

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Central High School Rebuild Begins on St. Croix as Hurricane Recovery Work Expands

Officials said the new campus will be built in phases to avoid disrupting current students, while the design emphasizes academic versatility, solar readiness, environmental resilience, and Virgin Islands cultural elements.

Disaster Recovery / **Published On April 21, 2026 07:08 PM /**

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St. Croix Central High School rendering. By. OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY.

Just over a week after construction officially began on the new Charlotte Amalie High School on St. Thomas, another major hurricane recovery project in public education moved forward on St. Croix with the groundbreaking for a new Central High School

campus.

The project, which will be built by the J. Benton Construction and Consigli joint venture, is being designed to support continued learning during construction, strengthen environmental resilience, and reflect Virgin Islands culture in its architecture.

J. Benton Vice President Eric Cusin said the new campus will emphasize academic versatility and environmental resilience. He noted that the buildings are being designed to be solar-ready in support of energy independence.

Mr. Cusin also said the campus design draws from the territory's Madras fabric and quadrille traditions, incorporating local culture into the physical structure of the school.



Officials, contractors and education leaders break ground Tuesday on the new St. Croix Central High School campus, marking a major hurricane recovery milestone on St. Croix. (Credit: Gov't House)

For many members of the construction team, he added, the project carries personal significance because it represents the rebuilding of their own alma mater.

Office of Disaster Recovery Director Adrienne Williams-Octalien said construction of the new Central High School will be completed in phases so that current students can continue their education with as little disruption as possible.

"We are going to build the school, demolish the gymnasium, build a school on this side, and then demolish the old schools. We don't have to worry about the disruption to learning, because we have this beautiful campus here today," she said.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. used the ceremony to praise both the work of the contracting firm and the broader effort to keep the territory's hurricane recovery projects moving.

"This train has been moving fast since the hurricanes," he said. "The train's been moving fast, and still we hanging out fixing the wheel them. We hanging out trying to get coal while it's still going, and still trying to build new caboose and new train carriers while we do it."

The governor also reflected on what Virgin Islands students have endured in recent years, pointing to hurricanes, the pandemic, and mold among the challenges they have had to face.

"Our students, they've been through it. They've been through hurricanes. They've been through Covid, they've been through mold, you name it," Governor Bryan said.

He added that each of those experiences has been its own lesson.

"They learn how to dip water out the system. They learn how to organize to protest, they learn how to get to the table to hear their voices heard from the commissioner, every little piece of it is a learning experience," Governor Bryan said. "Bless your adversity. It creates character," he concluded.

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