



Keynote Address
Hon. Fayval Williams
Minister of Science, Energy & Technology
JPS Foundation Top Students Awards Ceremony for CSEC Industrial Technology
Examination
April 16, 2019 at 12 noon

Salutations:

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Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to join the JPS Foundation as you stage this inaugural awards ceremony to recognize some of our nation's brightest minds who have done exceptionally well in their CSEC Industrial Technology Examinations for the year 2018.

I must applaud this move by the Foundation as it continues to contribute to national development through tangible investments in the educational pursuits of our nation's children.

JPS Foundation Sponsorship

I am aware that since 2016, the Foundation has been covering the fees for the CSEC Industrial Technology subject and so far 1,355 students have benefitted from this programme.



This is a notable achievement.

As a Member of Parliament, I have met so many parents and guardians who sometimes find it difficult to cover the costs of their children and wards' CSEC examinations. As a parent myself, I am all too familiar with the sacrifices that are sometimes made to allow our children to pursue their academic pursuits.

Funding, or the lack thereof, should not be a hindrance to self-improvement, however, that is not our reality. Many have not been as fortunate as you have been on their educational quest due to limited or absent resources. That is why I am so pleased, when corporate bodies such as the JPS, through its Foundation, institute programmes such as these, to help our nation's children achieve their dreams.

Ladies and gentlemen, this ***investment in the education of our youth is an investment in Jamaica.***

Building capacity

As I stand here today and look at the faces of this year's awardees, I see a bright future for this country.



Gathered in this room are budding engineers, roboticists, and innovators who have the capacity to positively affect and shape the future of this country and the world.

As young people, you are growing up in a time where the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are vastly changing the world as we know it and opening endless opportunities than in previous years.

People all over the world are tapping into the power of STEM and are using both the technologies and their ingenuity to create solutions which drive growth.

The traditional ways of doing things in all facets of life are slowly becoming obsolete and we have to use this time to build our capacity to stay relevant and ahead of the market.

The **World Economic Forum** in its **Future of Jobs 2018** report states that:

- Four specific technological advances—high-speed mobile internet; artificial intelligence; widespread adoption of big data analytics; and cloud technology—are set to dominate the 2018–2022 period;



- By 2022, no less than 54% of all employees will require significant re- and upskilling; and
- Up to 2022, there will be an increasing demand for Data Analysts and Scientists, Software and Applications Developers, and Ecommerce and Social Media Specialists, roles that are significantly based on and enhanced by the use of technology.

Now more than ever, our children need to be exposed to as much of the STEM areas as possible; so that they can be equipped with the necessary skillsets and competencies to take advantage of the opportunities which will be an integral part of the fourth industrial revolution. This is after all, an age characterized by artificial intelligence, increased automation, data analytics and constant change.

With all the opportunities that abound, there is no reason that the next great innovation cannot come from Jamaica. There is no reason that the next great innovation cannot come from **YOU**. We have done it before and I am confident that we can do it yet again.

Charge to parents and educators

I must salute the parents and the educators who have invested in the lives of these students.



Today your time, dedication and commitment to these youngsters are yielding great returns and it can only get better.

To the educators - I urge you to continue to approach your job with the same passion every day, despite the challenges. You are helping to lay the foundation for a great future and the seeds you sow today will reap a bountiful harvest tomorrow.

Charge to the awardees

To you, the awardees, firstly, I must congratulate you for being the best in the island in this field of study. I know that it must have taken a tremendous degree of hard work and dedication to achieve this award and you deserve all the accolades that you will receive today.

You have not just made yourselves proud but also your parents, teachers and your wider community.

Secondly, I want to encourage you to use this achievement as a stepping stone to achieving greater things. I want you to not just study the material to pass your exams, but I want you to utilize the information that you have received in practical and innovative ways to transform Jamaica.



The particular skill sets that you have started to form, have the potential to create lucrative avenues and opportunities for you. If you can perfect your craft, you can be a world changer. ***Set huge goals for yourself, work hard and pursue them!***

Conclusion

My commendations once again to the JPS Foundation for the tremendous work that you have been doing over the years. You have remained true to your mandate to ***"improve lives and empower Jamaicans through charitable development projects in Energy Education, Conservation and Innovation."***

I wish you all the very best.

Thank you.