



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MEDIA RELEASE

March 21, 2022

Dear Editor / Head of Department,

Cross-Discipline team to address violence in schools

According to the Ministry of Education's Report on Existing Systems to Reduce Indiscipline and Violence in Schools, *"Schools are considered to represent microcosms of society; thus the societal trend of interpersonal violence has also been noted at schools in terms of deviant behaviour, choices made, or infractions committed by students."* It was in this context that Dr. the Hon. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Education, convened the second meeting of a wider cross section of government Ministers and agencies to discuss the issue of violence school, today, Monday March 21st, 2022.

The Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, Minister of National Security (MNS), the Hon. Foster Cummings, Minister of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS), the Hon. Ayanna Webster Roy, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, responsible for Gender and Child Affairs, along with their technical teams and the TTPS Community Police reviewed the report submitted by the Ministry of Education to identify trends and analyse some of the root casual factors that contribute to indiscipline and violence in schools.

Sixteen secondary (16) schools were described in the report as high risk, exhibiting at least 2 of the following characteristics: high percentage of Form 1 students who scored under 30% in SEA, high levels of indiscipline; high absenteeism, low levels of CSEC achievement. At least 7 of these schools exhibited all characteristics.

Today's meeting centred around examination of the current systems and procedures in place for reducing school violence, and also identified the specific schools with high levels of violence, and the profiles of individual students who have been suspended multiple times. Recommendations were proffered for improving the effectiveness of measures used to reduce school violence, through the collaborative use of resources available in various government agencies and ministries.

Having noted these recommendations, the Minister of Education will now invite the Ministers of National Security, Youth Development and National Service, Social Development and Family Services, Sport and Community Development, the Office of the Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs, as well as the Secretary of the Division of Education, Research and Innovation, THA, to nominate two suitable representatives to the multi-disciplinary team which, along with staff of the Ministry of Education, will review and revise the existing policy on the Reduction of School Violence. The meeting attendees acknowledged the willingness of NGOs, Community Groups, retired experts and volunteers in the relevant areas to lend support to schools and noted the importance of incorporating a wide network of support as this issue is tackled.

As articulated by the Education Minister, “There is the need to address the problem with immediacy- and this is the context in which the team is asked to make its recommendations for amendment of the policy.” The Education Minister went on to indicate that the MOE will interrogate the criteria used to define high risk schools, compile more granular data on the type of support required by specific students whose actions identify them as needing intense focus, and address resource issues as far as possible.

These recommendations met with the agreement of the Ministers and their technical teams, all of whom pledged their support in solving the problem of school violence.

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