

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Administration To Shutter Elena Junior High For Repairs, Evelyn M. Williams Permanently

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ST. CROIX -- The Kenneth Mapp administration will shutter two elementary schools and merge two others, a senator, who requested anonymity in order to speak freely, told *VI Consortium* this afternoon.

Residents contacted *The Consortium* inquiring of the matter, saying they'd heard rumblings from teachers that some schools would shutdown for repairs, while others would be shutdown completely because there were not enough students to justify faculty and staff.

According to this senator, Evelyn M. Williams Elementary School will merge with Claude O. Markoe and Eulalie Rivera Elementary, because Evelyn Williams has "some very, very serious mold issues." The senator also revealed that Elena Christian Junior High School (ECJH) will close for repairs for the entire school year after summer 2015. During that time, the students will move to Charles H. Emmanuel Elementary School, which will also consolidate with Alfredo Andrews Elementary School.

The senator said the consolidation is necessary because the numbers demand change.

"Looking at the numbers, there are some consolidation that needs to be done," the senator said, "to have schools operating with two hundred students really isn't cost-effective."

To run these schools, [high-paying positions](#) like principal and assistant principal must be filled, along with a full array of teachers and other staff, plus a safe and adequate environment to make for a good learning experience. However, to have all of the aforementioned in place with only a minimal amount of students, further strains an already cash-strapped government, the senator said.

The legislator likes the move because it opens an opportunity for savings in the Dept. of Education, which could be passed on to teachers in the form of salary increases. "By not having so much operational costs, electricity and everything else, I think it's a really good opportunity the department has."

In April, Mapp hosted students from the ECJH Rocketry Club who recently made history by being selected over U.S. science clubs to visit the White House, meet President Barack Obama and display and demonstrate their latest project. [There](#), the territory's leader made mention of his plan to rebuild and refurbish the islands' ailing schools, including his alma mater, St. Croix Central High School, "so by the time you graduate, you will have a new, modern school with up-to-date technology," he said.