



Hon. Tara Rivers
Minister

Upon taking office as the Minister for Education, Employment & Gender Affairs I sought to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the way the Ministry and relevant agencies function.

In doing so, during the course of the year I set about making strategic and purposeful changes, not to unravel the work of the previous administrations, but to enhance the work and functioning of agencies responsible for carrying out the Government's policy directives.

I am looking forward to driving continued improvements, and I am pleased to present some highlights of the achievements from my Ministry and agencies over the past year.

Education

The success of any strategy is dependent on its effective implementation. Over the past year I have supported the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Education as promised during the 2013 Elections Campaign. In addition, I have been able to identify areas of focus that goes beyond the Strategic Plan which are necessary to improve the functioning of the education system, to raise standards and bring about the best possible outcomes for our students. Some highlights of the achievements during the past year are as follows:

- Implemented guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education Centres to raise standards and improve quality of care.
- Implemented a Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum Framework (CIEYCF) based on national and international curricula.
- Strengthened interventions in Mathematics and Literacy, especially at the primary school level.
- Supported schools and teachers in utilising diagnostic data in English and Mathematics as a source for understanding students' progress and as a tool to improve teaching and learning.
- Conducted a review of current provisions in schools for children identified as at-risk or having serious social, emotional and behavioural issues.
- Developed a framework for safer schools to include policy guidance on anti-bullying, safe handling, and dealing with complaints received.
- Implemented a new Graduation Policy for public high schools which includes academic standards for the first time in the history of the Cayman Islands, and introduced a new category of 'High Honours' to recognise and motivate the exceptionally high achievers.
- Introduced a "Pastoral Support Workers" pilot programme in some schools to provide extra support for specific children deemed most in need of such guidance and support.
- Strengthened the provision of technical and vocational programmes offered at CIFEC.



Gender Affairs

- Requested via the Governor's Office the extension of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to the Cayman Islands.
- Launched the FIRST ever National Conference on Women which provided an opportunity to discuss the key areas relating to CEDAW; to receive qualitative data regarding priority issues and potential areas of concern in relation to CEDAW; to empower girls and women; and to promote messages of equality between men and women.

Progress Report

No Excuses, Just Solutions

CI Public Library Services

- Installed a Computer Assisted Literacy Solutions Programme for adult learners who wish to improve literacy and math skills needed to secure employment and enhance quality of life.
- Offered Techbyte Computer Courses that are designed to help adult learners feel more comfortable and confident with computer technology and covers the essential functions that are most commonly used.
- Increased the number of E-books and magazine subscriptions which can be accessed through any computer with Internet and are available to any member of the public library.
- Launched a Student Information Research Database which is a free academic database for students from year 2 through college and that can be accessed virtually through any computer with Internet access.
- Added a Local Authors Database with the ultimate goal of creating complete local authors collections at each Public Library branch.

Sunrise Adult Training Centre

- Restructured the vocational training programme for adults with disabilities to improve employment opportunities.
- Introduced and enhanced therapeutic programmes for adults with disabilities that include supported workshops, crafts and grow projects; promoted and strengthened life skills training focusing on daily activities such as meal preparation and cleaning, literacy and numeracy, as well as functional communication.



Department of Labour & Pensions

- Convened a Minimum Wage Advisory Committee to review and propose the best options for a Minimum Wage regime for the Cayman Islands. The report is expected to be received in October 2014.
- Resolved and closed 480 of the 594 labour cases received during the period June 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014.
- Improved efficiency by resolving Pension cases filed (including backlog cases) by 674; conducted over 1800 pensions investigation activities; and filed 2 new cases for prosecution along with 15 ongoing cases in court during the period June 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014, respectively.
- Launched a new Inspections Unit in September 2013 and have completed 45 inspections.

National Workforce Development Agency (NWDA)

- Increased human resources and improved physical layout of the NWDA to better serve the public and the needs of the clients.
- Established the NWDA Task Force to engage in a comprehensive review of the NWDA and put forth recommendations aimed at improving its ability to carry out the duties for which the NWDA was originally set up. Feedback and recommendations informed the work that has taken place in the re-engineering of the NWDA.
- Developed and implemented the NWDA Intake and Assessment Process to assist in identifying training and development activities needed to support Job Seekers overcome their particular barriers to employment.
- Developed and launched the National Internship Programme to provide opportunities for participants to gain practical experience and develop their skills.
- Launched the National Training Programme to provide a range of opportunities to meet the needs of the labour market.
- Developed and launched the NWDA Online Job Portal to help connect potential employees to jobs.
- Developed and launched the NWDA/Immigration Database Interface to greatly improve communication with and better inform the Immigration Department and its Boards of the registered Caymanian and other jobseekers.

