



ADDRESS BY

SENATOR THE HONOURABLE HAZEL MANNING

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

AT THE

FORMAL HANDING OVER CEREMONY OF THE
EL SOCORRO SOUTH GOVERNMENT EARLY
CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION CENTRE

Kamal Avenue
El Socorro Extension # 2, San Juan

Friday 1ST June, 2007 @ 10 a.m.

- SALUTATIONS
- Alderman Joseph Ross, Chairman, San Juan /Laventille Regional Corporation .
- Councillor Santam Ranjit, Representative of the Aranguez/WarnerVillage
- Mr. Lennox Sirjuesing and Members of the Board of Directors, Education Facilities Company Ltd
- Ms. Kathleen Thomas, CEO and staff of Education Facilities Company Ltd
- Mrs. Angella Jack, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
- Mrs. Marlene Juman, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
- Ms. Marlene Felix, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
- Mr. James Solomon, School Supervisor I Early Childhood Unit and other Senior Officials of the Ministry of Education
- Mr. Mudassar Khan, Assistant Manager, Amalgamated Engineering Services Limited
- Mr. Sarran Mungal, Principal, El Socorro South Government Primary School
- Representatives of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association and the National Parent Teachers Association
- Students
- Members of the News Media
- Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to be back in El Socorro South in two years. In 2005 we opened El Socorro South Government Primary and now to open the El Socorro South ECCE Centre.

I am very pleased to be here with you this morning to participate in the formal handing-over of this Centre of academic excellence for the young pupils of El Socorro South, which will be known as the El Socorro South Government Early Childhood Care and Education Centre.

At this Centre the children of this community, from age three to children under six years of age, will for the first time benefit from learning support, care and development services. We have kept to our mantra that all children, regardless of economic status, physical or emotional challenges, ethnic background or gender, have a right to high quality education.

And, in keeping with our mission to provide a reliable, comfortable environment to facilitate and enhance student learning, the Ministry of Education is building Early Childhood Care and Education Centres all over this nation. We anticipate that by December 2007 we will open eighteen such Early Childhood Care and Education Centres. The goal is to provide centers such as this for approximately 18,000 children between the ages of three and six.

Today you are witness to the Handing-Over Ceremony of our third Early Childhood Care and Education Centres.

- On April 23 we took delivery of the first ECCE centre at Church Street, La Romaine.

- One week ago - on May 21 – we took delivery of the St. Augustine South ECCE Centre at Bedasie Street, St. Augustine.
- Today we do the same here at Kamal Avenue, El Socorro Extension, San Juan.

Fifteen more ECCE Centres are expected to be completed by December. These include ECCE Centres at Santa Rosa, San Pedro, and at Sangre Grande. Sod turning ceremonies for ECCE centres are being arranged for Marabella, Salybia, Santa Flora, Strange Village and at Tunapuna.

The new ECCE Centres are being built with *themes*, not just in name but as part of the overall design. This concept is the result of briefs provided by the Ministry of Education and the unique designs of the architect Ms. Cheryl Adams and the team at Reynald Associates. I take this opportunity to extend sincerest congratulations to those employees of the executing agency for these ECCE centres – the Education Facilities Company Limited (EFCL). Congratulations also to those who worked on this El Socorro ECCE Centre – the Design Consultants - Reynald Associates; the Contractor - Amalgamated Engineering Services Limited; the Civil and Structural Engineers - Planning and Stantec; the Quantity Surveyors - Hart and Leonard Limited. Together we are enhancing the learning environment for our students.

Construction of this Centre began in June, 2006 and today we have these pristine facilities for the accommodation of 50 toddlers. Total construction cost amounted to a

little over \$2M. The construction of this ECCE Centre will serve as a complement to the El Socorro South Government Primary School.

The curriculum at this ECCE centre will be developmentally appropriate and will meet the needs of children, taking into account the environment in which they live. It will be implemented through meaningful activities and experiences for the children, rather than what is traditionally presented as knowledge to be acquired or facts to be stored. Here we will bring the activities of home-life, the needs of families and communities into the curriculum and we trust that the teachers and parents provide the necessary support.

This ECCE Centre will be staffed by fully qualified persons as follows:

- 1 Administrator/Teacher who will serve as the onsite professional development trainer.
- 2 ECCE Teachers who will plan activities using a variety of materials and equipment to improve the social, emotional, physical, creative and intellectual development of children three and under five years old.
- 2 ECCE Teacher Assistants
- 1 Auxiliary Assistant.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today we are witness to the most significant school construction programme ever undertaken in Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, at the Ministry of Education we have developed the following:

- Quality Standards for Early Childhood Environments for Children between Three and Five years Old;
- Registration and Licensing of ECCE Centres;
- A new curriculum to serve as a guide for teachers;
- A policy on governance to effectively manage the sector through Boards of Management that include key stakeholders in government, Non-Governmental Organisations, parents, families and members of civil society
- An expanded role for the National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education which serves as an advisory body.
- A restructured Early Childhood Care and Education Unit fully operational with the creation of new positions to suit its changing role.

Ladies and Gentlemen: This is evidence that education reform is working and that the government is delivering on its commitment to the people.

For the period 2002-2006, the Ministry of Education through its school construction programme has:

- Rehabilitated and upgraded schools through 889 projects;
- Installed furniture and equipment in 279 schools;

- Improved the classroom accommodation factor of 8 square feet per student to an accommodation factor of approximately 16 square feet per student;
- Provided expenditure for the construction of over 70 schools
 - ECCE 18
 - Primary 30
 - Secondary 22
- Prepared a Five Year Strategic Facilities Plan for primary schools –2006-2010
- Began works to upgrade and expand 100 secondary schools by 2010
- Developed a web-based Asset Register and Computerized Maintenance and Management System for all schools. This year, one hundred and ninety-five schools will be able to manage their schools’ assets utilizing this system.

During the period 2002 to 2006, this Government has incurred expenditure of \$613,206,888. in the construction of 70 schools detailed as follows:

ECCE	-	18	\$ 21,700,000.
Primary	-	30	\$174,889,219.
Secondary-		22	\$416,617,669.

These schools were built through the various projects of the Ministry of Education such as **the Fourth Basic Education Project, the IDB and the Public Sector Investment Project (PSIP).**

These new schools, ladies and gentlemen, are designed to enable teachers and students to access new technology and utilize modern teaching and learning techniques that were not possible in older schools.

For the year 2007, Government, through the Education Facilities Company Limited, has awarded contracts for the construction of a further seven (7) schools:

- Siparia Junior Secondary
- Couva - do -
- Marabella - do – Secondary

and

- Arima New Government Primary
- Arima West - do -
- Tranquillity - do -

Tenders have been invited for Design and Construction of seven (7) schools at:

- Bon Air
- Chatham
- Manzanilla
- Monkey Town
- Penal Quinam
- Fanny Village

- Cap-de-Ville

For example:

- The new school buildings are accessible to students with physical disabilities;
- Facilities for Physical Education and Sport, Visual and Performing Arts and Technology Education are included in the design of these schools.
- These schools are designed so as to be used by groups and organizations within the community;
- Computer technology plays an integral role in the education of all students, therefore:
 - Each new school is provided with a library-resource center that contains computers to assist students in accessing information from the Internet and from CDs;
 - Each school is being fitted with equipment to access the Internet;

Government has not only invested money which has been saved through education reform, but has provided additional funds to ensure that students can access the education programmes they need though daily and nutritious School Meals, School Bus Transport, Textbook Rentals and Student Support Services. Ladies and gentlemen, there can be no better investment in our future than an investment in the education of the children of this nation.

Some of the significant features of this transformation include teacher development and curriculum enhancement geared towards presenting more modern approaches to learning for the nation's school children.

As we take possession of this Early Childhood Care and Education Centre from the Education Facilities Company Limited, it is my hope that the people of El Socorro South and San Juan ensure that their children enroll at this Centre and that they participate meaningfully in early childhood education as a first step into the education system.

I thank you.

2007 June 1.