**REMARKS**

**By**

**The Minister of Health and Seniors**

**The Hon.Jeanne Atherden, CA, CPA, JP, MP**

**on Wednesday, 7 June, 2017, 3.00pm (for 2:45pm)**

**at The Bermuda Society of Arts, City Hall**

**Healthy Schools Programme 2017**

Good afternoon, educators, healthcare professionals, colleagues, students and guests.

Again this year, I am honoured to be here to acknowledge your schools’ participation in the Healthy Schools Programme.

*Together*, the Ministries of Education and Health and Seniors realize that the Healthy Schools programme is a vital link between education and health. In addition, our Ministries *and* our community health partners have a common goal: ensuring that our school students are healthy and positioned for success.

Our strategy for a Well Bermuda targets every age group across the life course. A large portion of a child’s growth takes place while he or she is a student, so schools are the perfect place to teach important lessons about the relationship between nutrition, health and wellness. We know that when students are healthy, they are better able to achieve their potential.

Schools, I want you to know that you are well on the way to helping your students establish lifelong healthy habits that will allow them to become viable and healthy members of our society, and I want to congratulate you all on your outstanding achievements!

The Healthy Schools Programme recognizes that the culture and philosophy of each school is unique and that each school interacts with its community in different ways as it promotes health.

Healthy Schools uses the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's 10-Component Model, which places the student at the centre of many social influences that affect a child's development and adoption of lifelong habits. These components enable Healthy Schools to standardize what health looks like in schools through school health policies and Bermuda laws.

Today, we celebrate and recognize the schools that have consistently promoted health to their students, staff and communities – all while delivering academics! Through the ten components of health, the assessment process standardizes health in schools.

Last year, we recognized schools through the Gold Star Awards for One Component. This year, school’s submitted demonstrations for the first Five Components.

This year, a total of 24 of 31 public and private, primary, middle and senior schools were reviewed. Those schools will be recognized here today as we celebrate all school health promotion activities. Each school received a Gold Star Award of Achievement and has been designated as a health promoting school.

In addition, 39 individuals were nominated as Health Champions by their schools and all school principals have been recognised for their consistent support of Health Promotion in their schools. In addition, 18 outstanding Department of Health school-based staff have been nominated by their program managers.

Furthermore, this year, the number of government schools advocating a Water-Only Policy or Practices increased from 13 to 22! *While Healthy Schools has always promoted water as the healthiest beverage choice, over the years, schools have chosen to implement their own water-only policies or practices!!* These schools promote the consumption of water as the only beverage on campus and / or allow their students to sip water in the classroom throughout the day. Students are allowed to keep reusable water bottles on their desks and / or make frequent visits to filtered water fountains.

And now, the Permanent Secretary of Education, Mrs. Valerie Robinson-James, and I will present to you the recipients who earned Health Champion Awards; Health Promoting Awards; Special Recognition Awards; and Healthy Schools Gold Star Awards.