

The Virgin Islands Consortium

At Central: Happy Students, Excited Staff But Work To Be Done

VIC News / **Published On September 02, 2014 11:16 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **September 02, 2014**



Tuesday marked the official reopening of public schools in the Virgin Islands. While it was a joyous day for many, the usual antics from some students who, were it up to them, would rather be 'cooling' elsewhere with their friends, could not be missed as some of the young men could be seen wandering around the campus of St. Croix's Central High School.

This story is about the reopening of the school that has seen so much trouble in recent times, the peak of which came when students, faculty and staff were forced to move to the Educational Complex for a large part of the last school year because of a foul odor that engulfed Central's campus.

So what was the mood of the students? Were the teachers excited to be back at Central High? And were the school grounds well kept in preparation of the new school year? Let's find out.

Most of the students couldn't hide their excitement as they greeted friends, old and new, while headed to their respective classes. I met with a student who was making his way to few questions about the new year.



Cars in Central High Parking Lot

Asked about being back at Central, Akram Elliott said he was "happy." However, the teen admitted he enjoyed the time spent at Complex and lamented the thought of not being able to have the "fun" he had at the school. There are lots of things to do at Complex, young Elliot said.

For parent and local radio and TV personality, Daren Stevens, better known as Bogle, it was a good feeling to have his child back at Central. He said his child felt the same way, but he was perturbed at the Department of Education for "doing things last minute" for yet another school year.

"Every year, the Department of Education waits until the last minute to start preparing the school and they always have to rush it," Stevens, who also is a member of the PTA board, said.

Stevens cited debris outside the school fence, the lawn not being freshly cut, and heavy equipment still parked on the school grounds as reasons for his frustration.

Below are screenshots of the debris and heavy equipment on the Central High School grounds, and the debris outside the school fence, on the side walk. This can be found on the east side of the campus.















For teacher Rhudel James, a newcomer to Central, it was a good feeling to be back at the school.

"I'm glad because it was a burden having to do the double sessions, so being back home is a good feeling, and it's a really good thing for the students," James said. "It's always better to be in your own."

The parking lot was at capacity this morning, and proud parents could be seen either walking their children to class or heading back to their vehicles. Other students lingered, for no fault of their own, as they were waiting for class schedules-- "something that should have been handled during orientation," one parent mumbled.

The summation of my visit to Central High School this morning was clear-cut: happy students, excited teachers, but still work to be done.

Lots of it.