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## PRESS RELEASE

### Ministry of Education hosts Annual Education Professionals' Welcome Events

**Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, 24 August 2020.** The Ministry of Education hosted separate welcome events for new and returning education professionals employed in government schools in Grand Cayman and the Sister Islands, last week, in adherence with current Public Health protocols.

The events, also aimed at announcing the Education Ministry's plans for the upcoming academic year, were held at the John Gray High School Gymnasium and the Layman E Scott Snr. High School Hall on August 19 and 21 respectively with approximately 700 educators in attendance.

In her opening remarks Acting Chief Officer for the Ministry of Education, Mrs. Lyneth Monteith, urged educators to view the previous year's challenges as opportunities for improving their service. She also applauded the recruitment of local educators to fill vacancies for the upcoming academic year.

Other speakers, included His Excellency, the Governor, Martyn Roper and Deputy Governor Franz Manderson both of whom expressed their appreciation for local educators. Mr. Roper described teachers as the 'lifeblood' of the Cayman Islands. Mr. Manderson committed on behalf of the Government to make decisions that will "keep you safe, defend your actions and make sure that we continue to deliver a world-class education to our nation's children."

Also in attendance was the Honourable Minister of Health, Environment, Culture and Housing (HECH), Dwayne Seymour. He used the opportunity to outline his Ministry's focus on ensuring the safety of all students and staff in schools. "The Ministry of Health will continue to rely heavily on advice from the World Health Organisation (WHO) as well as experts in the local and global medical fraternities as we navigate this academic term with you," Minister Seymour affirmed.

Acting Director of the Department of Education Services, Mrs. Tammy Hopkins reflected on the many challenges that the education sector faced in the previous academic year and called on educators to continue to work together. She summed up her remarks by saying, "Children are the priority, change is a reality and collaboration is the strategy."

Minister for Education, Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly used the opportunity to update the audience on the status of several projects the Ministry has ongoing to enhance education in the Cayman Islands including the provision of laptops for all students enrolled in government schools. She thanked the Government and private sector interests for their unrelenting and continued support for this and other education projects "We must continue to invest in education as without an educated country; we are doomed," she added.

Minister O'Connor-Connolly, also announced the final tranche of the increased salary threshold of \$5000.00 for all public school teachers commencing the first of September 2020. Acknowledging that the increase would result in a consequential effect, Minister O'Connor-Connolly called on the relevant personnel in collaboration with the Portfolio of the Civil Service (POCS) to adjust, as a matter of priority, the salaries of other educators whose monthly remuneration already surpassed this new threshold.

In underscoring the importance of educators, she declared, "Unless we take the time to treat you, our educators; the way you ought to be treated; we cannot expect a positive upward trajectory for our students."

His Excellency Governor Martyn Roper, Deputy Governor Franz Manderson and Health Minister Dwayne Seymour spoke at the Annual Education Professionals' Grand Cayman Welcome Event on Wednesday. MEYSAL and DES officials presented at both events. Deputy Premier Moses

Kirkconnell and District Commissioner Ernie Scott were also in attendance at the Education Professionals' Sister Islands Welcome Event on Friday.

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