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## **PFA Approves \$224M Renovation of St. Croix Educational Complex, Selecting MCN Build After Evaluators Cite Stronger Overall Approach**

**A \$224M reconstruction of SCEC will proceed under MCN Build after the PFA board endorsed a phased plan citing early trade integration, strong presence on St. Croix, and reliable scheduling, as the Edith Williams project now heads for re-solicitation.**

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**The St. Croix Educational Complex. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.**

The long-planned renovation and modernization of the St. Croix Educational Complex is moving forward with a projected maximum cost of \$224,469,934, after the Public Finance Authority board on Thursday approved the first two phases of the project and selected MCN Build as the

contractor. The award marks one of the largest school facility investments underway on St. Croix and places MCN Build—already constructing the new Arthur Richards K-8 School—in charge of another major education project on the island.

The PFA approved up to \$41.3 million for the initial work: a yearlong pre-construction phase capped at \$357,894, followed by an 18-month construction phase with a ceiling of \$40,976,200. Further amendments and the final guaranteed maximum price will come back to the board once these phases are completed. In its proposal, MCN Build estimated the total project could reach the \$224 million figure.

Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne Williams-Octalien said the evaluation committee favored MCN Build for several reasons, including the company’s development of “a blitz approach” for the project, its identification of “specified assistant trade partners to bring in early trade expertise,” and what she described as reliable scheduling. She also pointed to the contractor’s extensive activity on St. Croix. “MCN Build has made a strong presence on St. Croix,” she noted, adding that the St. Croix Educational Complex’s proximity to the Arthur Richards K-8 site was an additional advantage.

The second bidder, the Suffolk-CBNA joint venture, also submitted a strong proposal, Ms. Williams-Octalien said. Suffolk-CBNA is currently handling education bundles on both St. Thomas and St. Croix involving “nine schools and two administrative facilities.” However, despite the overall strength of its plan—which the evaluation committee described as “well thought-out”—the committee did not observe the economies of scale or cost efficiencies they expected from a firm already operating on multiple school reconstruction projects in the territory.

“While the capabilities of both respondents are well documented, the committee determined that the MCN Build proposal for the St. Croix Educational Complex renovation and modernization project should be awarded,” Ms. Williams-Octalien said in her recommendation to the board.

The project was originally intended to include two schools: the Complex and the Edith Williams Alternative Academy. However, Ms. Williams-Octalien told the board that “none of the respondents opted to bid on Edith Williams,” prompting the need for market research to understand the lack of bids and a re-solicitation of that portion of the project. Edith Williams remains the last unaddressed school facility on the Department of Education’s priority list.

With no objections from board members, the PFA governing board approved the committee’s recommendation by concurrence, formally awarding MCN Build the contract and advancing one of the territory’s largest school modernization efforts.