

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Positive Influence: Group Of Men Led By Sen. Violet Greet Students At Complex And Central

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ST. CROIX -- Sen. Kurt Violet organized an event that many are saying was just what the territory's youths needed, especially following the rash of heavy criminal activity that plagued this island over the weekend.

Held at both Central and the Educational Complex high schools, the idea, according to Violet, was to motivate students and give them a positive outlook for the new school year. He said he also wanted to demonstrate to the students that there were still positive and successful men role models in the community that they could look up to.

"Education is super-important and I think we need to build that intrinsic motivation and not extrinsic motivation, so we wanted to be able to portray positive, black men role models who are doing well in the community and have good jobs. We wanted to show them that everybody don't have to be a thug; everybody don't have to be a bad man."

Men greeting Complex students on Tuesday morning













Violet mentioned the [injurious weekend](#) where one man died and multiple others injured, stating that it was important to show the territory's youth the outcome of taking life and education seriously. And there's a large group of students who Violet said are very interested in education, but they "need to be able to look at us and hopefully say, I want to graduate, I want to do well."

Successful black men from all walks of life were present: Pastor Reginald Perry, Senator Terrence "Positive" Nelson, employees of the Virgin Islands National Guard, 31st Legislature employees, Al "Daddy Jones" Baptiste, Jr., a superstar producer in the territory who's also employed at the Senate here, and other outstanding community members.

As they walked through the meet-and-greet line, hands being shaken by a sea of strong men, some of the students could be heard saying, "I feel special," while others, coming in with a serious look, gradually began smiling -- testament to the impact the event had on them.

Violet, a former educator, continued championing the importance of learning after delving into politics. In early June, he launched a billboard initiative that sought to make education a top priority on this island, while encouraging students to become self-motivated on their quest to succeed.

The first billboard was installed near the St. Croix Educational Complex and features a student holding school books, and prominently-placed caption that reads: 'Education First, Everything Else Can Wait'.

Violet said the initiative was created not only to promote education and the importance of staying in school, but also to dissuade students from following the "social ills that stop students from achieving an education."

The senator stated that there needs to be a stronger focus on learning territory-wide. He said while the problems associated with lack of education have been acknowledged, more emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of learning and the benefits thereof.

On Tuesday, however, the focus was on creating an environment that would have a lasting impact on the students.

"For some of the students, it's the first time that they've seen a bunch of black, positive men that they have to confront and walk through," he said. "So it's better they confront these men instead of the negative, thug life behavior."

Feature Image: Outstanding men in the community who gathered at the St. Croix Education Complex on Tuesday morning to greet students.

Image Credit: VIC.