



## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

**The Honourable Wayne Caines, JP, MP**  
Minister of National Security

### **Gang Prevention in Primary Schools**

May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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**Mr. Speaker**, this morning I would like to highlight and acknowledge the important work of the Ministry of National Security's Gang Violence Reduction Team, Primary Prevention Initiative, Elliot Kings Group.

The Gang Violence Reduction Team has been working hard in our Public Schools since September 2018. The Team has strategically partnered with the Ministry of Education, Bermuda Police Service, Department of Child and Family Services, Court Services, various School Administrators, School Student Services Teams and Community organizations to provide various support services for at-risk students and deliver prevention programs targeted for specific year groups.

**Mr. Speaker**, The Elliot Kings Group is a Targeted Primary Prevention Initiative delivered by the Gang Violence Reduction Team in conjunction with Elliot Primary School administration and the Living Legends Community Organization. The initiative's specialized curriculum includes 14 experiential based sessions, which are delivered

to targeted students in Primary 5 and 6. Sessions focus on building self-confidence; self-esteem, positive relationship building skills; teamwork; and building resilience. The Initiative was designed to reduce risk factors, enhance protective factors, increase academic motivation and increase developmental factors in the young people participating.

**Mr. Speaker,** Yesterday I had the opportunity to watch the 14 young men at their completion ceremony. The young men gave testimonials on how the group impacted them and why it's important for them to participate. I learned that for the majority of the young people participating, this group has been a safe space where they can speak freely about their challenges, fears, and even their triumphs. It is also a space where they can be themselves, ask questions, be pushed to try new things and step outside their comfort zones.

The Elliot Primary Principal, Kimberly Creighton spoke yesterday about the changes the school had seen in the young men participating. She reported the young men were fully engaged and looked forward to each session. Principal Creighton reflected positively on the changes the classroom teachers and counsellors had seen within the young men. She was proud to announce that there was a major decrease in discipline referrals and an increase in class participation for the young men involved in the program.

**Mr. Speaker,** I would like to congratulate all 14 of these courageous young men for their hard work, dedication and commitment to this programme.

- Daezi Harvey
- Zion Smith-Codrington
- Kyrah Richardson
- Josiah Smith
- Danari York
- Gregory Talbot
- Mason Whitehead
- Jyaire Swan
- River Curtis
- Zaidon Smith-Codrington
- J’Kiah Minors
- Yacol Simons
- Qash Lambert
- Zianni Trimm

I would also like to highlight the special award winners Jyaire Swan and River Curtis the recipients of the Most Improved Award, Gregory Talbot the recipient of the Alchemy Fitness Comfort Zone Award and Kyah Richardson the recipient of the Overall Leadership Award.

I personally would like to thank Elliot Primary Principal, Kimberly Creighton and the teaching staff for their support of the students in throughout this Initiative. I would also like to thank Darren Woods, Youth Outreach and Prevention Manger of the Gang Violence Reduction Program, Ian Coke, Founder of the Living Legends Community Organization and Don Vickers, Behavioral Therapist at Elliot Primary School for designing, coordinating and delivering this amazing initiative. Their involvement and leadership is inspiring and the impact it has on the students in immeasurable.

**Mr. Speaker,** The Primary School Prevention Initiative is one of the programs in the Ministry of National Security's, Gang Violence Reduction Team coordinated plan. This Program will be delivered in two additional targeted primary schools next year. I am looking forward to seeing equally uplifting results in the young men selected for next year's initiative.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**