

BHSDNRC PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS
MIN OF EDUCATION – THE GLENYS HANNA MARTIN
JUNE 1, 2023 (Thursday) @ 8:30AM

I would like to extend sincerest appreciation to the Chairman of the Bahamas High School Diploma Review Commission, Mr. Cecil Thompson and the members of this National team of professionals who undertook to assist the Ministry of Education and Technical and Vocational Training with this important work.

The face of education has changed tremendously over the years, particularly as a result of the global pandemic CoVID19. Students were displaced from their normal learning environments and forced to adjust and pivot to new learning frontiers. This process has not been without its challenges, as countries worldwide have acknowledged, and collectively sought interventions to mitigate against recognized learning loss. The Bahamas is not unique to this reality and as our counterparts have done, we too are seeking to provide remedies for our students - students who have lived a reality foreign to many of us, at their ages.

We are also learning that technological modalities and a changing global reality requires that periodically we review our approaches and methodologies and constantly monitor and measure outcomes to ensure the efficacious delivery of education to our youth population

This is in line with the shifting focus globally on developing confident critical thinkers and an appreciation that children are motivated differently and even learn differently. It is with this understanding that a more inclusive approach to academic credentialing has been undertaken and a recognition of the diverse abilities of our students and their access to a Bahamas High School Diploma.

I provide this backdrop, as on the 25th August, 2022 in this very room, I would have met with a team of professionals representing a cross section of education stakeholders, commissioned to review all criteria associated with The Bahamas High School Diploma. As a part of their mandate, they were to ensure that offerings were more inclusive and prepared our students to secure entry level employment upon the completion of high school. Further, the Commission was also to recommend pathways to the high school diploma which promoted and celebrated the gifts and talents of our students and provided opportunities accordingly, for associated credentials.

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The Commission comprised six (6) working committees and today we celebrate the sacrifice and hard work of that team, to bring to the fore, recommendations that have the capacity to transform the education sector as we know it. Today, we say as a government and a people, we acknowledge that our students learn differently, are differently gifted and differently curious, but that they are all valuable to our nation and its development.

For the first time as I am aware, while students have secured certifications for years in specialized programmes of interest, moving forward, they will have approved equivalent certifications recognized on par with national certifications. This means that a Hospitality and Tourism student, studying the inner workings of hotels and lodging and earning an international credential, will now be able to have that credential

assessed for equivalency and if approved, be used in place of a BJC, to satisfy high school diploma requirements.

This is a red letter day in education and we are excited with and for our students.

Our focus as an administration and education team is to ensure that we improve equity and access for students throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. This has manifested in multiple initiatives geared toward enhancing student performance and morale undertaken by the Ministry inclusive of the following:

- 1. Our initiative to find missing students;
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- 2. A study undertaken by UB to determine those factors which impact learning;
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- 3. Testing to determine the level of Learning Loss and required remediation in collaboration with Renaissance INC.;
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- 4. A Math consultancy which is soon to be launched to improve performance in Mathematics;
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- 5. Consultancies developed to expand Creative Arts and Sports participation by students;
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- 6. A review of GLAT results for the past ten years and strategies employed by schools to improve student academic attainment.
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In addition to the recommendations being actioned, I would wish to advise that, as was the revised standard in 2022, all students will participate in the graduation ceremony and be afforded the opportunity to celebrate the end of a chapter in their lives as a part of their school families.

Our work is ongoing and many of the Commission's recommendations were accepted several are still under review with a view to identifying prerequisite implementation resources.

We are collectively excited about the way forward and the Commission members are to be commended as the modified recommendations will impact the Class of 2023.