

TEACHERS' DAY 2016 MESSAGE.



In acknowledging and endorsing the current celebration of **Education Week 2016** and in particular, **Teachers' Day 2016**, I would like to first point out that every Jamaican child deserves a champion – an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.

In an overwhelming number of instances around the nation of Jamaica, the nation's teachers have stood up and have indeed become the champions of many a Jamaican student. The unique challenges which faces the Jamaican society, especially the troubling collapse of family structures around the island, have made an unfair demand on teachers to become unofficial foster parents to so many students from all parts of society, including the upper echelons of society– and not just from the economically challenged sectors as many would like us to believe. Our teachers have largely stood up and taken on this challenge, and most of the times, in very trying circumstances.

I want to remind our teachers that you bring more than your professional qualifications and competencies to the classroom. Teachers, you bring your life, your principles, your standards, your internal character and your morals to the students. The quality of your life and conduct is what impact the students more than anything else and it is what they will remember most about you. Alexander the Great once said *"I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well"*. His teacher was the legendary philosopher Aristotle. Furthermore, in light of the major moral fallout that is taking place in the Jamaican society, this becomes an even more important and critical issue. I implore you to take note of Karl A. Menninger, the great American psychiatrist who once said *"What the teacher is, is more important than what he or she teaches."*

I would like to call on the parents of the nation's children to do your part. Do not just give up the hearts of your children to teachers. When you play your role then the teachers will become even more productive and helpful to your children. Many teachers tend to gravitate toward students whose parents are involved and who also keep them accountable. Parents, most of all, please remember, that great teachers will never be able to make up for bad parents, nor should they be expected to.

I want to encourage the government of Jamaica and the private sector to continue to support the educational process inside of Jamaica. This is our duty as stakeholders. Let's take care of our teachers. They are preparing our future citizens and employees. It will also be useful to pay attention to the special challenges faced by teachers who are employed by private schools. In light of the current economic climate, it is becoming increasingly difficult for many of these institutions to pay the teachers the salaries that they deserve. I am therefore encouraging Corporate Jamaica, to join hands with the private institutions in order to overcome this challenge. Private schools are performing a very, very important aspect of the education process, which if allowed to fall apart, will have a severely negative impact on the standard of education in Jamaica.

In closing, I would like to leave this Chinese Proverb with all of the stakeholders who should be supporting our teachers. *'If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people'.*

Let us support our teachers. May God blessings be with you.



Pastor Wesley Boynes

President/ Jamaica Independent Schools Association.