Microsoft Partners with J'can Gov't

The technological competence of the nation’s teachers and students is expected to be significantly improved under the Microsoft Jamaica Inc. Partners in Learning Programme.

An agreement was signed between Minister of Education, Hon. Rev. Ronald Thwaites and Country Manager, Microsoft Jamaica Inc., Marcelle Smart to embark on the initiative, which will see the computer software company providing training, technical support and access to technology at the primary and secondary levels up to 2018. Speaking at the signing ceremony at the Ministry in Kingston on July 31, Rev. Thwaites welcomed the partnership with Microsoft, noting that it is in keeping with the Government’s thrust to utilise technology in every aspect of learning. “Thank you for your work in teacher training and also in student acclimation to technology...we need to be particularly mindful of the option of (achieving) better outcomes in literacy and numeracy through technological instruction and our partnership ensures us the continuing capacity to do so,” he said. He stated that the five-year partnership will also ensure that students are properly prepared for the world of work, noting that some employers have pointed to the need to improve the digital knowledge of graduates. “How happy we are then that our partnership with Microsoft allows us to begin to close that gap of expectation and to achieve a much higher level of employment, productivity, prosperity from technical competence,” he said, while thanking the conglomerate for extending its services to the education sector at affordable rates. For her part, Ms. Smart said Microsoft was pleased to be partnering with the Education Ministry under the programme for a second time. The previous agreement was entered into in 2005. “What we hope to bring to the table again is teacher training, student support through training as well as access to resources that will allow them to be a part of the digital future,” she said. “We all recognise that there is a digital divide that exists in Jamaica and we believe that with Partners in Learning, students from all walks of life in Jamaica will be able to start to engage in the educational process through the technical capabilities that Microsoft brings to the table,” she added. Source JIS