



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

The Honourable Wayne Caines, JP, MP

Minister of National Security

Gang Prevention in Primary Schools

March 6th, 2019

Mr. Speaker, this morning I am delighted to provide this Honourable House with an update on the prevention and intervention programmes administered by the Gang Violence Reduction Team (GVRT) within the Ministry of National Security.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members and members of the public will be aware of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T) programme. Throughout the school year, the programme curriculum is delivered to students in Primary 6 and Middle 1. The programme continues to rotate through the schools. Most recently, G.R.E.A.T. graduation ceremonies were held at Port Royal and Heron Bay Primary Schools. The programme is on track to be delivered to all public primary and middle schools by the end of the current school year.

Mr. Speaker, the delivery of this programme has been made possible by officers from the Bermuda Police Service and the Customs Department who have volunteered to be trained in the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum. Their involvement and the impact it has on the students is immeasurable. The Ministry of National Security anticipates that training will also be offered to officers of the remaining uniformed services under its remit.

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday of last week, I had the opportunity to visit Elliot Primary School to participate in a session of pilot programme. The programme is being delivered by the GVRT in conjunction with the

school administration and the Living Legends community organization. The Targeted Primary Prevention Programme is currently in its seventh of fourteen weeks. The programme is designed to reduce risk factors, enhance protective factors and increase developmental factors in the young people participating. It focuses on Building Self Confidence; Positive Relationship Building Skills; Teamwork; and Building Resilience. The young men are fully engaged and the school has reported there has been a decrease in discipline referrals, and an increase in class participation for the young men involved in the program.

Mr. Speaker, during my visit, the 14 young men spoke to me on what they are enjoying most about the programme and their biggest takeaways. For the majority of the young men, the programme is a safe space where they can speak about their challenges, fears, and even their triumphs. I was invited to lead a session on trust, positive affirmations, and the importance of being your brother's keeper. From my observations, the young men were all committed to their intellectual and emotional growth. They shared frankly, and had respectful and supportive interactions with each other.

Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that this programme will be delivered in two other targeted schools, based on the results from the Trauma Indicator Checklist. I am looking forward to seeing equally uplifting results in the young men selected in these schools.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.