



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MEDIA RELEASE

February 28, 2022

Dear Editor / Head of Department,

Ministers meet to Discuss Strategies for the Reduction of School Violence

Dr. the Hon, Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Education (MOE), the Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, Minister of National Security (MNS) and the Hon. Foster Cummings, Minister of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS), along with their technical teams, convened a meeting to discuss the issue of school violence, on Monday February 28th, 2022.

The virtual meeting sought to set the foundation for determining the causal factors, identifying and reviewing current methodologies of addressing the problem and proposing interventions needed to stem the tide of the school violence. Several key factors were raised as contributors to the problem, from the need to better understand the psycho-social developmental needs of adolescents and the impact of gangs and drugs in communities on students, to the role of school administration in managing discipline.

The MoE presented an overview of the current environment and strategies used to address school violence and provided some historical data; while the MYDNS shared the positive impact of youth intervention programmes, formally under the Ministry of National Security, now under its purview.

In proposing a way forward, Dr. the Hon. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Education, sought the agreement and commitment from both Minister Foster Cummings and Minister Hinds to formalize a smaller inter-ministerial team to develop a plan of action. This team will review the MOE's report on historical baseline data as it relates to schools with problems of violence; along with an analysis of trends and patterns. The report will identify interventions currently implemented and their associated results and/or challenges. This document will inform the work of the inter-ministerial team in the development of specific recommendations for improvement of the current system in place to address the problem of school violence.

According to the Education Minister, “we need a multi-pronged approach to not only understand why we continue to have the problem of school violence, but to reduce its occurrence significantly.” Ministers Cummings and Hinds articulated their commitment to the process, along with the technical expertise of their staff. The inter-ministerial team meets again on or before March 21st, 2022.

Persons at the inaugural meeting were:

Lenor Baptiste-Simmons Permanent Secretary, MOE

Kurt Meyer Permanent Secretary, MOE

Lisa Henry David Chief Education Officer, MOE

Naima Hosein Dir. School Supervision, MOE

Anna Singh Dir. Curriculum, MOE

Judy Seepersad Coordinator Guidance and Counselling SSSD, MOE

Leticia Rodriguez-Cupid Coordinator - Diagnostic, Prescriptive & Special Education Services, SSSD, MOE

Natalie Robinson-Arnold School Social Work Specialist, SSSD, MOE,

Dr. Peter Smith Director (Ag.) Educational Planning Division, MOE

Sheldon Henry Programme and Projects Management Unit, MOE

Rhoda A Patiram Educational Planning Division, MOE

Julia Ramirez - Modeste Planning Officer II, Educational Planning Division, MOE

Rodelle Phillips-Simmons Manager , Corporate Communications, MOE

Mervyn Sambucharan Dir, Education Research and Evaluation, MOE

Ian Miller Head - School Health Safety and Security Co-ordinator, MOE

Mr Farook Hosein Permanent Secretary (Ag), , MYDNS

Ms Cherryl-Ann Solomon Deputy Permanent Secretary, MYDNS

Ms Gail Sooknarine Advisor to the Minister, MYDNS

Mr Anthony Garcia Technical Advisor to the Minister MYDNS

Mr Sean Ramrattan Dir.(Ag), Youth Affairs Division, MYDNS

Major David Benjamin Dir. Specialised Youth Service Programme (SYSP)

Dr Germain Bovell Pitt Technical Advisor to the Hon. Minister, MYDNS

Jenine Benjamin Research Analyst, MYDNS

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