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Bryan Praises School Construction Director Amidst Ongoing Maintenance Struggles

Craig Benjamin's leadership and challenges with hurricane-damaged modular classrooms highlighted during press briefing

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Craig Benjamin, executive director of the Bureau of School Construction and Maintenance.

The tenure of Craig Benjamin, executive director of the Bureau of School Construction and Maintenance, is “going really well,” said Governor Albert Bryan Jr., who made the assessment during Monday’s press briefing from Government House.

“We got him in late this summer, so his priority right now is making sure we’re good on the new school contracts that are going forward,” said the governor.

Mr. Benjamin reportedly [began leading the Bureau in mid-June](#). However regular school maintenance, Governor Bryan anticipated, will continue to be a struggle, particularly when it comes to the “modulars inherited from the hurricane,” which he says “have just been a nightmare from the start.”?

Despite the “battle” the governor says education officials have been fighting to keep modular classroom units in good repair – fitting new sheetrock, new ceiling tiles, and extensive mold remediation – cash flow is a perennial issue. “We’re having a terrible time with a third-party fiduciary trying to get those things done in a timely manner,” Mr. Bryan disclosed. A request for proposals is currently open, with the goal of replacing the fiduciary with a more efficient partner, he informed.

?He argued that making decisions on school repairs, especially in older facilities that are scheduled for replacement, is a balancing act. “Putting massive amounts of money into schools that you’re going to have to tear down in a year or two isn’t too prudent,” he said, noting that students at the Eulalie Rivera K-8 school will be absorbed into the new Arthur Richards facility when it is built.?

Mr. Bryan was confident that students in the Virgin Islands would soon all have the opportunity to attend classes in facilities that are in good repair and up to modern educational standards. “The schools are coming along; we’re going to get this done,” he said.