

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Land Exchange Agreement to Build St. John's First K-12 Public School Signed Into Law

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Governor Albert Bryan on Friday signed into law a pivotal bill that solidifies a land exchange agreement between the National Park Service and the Government of the Virgin Islands. This agreement comes after the members of the 35th Legislature approved the transfer of a tract known as Whistling Island, often referred to as Whistling Cay, to the Department of Interior on Sept. 15.

In a reciprocal move, the government secured a parcel located in Estate Catherineberg, St. John, which has been earmarked for the construction of the island's maiden public K-12 school.

The agreement ushers in the beginning of a process to build a state-of-the-art pre-K-12 school on St. John, culminating a persistent 50-year endeavor championed by multiple governors and their respective administrations.

"Today's signing represents the realization of a long-held dream for the residents of St. John," said Governor Bryan. "For many years, our students journeyed to St. Thomas to obtain their education. The enactment of this bill opens a fresh chapter of accessible education on St. John, underscoring the tenacious spirit of our community."

The school won't solely serve as an educational facility; it will also double as a storm shelter and a community center for the island's residents.

Mr. Bryan highlighted the pivotal role played by the nine senators of the 35th Legislature who supported the measure. "I wish to convey my profound thanks to the committed legislators who grasped the essence of this initiative and labored relentlessly to transform it into reality. This landmark achievement showcases what is attainable when leaders collaborate with a shared vision," the governor said.

Mr. Bryan was joined during the bill-signing event by Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach, Senate President Novelle Francis, At-Large Senator Angel Bolques, Education Commissioner Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington, and St. John Administrator Shikima Jones-Sprauve.