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PRESS RELEASE

Government needs a long-term education strategy to help achieve better educational outcomes

The report “*School Education*,” issued by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) today reviewed how efficiently and effectively the Ministry of Education is using its resources to maximise student achievement.

The report specifically looked at whether the Government has a clear strategic direction for improving performance of the education system and how efficient and effective the Ministry of Education is at using its resources to maximise student achievement.

“Despite education being a priority area and one of the Government’s strategic broad outcomes, there is no overarching strategic plan that sets out the goals, objectives and outcomes that are expected to be achieved.” says Ms. Winspear. “We found that there was limited understanding between the use of resources and performance. It is important that good success measures and outcomes are set for education to ensure that success can be measured and money is being spent on things that will make a difference.”

The report highlights that student performance has improved in recent years but there are significant areas of underperformance.

The Auditor General adds, “It is encouraging to see that overall student performance is improving. But it is worrying that there continues to be significant levels of under-performance. Students at both primary and secondary schools are under-performing against the expected levels and there is a significant gender gap. Both of these issues need to be addressed if the Government’s strategic broad outcome for education is to be achieved.”

The report also highlights that the Government has increased its investment in students with special educational needs over the past five years but it is not clear if this is improving outcomes.

“We found that despite investment in special educational needs increasing significantly, it is not clear if it is improving outcomes for students with special educational needs,” Ms. Winspear adds. “There has been a significant increase in the number of specialist staff but the performance of students with special educational needs continues to be mixed.”

More information about the report can be obtained by contacting Sue Winspear at (345) 244-3201 or Angela Cullen, Director of Performance Audit at (345) 244-3220.

This report and the original OAG reports on which this report is based are available at www.auditorgeneral.gov.ky.

Notes to the editor:

1. The Government through the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Land (MEYSAL) and the Department of Education Services (DES) oversees the education system and operates public schools in the Cayman Islands.
2. The Government spent \$86 million on public school education in 2018. Government spending on education increased by 17 per cent over the five years to 2018. This increase is largely due to increased payroll costs, maintenance of school buildings and school transportation costs. The OAG reported on MEYSAL's outsourcing of school transportation in its report *Government's Use of Outsourced Services* in June 2018. The Government also provides annual funding to private schools and scholarship funding.
3. The audit covers the period 2014 to 2018; where data for 2018 were not published at the time of drafting, the analysis covers the period 2013 to 2017.
4. The audit did not cover the role of the Office of Education Standards (OES), which carries out inspections of all schools in the Cayman Islands. However, it did use OES data and findings where relevant.