyday living expenses can place considerable pressure on household finances.

Government scholarships cannot remove every cost, but they can make a meaningful difference. For some students, that assistance may determine whether they are able to begin their studies, continue into another year, or complete their qualification.

That is why increasing access to financial assistance remains an important priority for this Government.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the Board of Education and the Scholarships and Awards Committees for the considerable time, diligence and care they have devoted to the selection process.

Reviewing hundreds of applications and making difficult decisions among talented and deserving candidates is no small undertaking. Their commitment helps ensure that public funds are awarded through a considered process that recognises achievement, potential and need.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, to every student receiving an award this year: Bermuda is investing in you because we believe in your potential.

I encourage each of you to make the most of the opportunity before you. Study hard. Challenge yourselves. Build relationships. Gain experience. And wherever your educational journey takes you, remember that your country looks forward to the contribution you will make to Bermuda's future.

To those students who applied but were not successful this year, I also encourage you not to be discouraged. Continue pursuing your goals and continue seeking the opportunities and support available to you.

Mr. Speaker, the Government remains committed to expanding access to post-secondary education and ensuring that more Bermudians have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, qualifications and skills required to succeed. Our investment in these students is an investment in Bermuda. I congratulate all of our 2026 Scholarship and Award recipients, and I wish them every success as they continue their educational journeys.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.