

Minister hits back at PLP MP's promise to double education budget

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EDUCATION Minister Desmond Bannister threw cold water on two PLP MPs' promise to double the education budget - asking them to explain where the money would come from. In a joint press statement issued by the PLP yesterday the opposition party said they plan to broaden education, announcing they would double the current \$200 million education budget during their next term in office.

"We in the PLP have pledged to double the size of the education budget in real terms over the five year term when we next get the opportunity to govern - part of that will be a dramatic expansion and investment in pre-school education," said the statement.

Questioning the statement Mr Bannister said while anyone would welcome a budget increase you have to address where the extra \$200 million annually is coming from.

Mr Bannister said the amount of money coming into the Bahamas is not unlimited, in order to increase the education budget one of two things must be done; either taxes paid by the public are increased or money is taken from another ministry.

"You are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars - you have to be able to tell the public where this money is coming from," said Mr Bannister.

Furthermore Mr Bannister said the Christie administration does not have a strong record on education.

Under the Christie administration Mr Bannister said there was no full time minister appointed to education nor were any schools built under his five year term.

"Where does this commitment to education come from?" asked Mr Bannister.

He added no other government has allocated the most funds to BTVI, College of the Bahamas, the Department of Education and other educational institutions as under the FNM government. Mr Bannister said the public must match what the PLP is promising against the reality of what was done while they were in office.

You must look at "what type of basis are they making these claims on while also looking at their record," said Mr Bannister.

