

2001 State of Education Address

Good Evening, Buenas Noches yan Hafa Adai. I want to thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share the State of Public Education with you. I am truly humbled by this honor. And although I am here as the Interim Superintendent, I want to assure you that there is nothing interim in the work that we do and progress that we are making.

Isaac Newton once said: "If I have seen further, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants." Today, I stand before you because of those giants – dedicated administrators, effective teachers, and hard-working support staff...and Along with those giants, I stand committed to Prepare all 31,361 DOE Students for Life, Promote Excellence in all that we do, and Provide Support to both our internal and external stakeholders.

This month I celebrate my second anniversary with the Department of Education. When it suggested that I apply for the opened Deputy Position, I did so with some trepidation. How can anyone meet the expectations of the position knowing that resources to get the job done are more often than not slim to nonexistent? But here I am two years later and I can honestly say that I love my job and it gives me great fulfillment. But I could not do it without the support of my DOE family, and I sincerely thank you all for that.

Tonight, I will share with you, some of the current challenges we face as a department; highlight some of our accomplishments and improvements; note some of the opportunities that we have taken advantage of this past year; and finally share with you some of our plans as we move forward.

School District Governance

My first week on the job brought me to a meeting at the Legislature. While waiting for everyone to gather and the meeting to start, one of the staffers asked me if I thought the board should be dissolved. Taken aback and a little concerned about political landmines, I said after some thought, if we don't give the board structure an opportunity to mature, how can we truly measure its effectiveness. The reply was, jokingly: I guess you haven't been to your first board meeting.

In 2002, the Guam Education Policy Board was created by Public Law 26-26. Since I joined the Department there has been at least two pieces of legislation affecting the makeup and oversight of the board. Should the board be fully elected? Should they be fully appointed? Should it be a hybrid of the two? Should the board represent the community at large, various regions, or certain stakeholder groups? Should the board stick to policy issues or should they be involved with governance? Who should appoint the Superintendent?

These debates aren't new to Guam and mirror the debates in other states and districts. There are strengths and weaknesses in all of these different models and configurations. After two years, my thoughts are still that we need to allow the organizational or governance model to mature. I do not have a preference for any particular model, I see the potential in all. I just don't believe that any organization can function effectively if their governance structure is constantly in flux.

DAP

Our 5-year District Action Plan or DAP, as it is often referred to, is now in its 4th year of implementation. And when it was adopted in 2008, it set for us an ambitious goal. By the end of SY2012-13, 90% of our students, at every grade level, are to achieve at the Proficient and Advanced Levels on the State Adopted Test, in the areas of Reading, Math and Language Arts. Though I have incredible faith in the abilities of our administrators, teachers, and students, with less than 2 years to go, I am also aware that we are far from reaching that goal.

As we prepare to update our DAP, we should continue to clarify what our curricular goals are. These goals need to be high enough that it forces us and our students to stretch and to strive. Yet, they also need to be realistic and attainable, to ensure that we are not setting our students and ourselves up for failure.

We must also conduct a thorough evaluation of all our Federally Funded Consolidated Grant programs that help supplement and support our curricular efforts. Over the years, though the amount of funding has been somewhat stable, the number of separate projects funded under the Consolidated Grant has actually increased. Though the saying "the more, the better" may work in some situations... I prefer the phrase "quality over quantity." We need to focus our efforts and prioritize those programs that we feel will have the greatest impact on student achievement.

The last recommendation I have for this process is to ensure that the District Action Plan has an established mechanism for the continuous evaluation, revision and improvement of its activities. Though the current DAP does have this ongoing review process built in, actual follow-up is sporadic and inconsistent. The DAP committee is being revived to take the lead on this review and evaluation, and will ensure that such a mechanism is put in place.

SAT-10

Lets talk about SAT-10. Of the 1,641 students who graduated from DOE last year... of the 1,641 students who we sent off into the world of higher education or into the world of work... only 12% of them were Proficient in Reading. Only 6% of them were Proficient in Language. And only 1% of them were Proficient in Math. Note that in the national norm group, of the seniors tested only 24% are Proficient in Reading, 27% are Proficient in Language and only 5% are Proficient in Math. When compared to the national averages, we are behind, but perhaps not as far behind as we think.

Lets also keep in mind those 1,641 students are those who made it to graduation. There are still many students in that cohort who unfortunately, did not make it that far. In SY10-11, the 1,641 students who graduated represent a 68.9% Cohort Graduation Rate. What this means is that of the total number of freshman who entered high school four years ago, 68.9% of them graduated on time last year. And although there were 197 less students who graduated from the year before, this year's graduation rate is still the 2nd highest in the last five years.

While our graduation rates have been going up, they are not high enough... there are still so many students that fall through the cracks and we are well aware of our need to address this. Further, we need to ensure that our credit-recovery programs like Summer School and Eskuelan Puengi hold the same high standards and expectations as our regular courses. In our efforts to raise graduation rates, we need to be sure that we do not compromise the integrity and rigor of our high school programs or lower our standards simply to allow more students to achieve them.

Our overall drop out rates went up slightly from 6.1% last school year to 6.8% this school year. Of note is the fact that GWs drop out rate went from 6.4% in SY09-10 to 3.2% in SY10-11. Perhaps we should look at what GW has done so we can mimic this in our other high schools.

In the SY2010-11 SAT10 reports, our students were compared to a more recent norm group. Because this norm group did better than the previous group, the overall placement of our

schools as compared to the national average was negatively affected. But we can't simply look at these scores and denounce our performance... we have to look at how we have consistently grown over the years and recognize the consistent improvement and trends our schools are a part of.

Agana Heights consistently scored at the top in almost every subject area at all grade levels.

But what also needed to be noted is that Carbullido placed first in 1st Grade math and 2nd grade Language Arts and 2nd in 1st Grade Math and 3rd Grade Reading, Language Arts, Science, and Social Science.

LBJ- in the one grade that they take the test, scored the highest in 1st grade Math and Science, 2nd in Language Arts, and tied for 2nd in Reading with Agana Heights and CL Taitano.

Inarajan Elementary School came out on top in 2nd Grade Reading, and 5th Grade Language Arts but also came in 2nd in 2nd Grade Language Arts, 3rd Grade Math, and 4th Grade Math, and Language Arts.

Ordot-Chalan Pago Elementary came in 1st in 5th grade Reading, Math, and Social Science... but also came in 2nd in 2nd Grade Reading and in 5th Grade Language Arts and Science.

F.Q. Sanchez came in 1st in 1st Grade Reading and Science, and 5th grade Social Science while Liguan came in 2nd in 4th grade Reading, Social Science and 5th Grade Reading.

But we cannot only look at overall performance, we also need to look at consistent growth that was achieved from the year before.

Though ranking somewhere near the middle and sometimes towards the end, PC Lujan Elementary experienced the highest rate of growth in 2nd grade reading, math and science; and 4th grade Reading, Language Arts and Science. In each instance, this growth exceeded the national rate of growth indicating a greater than 1 year's worth of achievement.

Adacao Elementary School, again, though scoring somewhere in the middle overall, exceeded the national rate of growth in 8 content areas including: 2nd grade Reading, 3rd Grade Reading, Language Arts and Science, and 5th grade Reading, math, Language Arts and Science.

Inarajan Elementary School also consistently exceeded the national rate of growth in 7 content areas: 3rd Grade Math and Science, 4th Grade Math and Science and in 5th Grade Math, Language Arts and Science.

And also in 7 content areas: Marcial Sablan exceeds the national rate of growth in 3rd Grade Reading and Math; and in all 5th grade content areas- Reading, Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Science.

Middle School

In the middle schools, we saw Jose Rios come out on top in 6th grade Math, Language Arts and Science; 7th Grade Reading (Tying with Untalan), Math, Science and Social Science and in all 8th Grade Content Areas. They also came in 2nd in 6th grade Social Science and 7th Grade Language Arts. In 7th Grade Science, Rios scored 8 scaled score points above the national average, making them the only school to pass the national average this year using the new standard.

Untalan Middle School scored the highest in 6th Grade Reading and Social Science, 7th Grade Reading (Tying with Rios) and Language Arts. They also came in a strong 2nd in 6th Grade Language Arts and Science, 7th Grade Science and 8th Grade Reading, Math, Language Arts, and Science.

FBLG also came in consistently in the top two, scoring the 2nd highest in 7th Grade Reading, Math, Social Science and 8th Grade Social Science.

Now this is where value added analysis or growth analysis is most telling, though usually ranking in the middle, Oceanview Middle School showed the most growth among all middle schools in 7th grade math, and 8th Grade Reading, Language Arts, and Social Science... exceeding the national rate each time.

And even though they may not have scored the highest, Astumbo Middle School experienced the most growth in 8th grade math and Inarajan Middle School the most in 8th grade science. Both schools exceeded the national rate of growth.

High School

In the high schools, we again saw consistent performance that is notable.

In the 9th Grade, Simon Sanchez scored the highest in Reading, Math, Language Arts and Science ; with JFK and GW scoring the highest in Social Science.

In the 10th Grade, we saw JFK coming in first in all subject areas with GW coming in 2nd in Reading, Language Arts, Science and Social Science, and Sanchez coming in 2nd in Math.

In the 11th grade, JFK scored the highest in Reading, Math, and Science- with their scores a mere 1 point away from the national average.

GW and JFK tied for 1st in Social Science and GW scored the highest in Language Arts.

In the 12th grade JFK scored the highest in Math, Science and Social Science with their Science Students Scoring at the National Average of 693.

JFK also tied with GW for reading and GW came in first for Language Arts.

All of the high schools showed substantial growth in all content areas including Okkodo High School who showed the most growth in 10th Grade Language Arts and 11th Grade Social Science.

Southern High School also showed substantial growth in 10 grade Social Science and 12th Grade Reading, Math and Language Arts.

REFORM PROGRAMS

This year we were also able to aggregate scores to compare the 11 schools who adopted Direct Instruction, against the 10 schools who use the Success for All reform program, as well as the 6 elementary schools who teach using the adopted standards. The Success for All schools collectively came out on top in all subject areas with the exception of 1st Grade math where the DI schools ranked higher. The DI schools collectively ranked second with the Standards-Based schools scoring the lowest. While the standards based schools, we affectionately call our Metgot schools, did not come out on top, collectively their overall performance showed substantial gains from the previous year.

While this was an interesting exercise, we need to be careful about rushing to judgment about the effectiveness of different reform programs based on one assessment without taking into consideration a variety of variables that may affect overall student performance. These variables such as socio-economic status, cultural or linguistic differences, and school readiness all play a part in student achievement. Schools may be affected in a variety of ways that, in all fairness, need to be accounted for when evaluating the overall effectiveness of a school's curricular program.

So what are we at the DOE doing to address student achievement? How do we turn these challenges in to opportunities for success?

During the short time I've spent at DOE, I have seen how our work, in all areas of the department, has continued to move toward a greater focus on meeting the needs of our students. These focused efforts, were not just started this past year, but are a part of the foundation and ground work laid by Dr. Nerissa Underwood, our former Superintendent, who is here tonight as one of our honored guests.

Educators know that the alignment of our Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment policies and practices is critical if we are to achieve long-term, systemic improvement in student achievement. If any one of these components is misaligned, if any one is out of order, unclear, or even contradictory... we reduce the ability to succeed in the other areas.

An extreme example of misalignment between the three areas, shared during a workshop, had to do with "students getting a drivers license." Though silly sounding at first, it is a good example that helps me to understand some of the more complex issues that we currently face in the district.

The example identified our curriculum goal as being to "prepare students to get a regular driver's license." However, instruction, was going to be conducted on a motorcycle and the assessment or "test" at the end was going to be on a boat.

Now, do you see how silly it sounds at first? But... if we think about it, if we examine our current curriculum policies and practices, can we see some parallels?

Of course, maybe the example is too extreme... How about if we conducted our instruction using a vehicle with automatic transmission and then gave the student the test in a vehicle with Standard Transmission? Even though the components are more aligned than before, they are still not as in sync as they should be.

What is also good about the earlier example of using a motorcycle and a boat, is that it demonstrates how our efforts to improve may be misguided if the underlying issue of misalignment is not sufficiently addressed. In the case of the license example, no matter how much professional development we give to our teachers, no matter what resources we give to them, no matter how much time is spend on the instruction... if the instruction is still related to riding a motorcycle... the student will always fail, or at least not do as well, when the test is given on a boat.

So how do we face the challenge of misalignment? To ensure that all of our efforts with regards to our curriculum policies, instructional practices and assessments are clear, coherent and properly aligned, we are undertaking a number of major projects federally funded by the Consolidated Grant.

Curriculum

The Curriculum Alignment Project will help us to align our newly revised Content Standards and Performance Indicators, our Local Standards Based Assessment, the Skills tested on the SAT10, our adopted textbooks, and what are called the Common Core State Standards. This alignment document is meant to provide guidance to administrators and teachers, at all levels, to help them have a better, clearer, more specific understanding of what is expected at each grade level in all of the core content areas, through the course of the entire year. This document, once completed, will help the entire district align our instruction both Horizontally across classrooms and schools at the same level; and Vertically to allow for a smooth transition from grade to grade, and from one level of schooling to the next.

Instruction

As our curricular expectations become more clear at each grade level... to assist teachers with their instruction, we are developing Curriculum Guides to accompany our alignment document. These guides are meant to be of practical use to teachers and will contain sample lesson plans for each standard and performance indicator, as well as other supplemental resources to help teachers with their instruction of the content.

Assessment

Turning our focus toward assessment, one of the concerns that has been raised over the years is that our primary state assessment is a norm-referenced test, the SAT10, which was developed using standards not necessarily aligned with ours. As many educators know and have pointed out through the years, though we are able to obtain criterion-referenced scores from a norm-referenced test, is not the intended purpose of that type of assessment. That is why we are now working on the development of a set of Criterion-Referenced tests or Standards-Based Assessments that are geared specifically to measure student achievement of our local standards.

These Criterion-Referenced Tests, which are aligned to our standards and designed to be sensitive to instruction, are being developed using the same standards and protocols required of the states by No Child Left Behind. So far, we've completed the first set of tests in English - Language Arts, Math and Science. The second and final set will be completed in the summer of 2012.

Considering all this, what are we going to do with the SAT10? Or, more specifically, what role is each assessment going to play in our overall assessment program?

Though we will have a Criterion-Referenced test based on our standards, we should still measure how well our students compare to others across the nation. With SAT10 being the most consistent assessment administered across the board to all schools over the last 8 years, it may be the most useful source of longitudinal student achievement data we have.

When used in tandem, our Criterion-Referenced Tests and the SAT10 have the potential to complement each other and provide us with valuable insights into our students' achievement.

Before I close out the discussion on SAT10 scores and our efforts towards curriculum alignment, I just want to encourage the teams negotiating the board union contract, to consider terms in the contract that will make it easier to implement strategies to help our students succeed.

In this past year, the challenge to provide professional development was largely met through Federal Funding from the Rural Low Income Schools Program or RLIS, as well as our Title 5 Consolidated Grant. Teachers, administrators and staff have been provided with an

unprecedented amount of Professional Development ranging from Strategies for Teaching English Learners... to Developing Appropriate Assessments... to Integrating Technology into the classrooms. These trainings were part of several different projects including the regional School Level Improvement Plans, English as a Second Language (ESL) program, Highly Qualified Teacher Program, Standards and Assessment, Gateway to Technology, Special Education; Science, Technology, Engineering and Math or (STEM project); and the education reform programs Direct Instruction, Success for All and John's Hopkins.

With all of this professional development we've received, we have to ask ourselves three important questions to ensure that we are maximizing their effects.

1st) How can we ensure that all of this professional development, all of this training actually improves the quality of instruction in the classroom? How can we ensure that what we've learned as teachers, administrators and coordinators, alike, results in improved student achievement?

The 2nd Question is: How can we sustain and leverage this effort to maximize the benefit for all teachers and, thus, all students? When we send administrators, coordinators and teachers off-island to conferences, workshops and trainings... it must be understood that they are sent not only for their individual benefit, but for the benefit of our department and thus, all of our students. Travelers have a duty to bring back what they've learned and to share it with our colleagues and larger community.

And this also applies to when we bring expert presenters here. How can we maximize the benefit of the workshops and trainings given by experts who are brought in from off-island many times at great expense?

The 3rd and last question is: How can we build upon the work that has already been done and the resulting practices that have been put in place?

The answers to these questions may lie in the incorporation of Professional Learning Communities into our daily work and the understanding that the development and betterment of all of us in our careers does not happen in isolation. As educators and professionals, our learning does not stop upon graduation from high school or the university. When we enter our chosen careers, we

essentially start on another journey of learning as we enter into the ranks of a larger community of not only professional “educators” but of professional “learners” as well.

Student Support Services

Attending to the academic needs of our students is not all that we need to do. Students' social and emotional success through services in counseling, health, social work and truancy prevention are also part of our mission. The goal is that through these efforts, all students in the Department of Education will succeed and contribute to the communities in which they live. Through funding by the Title 5 Consolidated and other discretionary grants, social services were provided to families throughout the district geared toward increasing parental involvement, social transition of immigrant families, and strengthening communication and interaction between families, schools, and the community. Bullying prevention, Play By the Rules (PBR) instruction, the Children At Risk (CAR) initiative, and the Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) Model provide character education curriculum and other tools to strengthen these areas.

Although many efforts are ongoing, they have been overshadowed by oversight hearings and media reports on bullying and vandalism, the arrest and threatened arrests of our Administrators for failure to report, and the one too many suicides by our children. We continue to forge ahead, with professional development and a myriad of programs to assist our staff in grappling with these many issues so that they can provide the much needed support to our students and their families. And we thank our many partners in this effort.

In keeping with tonight's theme, “Facing challenges, embracing opportunities, moving forward,” I would be hard pressed to not speak about the operational and fiscal challenges the Department faces. When I first joined the Department as Deputy Superintendent of Finance, my goal was to refocus the attention of both internal and external stakeholders back to the schools, back to the classroom – back to our mission of educating students. The reality is that the Department's financial and operational woes often times are the topic of local news. It is evident that many of the Department's challenges are deeply rooted in perennial resource shortages, operational inefficiencies and quite frankly, government red tape.

My first professional experience with the Department was nearly two decades ago, when I was 12. At the time I was working with Deloitte and assisted with the implementation of the current financial management system. While the system has served its purpose, it has become antiquated and has not kept pace with policy and procedural updates and legislative

mandates. Today, central office staff work laboriously to compile reports and to analyze data. The system is unable to develop budget projections and readily provide data for analysis. The result is: we have a financial management system that lacks credibility and prevents the Department from being as transparent to our stakeholders as we would like to be.

State Fiscal Stabilization Funds or SFSF provided the opportunity to finance the implementation of a new Financial Management System. We are currently working through the consulting phases of the implementation, and from attending several sessions and speaking with central office staff; the new system promises to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Department operations. Some of the benefits of the new system include enhanced report writing capabilities that will address stakeholder requirements, more efficient workflow processes that decrease throughput time, and sophisticated management internal controls.

The anticipated 'go live' date for most of the financial management system modules is April 1, 2012, with the exception of Payroll and Personnel, scheduled for July 1, 2012. Employee and vendor portals will allow many self service functions. And ultimately, the new system will help rebuild the Department's financial credibility.

Keeping in line with technology, the technology in our classrooms has generally been donated and is often outdated. I am happy to announce that new computers have been purchased for each classroom teacher and school offices will be provided with new computers as well. To further enhance the learning environment, many classrooms will soon be fitted with interactive whiteboards, and mobile computer labs and school wide internet access should be provided at most schools before the end of the year.

PERSONNEL

Every School Year, the Department of Education is challenged in filling more than 300 Teaching Positions most especially for its high needs areas of Math, Science and Chamorro. . Last school year, we were able to start with 22 vacancies. This SY 2011-2012, we set a record by only having (4) teacher positions remaining to be filled at the beginning of the School Year. This success is attributed to the collaborative effort and dialogue with the University of Guam, Guam Community College, the Guam Commission for Educator Certification and of course, advance preparation and our hard working Staff.

Another challenge the Department faces is aging facilities and the lack of sufficient funding for maintenance. DOE continues to be plagued with maintenance issues which, at the end of last school year, resulted in the closure of Simon Sanchez and threatened the closure of Southern and Agueda Johnson. Maintenance issues also played a large part in delaying the opening of school this year because of the state of many of our school cafeterias.

We have also leveraged our SFSF funds for capital improvement projects at all our schools. About \$60 million dollars will be invested in renovations. While this does not mean a complete overhaul or reconstruction of each school, the projects chosen will enhance the learning environments of the school communities. And our new cafeteria contractor continues to improve its services judging from the increased number of students eating breakfast and lunch in our schools.

And not only do I know more about cafeteria management than I ever wanted to, but I have been eating, sleeping, and dreaming about procurement for what seems like forever. Expiring funds, protests, threats of protests, court filings, the Attorney General's 100+ list required for all procurements over \$500,000, the loss of our lawyers and our procurement manager during the course of the year made for a lot of frustrations. Remember the computers I mentioned earlier, well we have a container load of computers and the same vendor that we purchased the hardware from has filed in court to prevent us from moving forward with the procurement of software for those computers.

For many months we met twice a week on procurement and once a week on the CIP projects and it seemed more often than not things moved at a snail's pace. The good news is that we were able to push through all major procurements of expiring grants by the end of the fiscal year and those goods and services should be deployed to our schools and divisions in the upcoming months. The balance of the SFSF funds were used to reimburse DOE for schools' based salaries and the cash placed in a trust fund to pay for the planned \$60 million CIPs.

And, at almost the last minute of the fiscal year, USDOE provided DOE an opportunity to apply to extend the obligation and expenditure deadlines for RLIS and 2009 Consolidated Grants. This will allow the department to better focus use of those funds. The application was filed a couple of days ago and we hope to have the approval from USDOE in the near future.

As you may know, DOE has been designated as a high-risk grantee by USDOE, and as a result, DOE is required to comply with certain special conditions in order to continue to receive USDOE grants. As part of these special conditions, DOE was required to procure the services of a Third Party Fiduciary Agent. In September 2010, the Department contracted with Alvarez & Marsal to manage the expenditures of USDOE Funds. The presence of the Third Party provides an opportunity to review our current (and often times, outdated) procedures. Although they are here to monitor USDOE funds, DOE has decided to apply the new third party policies to our local funds as well.

Another special condition is the requirement for an updated Comprehensive Corrective Action Plan, or CCAP. The CCAP is meant to address persistent problems related to internal controls. The CCAP is essentially the road map to moving DOE off of high risk status.

In the past the standard reaction to a breakdown in internal controls at DOE has been adding another layer of controls and the collection of additional data. We have been mired in a tangle of red tape that requires additional time and resources that frankly we don't have. The new FMIS, the procedures developed by the third party and the updated CCAP allow us to revisit, challenge, and streamline our existing procedures so that we can improve internal controls and better serve our stakeholders.

DOE is on the road to successfully implementing the CCAP, with the over-arching objectives of regaining sole fiscal management responsibilities for federal funds, and enhancing our capability to manage local funds. In fact, in spite of our high risk status, DOE was issued in FY2010 an unqualified 'clean opinion' on its financials statements with zero questioned costs.

Relief to the General Fund was provided in FY2011, through the Education Jobs Fund which covered \$20 million of school based salaries. But while we were almost drowning in the amount of federal dollars made available last year, Government of Guam's revenue and cash shortfalls continue to impact the Department's cash allotments and financial position. Since our FY2012 budget was approved in August, several actions taken by the Administration further indicate the severity of the Government of Guam's financial position:

- On August 12, DOA issued a General Notice of Layoff to Line Agency Employees
- On September 28 BBMR issued a circular to impose a 15% Budget Reserve to All Line Agencies

- On October 10 the Governor issued an Executive Order to freeze all Classified Employee Increments and all Unclassified Employee Raises

This 15 percent reserve, or \$30 million dollars, applied to DOE's FY2012 budget will cut deeply into our ability to operate and sustain our services. Over 84% of our budget covers personnel, with teachers accounting for more than two-thirds of the number of our employees. Although the decisions to transfer students from FQ Sanchez to Merizo and change Southern's schedule was unpopular it has resulted in direct savings to the Department and similar actions may be necessary to stay within allotment limits.

If the reserve is fully effectuated and is not restored over the course of the fiscal year, this would mean by June of next year the Department would be unable to meet its payroll. We must work together to identify ways to substantially cut costs.

While we have asked employees to help determine cost-saving measures, we will be expanding that effort to include students and parents. The Department's challenge will be in navigating a course of shared sacrifices from within and across all areas while minimizing the effect on the classroom and on our students.

Our Board Chair and Executive Committee continues to dialogue with the Legislature and the Administration to impress upon them the impact this \$30 million reserve will have on the Department and our schools. And I would hope that as the Board and the Union continue the negotiations towards a new contract, these discussions consider the impact of these financial constraints as well.

As in every accounting of the state of our island's public education, let us be mindful that it is simply a snapshot in time. A snapshot that captures the Department's progress wherein:

- We measure our children's improvement from one school year to the next;
- We acknowledge our successes and our failures;
- We identify areas where the Department must adapt and adjust and we determine the course of actions we must implement.

Whether it be the outline of images of improvements in curriculum and instruction, in our physical plant facilities and school campuses, or in our internal and external processes in our Central Office operations – it my sincerest hope, that we have succeeded in providing a meaningful report, that will serve as the basis for our community's continued dialogue about how to best improve the quality of public education.

Thank you and good evening.