

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor Mapp Calls Press Conference For Friday To Make Education-Related Announcements

Education / **Published On April 04, 2018 10:42 AM /**

Staff **April 04, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp, who has been out of the territory attending the Clinton Global Initiative Action Network on Post-Disaster Recovery in Miami, will host a press conference at Government House here on Friday, according to a Government House release issued today.

The press event, Mr. Mapp said, will be to discuss "major decisions and capital investments regarding public education in the territory."

On Saturday, during [the territory's 101st birthday event](#) at the Botanical Garden in St. George, the governor spoke of upcoming joint local and federal government press

conferences, where details relative to the rebuilding of schools would be announced.

"The realization that this territory can in fact have a robust economy, great education and healthcare systems, good security, strong private sector and a real high quality of life for the American citizens living in this territory, are no longer studies, are no longer plans, because the problems are no longer where will the resources come from," Mr. Mapp said on Saturday. "It's whether we will use our intellect and our discipline, and our maturity to do it the right way and to say to the federal government thank you for the opportunity and opportunities not squandered, but used in an appropriate manner to benefit the American citizens here and move this territory forward into the modern age."

The press conference announcement comes amid growing concerns with the state of education in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Just yesterday the Committee of Education, Youth, and Recreation held a hearing to receive testimony from Department of Education (D.O.E.) representatives, following school tours the committee had organized in both districts. However, the D.O.E. persons scheduled to testify did not attend the hearing, after being directed by the governor not to attend, according to Senator Jean Forde, committee chairman.

During the Tuesday hearing, Rosa Soto-Thomas, President of the St. Croix Federation of Teachers (A.F.T.), expressed frustration with the length of time it was taking to get modular classrooms in place. "Currently, in the St. Croix District, we continue to house thirteen schools in five buildings. Members who work during the afternoon sessions have reported that they have overstayed their welcome at assigned schools and are eager to return to their home school or temporary modular units," she said.

The concerns were not limited to the lack of modular classrooms, though. President of the St. Thomas-St. John A.F.T., Carol Callwood, said that some classrooms reported had roof damage; air condition units needed to be repaired and there are said to be continued reports of mold and asbestos. "The cost and time needed to properly clean and repair the schools and activity centers before classes resume for the 2018-2019 school year have not been identified or at least have not been shared with us," Mr. Callwood said.

Friday's press conference is scheduled to start at 10:00 a.m., according to Government House.