



**M&M Jamaica Ltd. Mathematics Competition
Address to Students at Prize Giving Ceremony
April 13, 2018**

Good Morning St. Elizabeth family!

I feel so honoured to be able to share in this momentous occasion. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and applaud our hard-working and dedicated coordinators who have given so much of their time and efforts to ensuring our competitions are of the highest quality. I would also like to give an extra special thanks to our Chairman Dr. Watson, and his Co-Chair Mr. Cecil Ramsamuch, for their continued commitment to nation building and the advancement of education in St. Elizabeth.

For those present who are not familiar with M&M Jamaica Limited, allow me to share a brief background on this noble organization. M&M Jamaica Limited is a civil and general engineering contracting company founded by Mr. Donald Mullings and his wife Mrs. Winifred Mullings, both past students of St. Elizabeth Technical High School. July 2018 marks our 25th Anniversary in the field of construction. M&M Jamaica is considered one of the premier leaders in the construction field -- erecting infrastructures such as homes, roads, businesses, bridges, water and sanitation systems, and other structures across the length and breadth of Jamaica.

I want to briefly speak to you today about the value of education. Nelson Mandela once said that "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Truer words have never been spoken.

Education is the currency by which nations maintain economic competitiveness and global prosperity. It is the key to eliminating gender inequality, to reducing poverty, to creating a sustainable planet, to helping prevent pointless deaths and sickness, and to promoting peace. It is one of the most critical investments we can make. A good education can provide the opportunity needed to make a successful life -- to help make your dreams a reality. It is for these reasons why M&M Jamaica has taken the mantle to help create a nation of change-makers by investing in our most valuable resource -- our nation's youth.

I am going to share a secret -- one that most do not learn till far into adulthood. Are you ready? Here goes: You are the master of your destiny. You may be young, but each decision you make sets the direction for your life.

Each student I see before me today has a talent, something they are good at. Some of you may have already identified your gift, while others are still searching, and that is fine. No matter where you are at this point, the thing you must know is that you are special, you are wonderfully and equally made, and

you have a responsibility to yourself to discover your own path. A solid education provides that opportunity.

In the most basic employment arena, Mathematics and English are core requirements. This tells us that the employment horizon is becoming more and more competitive each day. Only the determined and the driven can truly traverse the many challenges and stumbling blocks of life. Though I see no student here that will fit into that 'basic' category for employment, you should know that having a good education makes handling such challenges a bit easier.

Why should education be important to you? Because, no matter what you want to become in life, you will need some level of education to do it. If you wish to be an entrepreneur, a lawyer, doctor, an artist, a chemist, or even a civil engineer, you will require a sound education.

As adults we know that sometimes classes seem uninteresting, some people learn differently and are easily bored. We were young once too. But know this, a prosperous future is shaped by having a good education. You will not be able to drop out of school and acquire a good job.

Let's put things into a broader perspective; the education you gain in your formative years will decide nothing less than the future of this country. You are our future leaders. What is being taught in school today will determine whether we as a nation can overcome the greatest challenges in the future.

The knowledge and problem-solving skills you learn in science and math to cure diseases such as cancer, what you learn in your IT class will enable you to develop new energy technologies and protect our environment. You will need the insights and critical thinking skills you gain from studying history and social studies to fight poverty and homelessness, crime and discrimination, and make our nation more fair and free. You will require the ingenuity you develop in all your classes to build new companies that will create new jobs and boost our economy.

Every single student here today is tasked with the responsibility of developing their skills and intellect in order to solve the nation's most difficult problems. I strongly believe that all have a role to play in the development of Jamaica and if you do not apply yourself and receive the education your teachers are imparting, not only are you failing yourself; you are failing your country.

Now I know we are all accustomed to hearing the responsibility of our teachers where education is concerned, and the role our parents play in supporting and encouraging our educational journey, however, at the end of the day, even with the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, and the best schools system in place, if you do not have a drive and determination to gain a solid education none of it will matter.

So I challenge you all today to take the wheel and be the master of your destiny. Make the right choices; attend your classes and do not sit idle in the back, let your voice be heard, participate, make your mark, take your place in this world, pay attention to your teachers. There is great value in what they are attempting to teach you each day. Listen to your parents and guardians as they guide and encourage you. These choices, while it may seem small now, will have a big impact on your future. Dream big. I promise that if you put in the work you will succeed.

Thank you.