



**PRESS RELEASE
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Thursday, February 29, 2024



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang greets Juanita Nelson, a student of Sam Sharpe Teachers' College during his visit at the institution's Research Day held in Montego Bay, St. James on Wednesday (February 28).

Minister Chang urges stakeholders to increase the level of safety for students

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang is urging stakeholders to collaborate with schools to increase the level of safety for students.

The Minister made the remark while delivering greetings at the Sam Sharpe Teachers' College Research Day in Montego Bay, St. James on Wednesday (February 28).

He was speaking against the background of the National Assessment of Perception of School Safety undertaken in 2023.

“The results of this study enabled us to capture the safety and security perception among students, teachers, principals, and parents of primary and high schools across the country,” Minister Chang said.

“We found that students who spent more time at school felt safer than off campus which indicates that while the school compound may provide some degree of buffer, their off-



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campus commute experiences expose them to events that make them feel even less secure,” he added.

The Security Minister noted that while the findings provided a benchmark of the safety and security perception of education stakeholders **“it reinforces the approach that the Government has been taking towards citizen security”**.

“Our response therefore was to design a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated programme (the Citizen Security Plan) to improve citizen security. One that extends beyond traditional national security and law enforcement approaches and includes measures that will address the root causes of this societal issue,” Minister Chang emphasised.

One of the key findings of the National Assessment of Perception of School Safety is that the perception of school safety and security correlates with academic performance.

“In other words, for every one unit increase in perception of school safety and security there was an associated 9.67 percent increase in academic performance for high schoolers,” Minister Chang explained.

The Minister added that the findings indicated, **“that students felt the greatest sense of safety from the actions taken by their school administration in providing adequate safety assets, setting clear rules for behaviour and setting high standards of achievement”**.

