

The Virgin Islands Consortium

30 STT Students Head To D.C. To Attend 'Close Up'

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ST. THOMAS – Some 30 students from Charlotte Amalie and Ivanna Eudora Kean high schools will leave for Washington, D.C. Saturday to attend Close Up, a program that offers high school and middle school students from across the United States an insider's view of the U.S. democracy through a host of educational activities in and around the nation's capital.

The annual trip – which lasts from April 25 to May 3 – is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Interior's education fund, according to Annie Smith, the social studies coordinator in St. Thomas.

“It is an academic program, although the students are going to see the different sights of Washington, D.C., it is linked with their academics,” Smith said.

Students will learn about the history of the District of Columbia, the city’s subway system, as well as the features that make Washington D.C. unique, she said. Students will visit the new Martin Luther King, Jr. monument and other sites, as well as the offices of Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett.

Close Up also offers local students cultural stimulation through interaction with peers who attend from different parts of the United States. Smith explained that each of the territory’s students will be housed with two other students who are not from the Virgin Islands.

“They get to build personal relationships with other students from around the United States,” she said.

Students participating in the week-long program may also earn college credit through Washington, D.C.-based American University and Close Up also offers a component geared towards the educational enrichment of teachers who attend.

On its [website](#), Close Up has as its mission to “inform, inspire, and empower young people to exercise the rights and accept the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.”

Since 1971, nearly 800,000 persons have participated in Close Up programs.