

**OR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**19<sup>TH</sup> February 2013**

**MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
REPORTED COB BUDGET CUTS**

**THE HON. JEROME FITZGERALD**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

I would first wish to commend the Ministry of Finance, whereby they sought to challenge all statutory entities, public corporations and Government Ministries to improve our organizational and operational efficiencies. It is a responsible position to be taken by any Government in this economic climate.

It was clear in the letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 from the Ministry of Finance and addressed to the President of The College of The Bahamas that any reduction **“should be achieved without any reduction in quality and level of services to the public or any forced reduction in headcount** and should cover direct cash transfers (recurrent and capital) and tax deferment your organization is now receiving.... The expectation is that at least 50% of the reduction would be **achieved through improvements in organizational efficiencies”**.

It is worth noting that the Government’s subvention to the College of The Bahamas is 25 million dollars (excluding capital). 18 million of that 25 million contributes to personal emoluments and allowances. The remaining seven million dollars are applied towards travel, rent, utilities, printing, supplies, materials and special financial transactions. One would appreciate that any proposed reduction would then come from the remaining seven million dollars of the Government subvention. It is also worth noting that the total budget for the College of The Bahamas is some 46 million dollars of which the government contributes 56 percent. Therefore the Ministry of Finance is essentially requesting 1.25 million dollars in savings from operational efficiencies and 1.25 million dollars in other cost savings.

As was made clear in the letter of 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

has **ABSOLUTELY NO** intention of reducing subventions to the College of The Bahamas that would cause a “reduction in quality or level of services to the public or any forced reduction in headcount.”

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is a vast Ministry with a budget of over 280 million dollars, responsible for over 5,000 employees and over 55,000 students. This comprises the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education, the College of The Bahamas, Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute and the Department of Archives.

The Government has committed over this term in office to double the national investment in education and training. To this end we have:

1. Invested 3 million dollars in upgrading our computer labs and technology in our high schools and will invest another 5 million dollars before the upcoming school year in preschools, special education and further investment in technology;

- 2 We have added 125 new teachers to our existing complement of teachers, the largest single addition in recent memory.

- 3 We have provided 300,000 dollars in financial aid to The Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute. Enrollment has increased by 25%.

- 4 We have awarded over 11 million in scholarships and over 1800 students have benefitted. This is an increase of 25% in scholarships grants in a single year, over 3 million of which went to students at the college of the Bahamas.

As Minister of Education I accept my responsibility to ensure that my Ministry minimizes waste, improve efficiencies and reorganize our priorities to ensure that we are able to effectively match the demands of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology with the reasonable constraints placed on the Ministry of Finance and to do so without negatively impacting our quality of education and our level of services to the public.