

# iCHOOSE JAMAICA

THE NEXT CHAPTER: **EDUCATION MANIFESTO**

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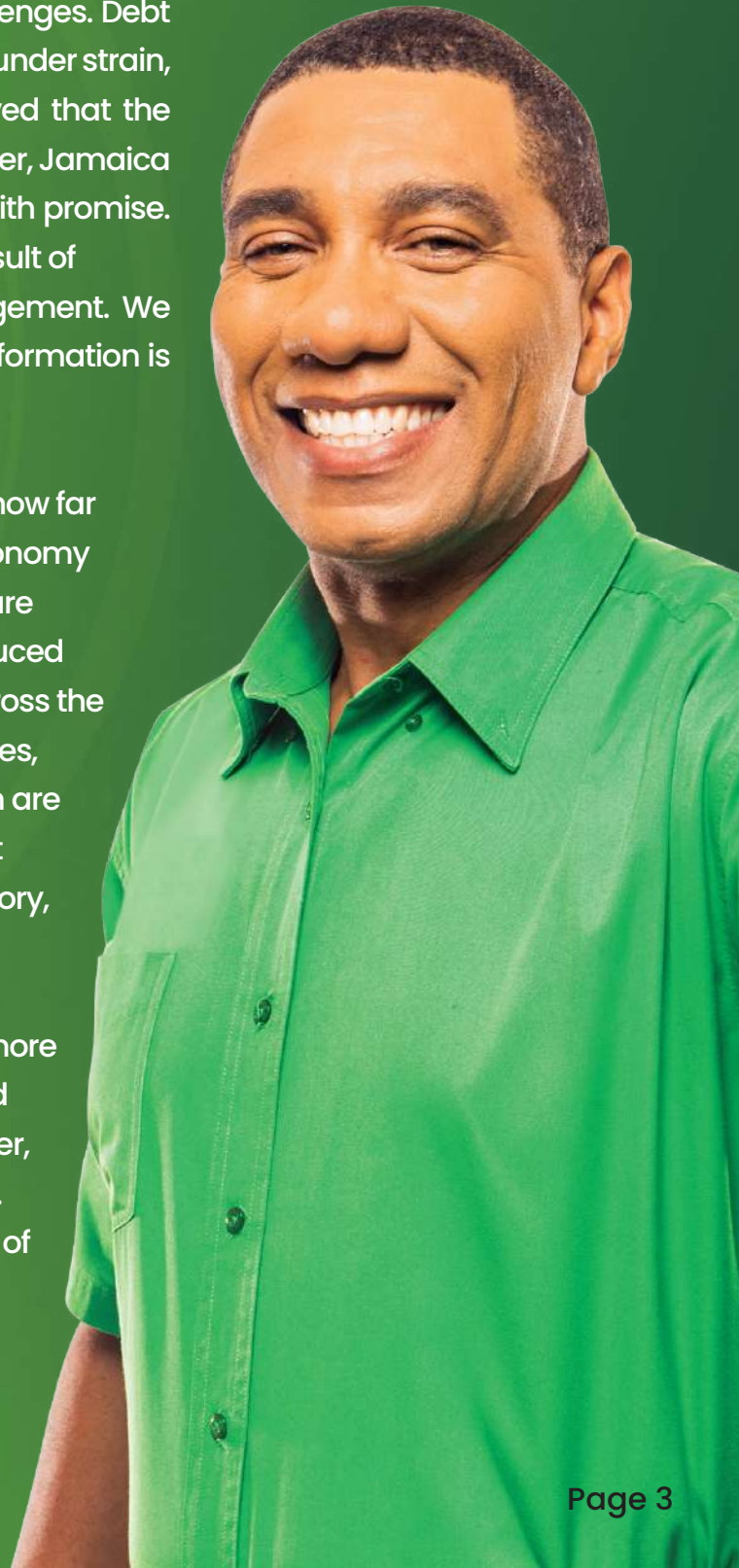


# ***MESSAGE FROM THE PARTY LEADER***

Nine years ago, Jamaica faced enormous challenges. Debt was high, jobs were scarce, public services were under strain, and national confidence was low. Many believed that the country could not change course. Today, however, Jamaica is stronger, safer, more stable, and more filled with promise. This has not happened by chance, but as the result of disciplined, careful choices and strategic management. We have shown that with the right leadership, transformation is not only possible, it is happening!

As your Prime Minister since 2016, I take pride in how far we have come together. crime is down, the economy is stronger, debt is lower, and more Jamaicans are working than ever before. Poverty has been reduced to the lowest level in decades. Communities across the island have seen new roads, water systems, buses, schools and housing. Healthcare and education are undergoing real change. Even through the most devastating global crisis in our independent history, Jamaica has remained stable.

But we know our work is not finished. There are more people to reach, more communities to uplift, and more opportunities to create. Be assured however, that we are committed to getting it done for you. Now, we stand at a critical crossroads. In the life of every nation there are rare moments – golden windows of opportunity that do not come again, or at least not in generations. Because of our



disciplined and strategic management over the last decade, Jamaica has such a window before it. The choices we make in this moment will decide whether we step through and continue Jamaica's steady rise, or whether we risk it all on uncertainty and untested hands.

As we shape the next chapter of our nation's future, Jamaica requires leadership that is dependable, decisive, and caring. Leadership that not only listens, but knows how to engage you, to solve your problems, and to navigate global challenges with strength and vision. We have confronted and overcome decades of corruption and inefficiency, fixed broken systems, and laid the foundation for generations to come. Together, we can build a Jamaica that is more productive, more inclusive, and more united. The Jamaica Labour Party is, and always will be, here for you. We are the party that chooses Jamaica at every turn, that does more for you, and that stands with every citizen. We are the party you can depend on to tell the truth, to be strong in difficult times, and to care for all Jamaicans with fairness and love of country.

## ***MY MESSAGE TO THE UNDECIDED***

To those of you who are undecided, I deeply respect the care you are taking with this decision. Choosing who should lead Jamaica is not about following the crowd; it is about thinking for yourself and deciding what is truly best for our country; it is about who can deliver – on jobs, on crime reduction, on stability and on opportunity.

The choice before you may be put this way: Do we continue to build on the tremendous progress we have made, or do we risk it all by handing the country over to those who have not proven that they can deliver? Some may say, "let us give someone else a chance." But government is not a game of chance. The future of Jamaica should not be gambled with.

Turning back now would put jobs, security, and stability at risk. The stakes are too high. This golden window of opportunity – where our economy is strong, our democracy is resilient and our people are rising, should not be wasted. Who knows when or if it will come again? Furthermore, your vote for performance will strengthen democracy and send a clear message to future governments that they will be judged on achievements, not on promises and rhetoric. This election is about Jamaica's future – your family's future, your children's future, the future of the land we all love. I ask you to weigh the record, look at the progress, look at our



plans, and think carefully about who is best prepared to do more for you and Jamaica. On Election Day, choose proven leadership. Choose a future of stability and opportunity. Choose Jamaica. Together, we will continue Doing More for You.

May God Bless Jamaica and may God Bless Jamaica Land We Love.

*Andrew*



# ***CURRENT CONTEXT***

Our Education Manifesto builds on the foundations laid by the report of the Jamaica Education Transformation Commission, chaired by Professor Orlando Patterson and commissioned by Prime Minister Andrew Holness, together with the resulting Education Transformation Plan. To ensure success in this area that is so critical to nation-building, we took the time to establish an ecosystem for reform, monitoring and measurement, including the Education Transformation Oversight Committee (ETOC), and are now picking up STEAM (pun intended)! Approximately one third of the recommendations of the Patterson Report have already been implemented, and we are pressing ahead for a truly transformed and transformative education system.

With the indispensable support of our hard-working and dedicated teachers and school leaders, our nurturing parents and the curiosity and enthusiasm of our students, we know Jamaica will succeed.

Our Manifesto therefore seeks to present the next phase of education transformation in Jamaica in this context. Many of the core recommendations of the Patterson Report – improved literacy and numeracy; strengthened teacher training; greater use of technology; and stronger governance – will be advanced in the next term, through the commitments set out in our Manifesto. We propose a comprehensive programme that consolidates work already under way and accelerates reforms in literacy, skills training, STEAM, and inclusiveness. We are confident that through this holistic plan that incorporates deep thinking and widened stakeholder inclusion, we will ensure learner-centered education that serves as the engine of Jamaica’s long-term growth and equity.



# ***CHOOSE A TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM***

## **Our Vision**

We will advance the transformation of education for all our children and teachers to become their best selves and to achieve their goals in partnership with parents and all education stakeholders.

Our Commitment to YOU:

## **A Jamaica That Masters Literacy and Numeracy**

We will continue to ensure that every Jamaican child becomes a confident reader and problem solver, leaving Primary School with the appropriate reading comprehension level together with the appropriate numeracy skills, through:

### **Early Grade Literacy Commitment**

Daily, timetabled reading instruction from Grades 1 to 3 across all schools to give our students more time to become confident readers.

### **Literacy and Numeracy Teachers**

Recruit and deploy a cadre of specialist reading and numeracy coaches across educational regions to support literacy and numeracy in schools. We will also expand opportunities for remote classroom support from Mathematics experts at our Teachers' Colleges.

### **Evidence-Based Interventions**

National rollout of proven literacy programmes such as the Creative Language Based Learning and ARROW islandwide, as well as holiday literacy camps to bridge learning gaps and prevent regression during holidays. We will also roll out more Mathematics camps for our students who are struggling with Math, to give them a chance to catch up.

### **Online and Community-Based Adult Literacy Programme**

Introduce an online audio and visual-based programme through HEART/ NSTA to support adults who want to learn to read at home in privacy and on their own time. Selected schools will also be used to deliver face-to-face adult literacy programmes after school hours and on weekends.



## **Update to Primary Exit Profile (PEP)**

We will continue to reform the PEP exams to reduce the number of assessments, thereby reducing the stress of the exam for students, teachers, and parents. We will also review the PEP to ensure that it is meeting the expected needs of a fundamentally changing world.

## **Brain Builder Centres**

We will establish 28 brain builder centres across all seven educational regions to provide free hands-on, stimulating day care that supports child development.

# **A More Inclusive Classroom**

We will create an education system that meets every child where they are, through:

## **Fully Operational Special Needs Diagnostic Centres**

All three diagnostic centres will be fully operational – with mobile units for additional access in rural areas – to provide diagnostic and other support services.

## **Reduce Diagnostic Wait Times**

Introducing fast-track assessments for severe cases.

## **Child Passport**

We will partner with the Ministry of Health and Wellness to update the Child Passport to pre-emptively alert and guide parents of children who display early signs of developmental delays or special needs.

## **Special Education Desk**

Every educational region will have a special education desk that provides support to parents, schools and, most importantly, our children with special needs. We will also provide public education and targeted information in health clinics to assist parents in knowing what their steps should be in seeking assistance, including the numbers for the special education desks.

## **Enhanced Inclusive Training to Support our Schools**

For all educators and school leaders to prepare them to adequately to incorporate children with special needs into our classrooms.



### **Full Scholarships for Special Educators, etc.**

We will introduce additional scholarships to train diagnosticians, special educators, speech therapists, and occupational therapists over the next 5 years.

### **Hire 1,000+ new Special Education Needs Assistants (SENAs)**

To support integrated classrooms, and HEART will introduce a part-time weekend certification programme to reskill and upskill all assistants.

### **Enhanced and Expanded Early Stimulation Programme**

The Early Stimulation Programme will be expanded to assist more young children under the age of 5 with developmental delays.

### **Build More Special Needs Departments in Schools**

We will meet the demands of the increasing number of children with special needs in Jamaica. In addition to more departments, we will also expand inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schooling, in appropriate cases.

### **Public Education Tool**

We will introduce a tool to support parents of children of special needs so they can easily find and utilise the resources available to support their child. This will supplement basic information also to be provided at clinics and at the Special Needs desks.

## **Transformed Education for Our Boys**

We recognise that closing the gender gap in education also means confronting the unique challenges faced by our boys in the school system. Boys are under-represented in tertiary institutions, more likely to drop out of secondary school, and disproportionately affected by underachievement and behavioural challenges. Addressing this requires targeted, data-driven, and culturally responsive interventions.

We will therefore implement a National Boys' Education Strategy designed to improve learning outcomes, boost engagement, and strengthen life pathways for boys. Key measures include:

### **Mentorship in Every School**

Expand structured mentorship programmes pairing at-risk boys with positive male role models in every secondary institution – both co-ed and all-boys.

## **A More Relevant Curriculum**

Encourage teaching practices and curricula that reflect boys' interests and learning styles, incorporating more project-based, hands-on, and competitive learning approaches.

## **Male Teacher Recruitment Initiative**

Launch a national campaign to recruit and retain more qualified male teachers so boys have more positive male figures in academic spaces.

## **Sports and Discipline Integration**

Further integrate sports and other extracurricular activities into schools to promote discipline, teamwork, and emotional regulation.

## **Technical-Vocational Pathways**

Expand access to STEM and TVET programmes for boys, giving them more hands-on learning opportunities and creating more pathways to high-demand careers.

## **Special Taskforce for the Advancement of Jamaican Boys**

Experts and stakeholders will be assembled to provide recommendations for changes to the education system to better address the disadvantages that our boys face.

# **A Digital School Environment**

Having already connected 50% of our primary and secondary schools to the internet, we will accelerate the digital transformation of our classrooms, through:

## **Jamaica Learning Assistant Platform**

Fully roll out free online access to lessons, assessments, and AI tutors so your child can receive support at home, at their own pace.

## **Smart Classrooms**

Install smartboards, provide devices, projectors, and internet connectivity in primary and secondary schools. No school will be left behind.



## **Cyber Hygiene Curriculum**

Train students and teachers in digital citizenship, cybersecurity, and responsible tech use so they can avoid bad actors and use technology responsibly.

## **Education Management Information System (EMIS)**

Complete the rollout of EMIS for school leaders and education stakeholders to track student performance and attendance, thereby allowing for early interventions when necessary.

# **A Secure, Healthy and Well-Governed Education System**

We will create a safe, nurturing, and accountable space for learning, with:

## **Full implementation of the Nutrition Policy**

Provide healthier meals in and around our schools through nutritional guidelines, the training of canteen staff, and partnering with the Ministry of Agriculture to include more local produce into the meals prepared at our schools.

## **Expand access to breakfast and lunch**

We will continue to expand access to breakfast and lunch for our vulnerable students.

## **Perimeter Safety Programme**

Expanding secure fencing and monitored entry points for schools in violence prone communities.

## **Rollout of an Anti-Bullying and Mental Health Campaign**

We will complete the design of our Anti-Bullying Campaign to address escalating bullying (including Cyberbullying) in our schools. We will deepen our collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness on addressing Mental Health in Schools, including our Mental Health Day, Wellness Benches at school and referrals to external counselling / psychological support where internal resources are insufficient. We will also facilitate and encourage the creation of more green spaces and gardens in schools where possible.

## **Governance Reform Modernising School Boards**

Leadership of our schools is important. We will modernise school boards aligned with contemporary good governance principles.

## **Residential Therapeutic Centre**

We will build the Caribbean's first ever residential therapeutic centre for vulnerable children.

## **School CCTV Programme**

Expand security surveillance technology to keep our students safe in schools.

# **Jamaica as a STEAM Nation**

We will prepare students for a prosperous future with a strong foundation in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math through:

## **STEAM Clubs in Schools**

Coding & Robotics Clubs in at least 50% of all schools across all levels (including infant schools) by 2029. Promote female participation in STEAM: Eg. Girls Who Code Competitions.

Develop and introduce innovation hubs, called Makerspaces in primary and secondary schools with successful STEAM Clubs by providing new equipment (digital tools, physical tools & craft materials) to encourage creativity and problem solving among students.

## **Six new STEAM Schools**

We will build six STEAM Schools that are climate resilient and accessible across strategic locations islandwide. These will be linked to industry and tertiary partners supporting apprenticeship and integration across career pathways and among students with and without disabilities.

## **Performing Arts Secondary School**

We will establish Jamaica's first three performing arts secondary schools to give our gifted creative students a chance to develop their skills and to support the further growth of our creative economy. The schools will focus on the teaching of art, music, and performing arts.



## Youth In The Arts

More resources allocated into supporting youth in the arts though:

- The introduction of Music Technology courses supported with Music labs in select secondary schools & youth innovation centres
- More musical instruments in all schools
- More performing arts support: resources and personnel across all primary & secondary schools
- Strengthen support to the Arts industry by creating alternative pathways to support festivals, shows, and the entertainment industry through TVET programmes
- Introduce stagecraft, lighting, costume design, and event management courses tied to national entertainment events.

## Incentivise STEAM Teaching

We will provide more scholarships and additional incentives to attract and retain STEAM educators across the spectrum of the acronym prioritising educators in the Visual & Performing Arts.

## Modernization and Equipment for TVET labs

Annual investments up to \$400 Million yearly towards renovation and modern equipping of TVET labs in high schools across the country, as well as relevant teachers' colleges.

## Develop Artificial Intelligence (AI) Labs

Develop AI labs in our key universities in collaboration with local and international businesses developing apprenticeship and co-op programmes across career pathways.

# A Skilled Jamaica

We will close the skills gap and expand access to jobs through robust training programmes including:

## Apprenticeship 3.0

The HEART/NSTA Trust will implement an enhanced apprenticeship programme that will allow HEART trainees to get relevant on-the-job training, HEART will cover stipend/salary costs in exchange for the structured training initiatives implemented by participating private sector firms. Key areas of initial focus will be construction, logistics, and manufacturing.

## **Expanded Prior Learning Assessments**

We will bring certification to our tradespeople and skilled professionals by expanding assessment and recognition of their experience.

## **Digital Certificates**

We will roll out a portable, digital record of credentials and competencies for successful trainees across all HEART programmes.

## **HEART Tuition free up to Level 5**

We have already eliminated fees up to Level 4. We will now eliminate all tuition fees up to Level 5 because we understand how important it is to continuously improve access to skills training.

# **A Well-Resourced and Empowered Teacher**

We will support our educators as professionals and nation-builders, through:

## **Staff Room Transformation Initiative**

Our teachers deserve a comfortable work environment. We will provide modern, well-equipped rest and planning spaces for teachers in every school.

## **Private Sector Education Support Programme**

Industry partners to adopt schools, provide additional resources, mentorship and support to our educators.

## **AI Tools for Educators**

We will reduce the administrative burden on our teachers by providing new tools for grading, content creation, and student assessment so that our teachers can focus more on student engagement.

## **Revised Teacher Education Curriculum**

Greater focus on digital skills, special education, data literacy, and classroom technology to prepare educators for the future of the classroom.



## **Mentor Teacher Programme**

Veteran teachers to support and develop early-career educators.

## **Teacher Wellness Programme**

Stress management and time management support, physical fitness, and professional coaching for the enhancement of our educators.

# **An Involved Parent**

We will further integrate our parents into the development of our country, through:

## **A Renewed, Restructured and Re-oriented National Parenting Support Commission**

We will conduct targeted community-based engagement and activities, support local groups, and provide training.

## **Enhanced HFLE Curriculum**

This revised curriculum will include parenting skills, improved financial literacy, male and female health concerns across the entire life cycle of a person and family communication and conflict resolution.

## **A National Parenting Campaign**

We will promote parental involvement, attendance, and home-based learning strategies.

## **Parenting Support Officers**

Deployed to communities with high truancy and underperformance rates to help those parents attain the best outcomes for their children. We will also revisit the MOHW home visits programme for parents of children aged 0-3.

## **A Parenting App and Toolkit**

This will promote early childhood development and provide adequate tools to assist parents in managing the various developmental stages of their children.

# A Modern Institutional Framework for Children

In addition to the work underway to reform the Early Childhood Policy and to review the Jamaica Early Childhood Curriculum, we will also, more broadly, strengthen the institutional arrangements for children by clarifying mandates, improving coordination, and reinforcing accountability across the system. Agencies involved in care, protection, or oversight will operate within well-defined roles to ensure that no child falls through the cracks.

## **Simplifying and Streamlining the Adoption Process**

Jamaica's adoption system is burdened by outdated laws, high legal costs, and unnecessary delays, leaving too many children stuck in state care without the love and stability of a permanent home. We will overhaul this broken system to make adoption simpler, faster, and more affordable because no child should grow up without the chance to have a loving home.

We will streamline the adoption process by removing bureaucratic barriers, introducing clear guidelines and standardised forms, and improving transparency. We will reduce the financial burden by lowering legal fees and offering targeted support to adoptive families.

Most importantly, every step will prioritise the best interest of the child, ensuring quicker placements with capable, loving families, stronger screening systems, and ongoing support for those who open their hearts and homes. We will also provide more evidence-based training for prospective, adopted and foster parents to support the best family building outcomes.

## **Speeding Up Safe, Stable Placements**

The new adoption law will support faster, more child-centred placements in permanent homes. It will include provisions for open adoption and structured, ongoing support for adopted children, adoptive families, and birth families.

## **Bringing Foster Care Under the Law**

For the first time, foster care will be brought under clear legal and regulatory oversight. This will promote safe, stable placements for children in need of family care, while enabling structured planning for permanent solutions.



## **From Institutions to Families**

We will continue the move toward family-based care for children who cannot remain with their families, and away from institutional settings. The CPFSA will take on a dedicated regulatory role for children's homes in keeping with best practices in de-institutionalisation.

## **Greater Policy Emphasis on Families and Children**

The family deserves greater focus. We will explore the appropriate institutional framework and resourcing to make this a reality with a focus on the areas covering policies related to children in state care and beyond, parenting, youth and adolescence. This is to ensure we provide optimal policy and programme support for initiatives to address the parenting skills gap, children affairs, conflict resolution within the home and more, all in the best interest of our families and our children.

## **HOPE for Children Trust Fund: Building a Financial Foundation for Every Child**

We will implement the HOPE for Children Trust Fund to help break the cycle of generational poverty. Every eligible child in PATH households or Wards of the State, born on or after August 6, 2022, will have a Government-funded long-term savings account, with contributions also welcomed from parents, guardians, and donors. The funds will grow with interest until the child turns 18 and can be used for education, skills training, property ownership, or starting a business. In this financial year, we will seed the Fund with \$200 million as we create a financial foundation for every child's future.

## **Reforming the CPFSA and Strengthening Social Work**

We will further reform the CPFSA, strengthen the National Parenting Support Commission and ensure alignment of their mandated work with the support of a more responsive social work system. This includes steps to ensure more manageable caseloads and improved case management practices.

## **Independent Oversight for Better Protection**

We will reinforce oversight in the child protection sector by supporting the work of the CCPA Advisory Council and Boards of Visitors, while creating additional mechanisms for independent scrutiny of all agencies involved in the care and protection of children.

## **Data-Driven Child Protection**

Children's records will be digitised in a secure system that supports active case management and long-term tracking. This will allow for better planning, earlier interventions, and more responsive services throughout a child's journey.

## Investing in Working Families

We envision a Jamaica where all working families have access to quality, affordable, and government-supported childcare, enabling parents to participate fully in the workforce while ensuring the well-being of their children.

We will therefore establish a **National Child Care Task Force** to map the demand for childcare across Jamaica and develop a clear plan to deliver more government-run facilities, starting with two in every parish (brain builders centres). Priority will be given to densely populated areas and communities with high female labour force participation.



# ***NOTES***

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***ON ELECTION DAY***

***VOTE***



***JLP***

**JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY**

