

The Virgin Islands Consortium

In Persistent Quest To Promote Education, Vialet Installs Billboard At Juanita Gardine Elementary

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ST. CROIX -- As part of his education first initiative, Senator Kurt Vialet has installed another billboard -- this time at the entrance of the Juanita Gardine Elementary School on Monday morning -- with an aim to embed within students self-motivation in their desire to succeed.

"If you can imagine it, you can achieve it! If you can dream it, you can become it!" the former educator and first-term Democrat said in a press release issued this morning. The initiative is one of a multipronged effort by the senator to, according to the release, "get students interested in learning and advancing in their studies while encouraging other students to follow in their lead."

The first billboard was [installed at the entrance of the Educational Complex](#), a school that Mr. Vialet led as principal from its inception, until he was transferred to the Arthur A. Richards Junior High School for the 2011-12 school year. As part of this latest effort, four students, chosen by their counselors with the permission of their parents, were selected to participate in the initiative.

Mr. Vialet maintains that supporting the territory's students is beneficial to the entire community, and says the billboard strategy is an effective method of promoting the importance of education as a surefire way of laying a concrete foundation for future success.

"There's a segment of our community that thinks it is cool and okay not to be educated," Mr. Vialet told The Consortium during the inaugural billboard initiative in June. "So this is our way of trying to build intrinsic motivation where it comes from within. Where a child comes to school ready, willing and wanting to learn. Not the teacher having to discipline or having to motivate, but they're going to come, willing and ready to learn."

The senator pointed to studies that show a direct correlation between an educated community and job opportunity. "Businesses are literally asking, 'if we come here, do you have educated individuals that can take these jobs,' so this is part of the push of trying to move St. Croix forward," the first-term senator added.

Mr. Vialet said there's a direct link between students who have an innate desire to learn and success, compared to those who constantly have to be pushed.

"In my years in education, having done data analysis for the last 20 years, our top 20 students are intrinsically motivated," Vialet said. "It doesn't come from the parent alone, they have that desire inside that they want to be educated, and intrinsic motivation goes a far way."