

SPEAKING NOTES

FOR

Mr. Omar Sweeney

Managing Director of the

Jamaica Social Investment Fund

AT

The Opening Ceremony of the Sensory-
Cognitive Foundations for Early Literacy,
Oral Language Development and Basic
Mathematical Concepts Workshop

On

February 16, 2024.

- Master of Ceremonies,
- Hon. Fayval Williams - Minister of Education and Youth
- Mr. Richard Troupe – Acting Director, Safety and Security In Schools Unit, Ministry of Education and Youth,
- Mr. Omar Frith – Chairman, CHASE Fund,
- Mrs. Karlene DeGrasse-Deslandes, Executive Director, Early Childhood Commission,
- Dr. Winsome Gordon, O.D., J.P. - Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica Teaching Council,
- Ms. Kaysia Kerr - Chief Executive Officer, National Parenting Support Commission, Ministry of Education and Youth,
- Ms. Dionne Gayle - Assistant Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education and Youth,
- Mrs. Mandy Melville - Executive Director, Creative Language-Based Learning Foundation,
- Mrs. Paulette Mitchell - Board Member, Creative Language-Based Learning Foundation,
- Representatives from the Jamaica Social Investment Fund,
- Participants from the various schools,
- Other distinguished guests.

Good afternoon.

I am once again very pleased to be able to share in an occasion like this, in which so many of our educators and their young charges will benefit from another project ably implemented by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

I am proud to be the Managing Director of this public entity which continues to make steps to aid in the overall development of Jamaica.

The JSIF is a major investor in education at the early childhood, primary and junior high levels. Through support from the Caribbean Development Bank's Basic Needs Trust Fund, 90 learning institutions have benefited from the JSIF's intervention, to include the rehabilitation and construction of schools, provision of equipment, installation of fencing, construction of Safe Passages, and capacity building training projects. This has translated into over USD\$16.4 million being invested in the education sector, with approximately 52 thousand beneficiaries.

With this latest endeavour, approximately JA\$8.8 million will be invested by the JSIF through funding from the tenth Cycle of the Caribbean Development Bank's Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF-10) Grant, to equip our teachers with the appropriate pedagogical resources which will help to improve their capacity to deliver effective instruction.

Based on the success of previous interventions, JSIF was eager to partner with the CLBL and the MOE to devise a new program

targeted at this critical age group. This project is a **pilot training program** that is designed to address sensory/cognitive / learning issues at the early childhood level. We **are aware of the regional interest in this pilot module by the Cayman Islands and Barbados and remain hopeful for regional partnerships for regional success.**

This venture stands as a testimony to the JSIF's continued commitment to support the development of our children, and more specifically ensure that they get the kind of start that will guarantee success in their quest to successfully progress throughout the education system. This investment to improve the learning outcome of our children also signals the JSIF's commitment to support the Ministry of Education and Youth as it takes bold steps towards achieving critical education outcomes.

On behalf of the JSIF Board, Management and staff of the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, let me wish you all, great successes going forward, as we continue to work together with the single objective of ensuring that all our children get the solid start they need to compete in this ever-competitive world.

I Thank You.