

## **“Japan signs J\$8 million Grant contract with Oracabessa Primary School to procure School Bus”**

Approximately 906 students who hail from the far rural and hilly areas of Oracabessa that face transportation woes, stand to benefit from the school bus that will be procured and furthermore, this Grant Contract is quite timely, said Mr. Anthony Davis, Principal of the Oracabessa Primary School during the Grant Contract signing that was held on January 10, 2018 at the Office of the Prime Minister.

Senator The Honourable Ruel Reid, Minister of Education highlighted that there is need for a comprehensive rural school bus system especially in the parishes of Portland, St. Mary and St. Thomas where the cost of transportation is too high. He added that 1000 buses are needed and he expressed that through the synergy between Japan and Toyota, a donation of those fairly new Toyota buses that are usually written off after a 3-year period in Japan, would go a far way in covering the need.

Minister Reid underscored that the recent findings from Jamaica’s Survey of Living Conditions revealed that 50% of the students are PATH beneficiaries whilst 20% of students are absent from school daily and that access to financial resources was a deterrent. The Minister lauded the work of the National Education Trust (NET) for working in partnership with the Embassy of Japan to address the Ministry of Education’s overarching strategy to provide a viable transportation for students. Minister Reid reiterated the need to use the partnership between Japan and Toyota for students to get to school on time and in style. The Minister profoundly expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Japan for its consistent support towards Jamaica’s Education sector.

Ambassador Yamazaki highlighted that the people and Government of Japan saw the need to provide funding support to improve the school bus transportation system for students and teachers at Oracabessa which, by-and-large, will support the development of Jamaica’s education endeavour. All students must have access to the critical resources that will foster their academic growth and development noted the Ambassador. Going forward, the Embassy of Japan and the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) would like to objectively continue to provide worthwhile contributions for Jamaica especially through the Embassy’s Grant Assistance Programme, JICA’s Training Programmes as well as Technical Cooperation Programme.

Other Notable attendees were: The Honourable Robert Montague, Minister of National Security and Member of Parliament for St. Mary Western, Mrs. Marcia Phillips Dawkins, Managing Director, National Education Trust (NET), Ms. Latoya Harris, Director, Donor & Partnership Management, National Education Trust, Mr. Howard Foster, General Sales & Marketing Manager, Toyota Jamaica as well as other notable officials from the Ministry of Education, Embassy of Japan and representatives of the Media.



(Left) Welcome & Overview from Ms. Harris, Director, Donor & Partnership Management, NET. (Right) Mr. Davis, principal of Oracabessa Primary School (at middle) expressed gratitude to the Government of Japan.



Greetings from Ambassador

Remarks from Minister Reid



(Left) Ambassador and Mr. Davis signed Grant Contract.



(Right) From left; Ms. Harris from NET, Ambassador, Minister Montague, Minister Reid, Mr. Foster from Toyota Jamaica and Mr. Davis