

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Federation Of Teachers Set To Protest At C'Sted Gov't House On Monday

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Staff **January 27, 2017**



ST. CROIX -- The St. Croix Federation of Teachers will host a protest at Government House here on Monday, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., the union announced Thursday.

A subtitle of the release reads, "VI Education in Crisis". The release then lists a myriad of issues that AFT has identified as affecting education in the territory. They include the following:

- Students' learning and AFT members' working environments present disturbingly serious health and safety issues (e.g. broken P.A. systems, mold, rodent infestations, etc.)

- AFT members are incredibly overworked. Instructional time and safety of our students are being compromised due to insufficient staff and too many impromptu PDS.
- Members of the 32nd Legislature's Committee On Education and Workforce Development, along with Department of Education Commissioner Sharon McCollum, are considering hiring virtual teachers.
- Professionals, paraprofessionals and support staff salaries lag six years behind. Most are being paid on 2010-2011 salary schedules while the cost of living in the Virgin Islands continues to escalate.
- Educator's school boxes are deficient, depleted and require functioning tools and adequate supplies and equipment. (e.g. copiers, computers, smart boards and replacement parts.)
- D.O.E. 2017 budget is grossly underfunded. Schools do not have sufficient text books and student manuals.
- Politicians continue to make empty promises to educators.
- Common Core Standardize test is driving our curriculum, which is ineffective and does not support the student's longterm success and career readiness.
- The temperature in our classrooms is unbearable, deplorable, dangerous and not conducive to teaching and learning. Schools should be properly retrofitted to accommodate the badly needed air conditioning units that are in all government offices.
- Teachers are leaving the profession and are not being replaced fast enough and our students must complete the mandated classes prior to their graduation.
- The Teachers Evaluation System takes valuable time away from instruction and our infrastructure and tool kits do not support it.
- Too many initiatives are impossible to adequately implement due to lack of resources and support systems.
- Too many deadlines and educators have no autonomy in classrooms. The education system operates on a top-down paradigm. D.O.E. has lost its way. Too much time devoted to high stakes tests.
- The Mapp/Potter administration needs to name a chief negotiator.
- The procurement process is flawed and cumbersome.
- There is an abundance of unresolved cases with the Office of Collective Bargaining.

Many of the grievances will sure to be challenged by the Mapp administration along with the Department of Education, but the list includes a number of issues that teachers and residents alike have long complained about.