

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos Will Be In USVI Wednesday

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ST. THOMAS -- U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, above, will travel to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands today, to see the recovery and rebuilding efforts firsthand and to discuss with local officials their plans to help students resume learning, the U.S. Department of Education announced late Tuesday.

In Puerto Rico, Ms. DeVos will meet with Governor Ricardo Rosselló and Secretary of Education, Julia Keleher, along with other key officials including higher education leaders. Later, the secretary will travel to St. Thomas to meet with Governor Kenneth Mapp and representatives from both the Virgin Islands Department of Education (D.O.E.) and the St. Thomas School District. During her second stop, Ms. DeVos will tour The

University of the Virgin Islands and meet with university President Dr. David Hall.

The Mapp administration condemned [over 7 of the territory's schools](#) following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, deeming the facilities unsafe for learning. The governor's over \$7 billion ask of Congress includes funds to rebuild some of the schools. It was not clear whether Ms. DeVos would have an opportunity to see some of the affected schools, which would give her a clearer picture of the storms' impact on learning in the territory.

According to [The New York Times](#), for years Ms. DeVos traveled the country — and opened her checkbook — as she worked as a conservative advocate to promote the expansion of voucher programs that allow parents to use taxpayer funds to send their children to private and religious schools.

A detailed look at the first six months of Ms. DeVos's tenure as the secretary of education — based on a 326-page calendar tracking her daily meetings — demonstrates that she continues to focus on those programs as well as on charter schools, the Times said.

Her calendar is sprinkled with meetings with religious leaders, leading national advocates of vouchers and charter schools, and players involved in challenging state laws that limit the distribution of government funds to support religious or alternative schools, the publication adds.