



**PRESS RELEASE
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Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang engages in a conversation with Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Youth, Dr. Kasan Troupe (left) and Executive Director of the Citizen Security Secretariat, Dianne McIntosh at the Inter-Ministerial School Support Retreat on a Multi-Agency Response to Violence in Schools in Western Jamaica at the Iberostar Rose Hall Hotel in Montego Bay, St. James. The Retreat focused on sharing data and strategies to tackle the recent upsurge of violence in schools across the island.

Gov't reiterates its commitment to safety and security in schools- Minister Chang

With the recent upsurge of violence in schools, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang says the government is committed to strengthening its collaborative efforts to ensure the safety and security of students and teachers.

The Security Minister says, **“we have indicated to the police superintendents that they must begin to visit the schools and see which principal needs their safety measures- personal safety programme examined.”**



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He said this is **“to ensure that while we provide school resource officers on expanded basis, we are training some additional ones but it’s just a matter of having a police officer in schools to work with the social workers”**.

Minister Chang was speaking at the one-day Inter-Ministerial School Support Retreat on a multi-agency response to violence in schools in Western Jamaica, at the Iberostar Rose Hall Hotel in Montego Bay, St. James earlier today (May 17).

He pointed out that collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Youth signals the government’s unwavering support to those on the frontline.

“We need not only quality instructors but the support of the security forces supporting the social workers to ensure we have a safe environment in which to operate,” he said.

“An environment in which you can feel you can walk to your classes not looking over your back. An environment in which students will feel safe sitting in class and if they have to come out of class they can play safely,” Minister Chang explained.

He noted that the issue of violence within schools require the efforts of the relevant partners and that it is not an issue for a one person to manage.

“With the combination of the principal, the chairman and the team of social workers that they identify are crucial...based on the experience we have, we can work to create the environment in which the challenges the students face can be overcome,” the Security Minister said.

He said while the expertise of case managers and social workers are crucial to tackling the issue of violence within schools, it needs to be extended to the wider community.

