

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Program Encouraging Positive Behavior Rolled Out At Juanita Gardine Elementary

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ST. CROIX -- Juanita Gardine Elementary School kicked off its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative for school year 2018-19 featuring the theme, "Be Respectful and Kind, Be Responsible and Be Safe" at a school-wide rally held Monday in the school's auditorium.

Principal Barbara McGregor welcomed students, faculty and staff to this year's launch, according to a Department of Education release issued Monday.

"I'm very happy to be here [today]," she said. "And I am very proud this morning we'll be rolling out our Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports Program to all of you."

According to the release, all elementary schools in the district adopted a matrix to follow when rolling out the PBIS message on good behavior. Assistant Principal Anna Gordon shared the mission and purpose of PBIS in the school and in the community.

“It is the foundation to have positive behaviors to build our school culture so that everything in school will run smoothly,” she said. “Our purpose today is for you to hear from the voice of your peers and see exactly what we need to do in our campus, in the community and at home. Because our expectations are not just for school, it’s for everywhere that you go.”

Veronica Prescott, Maria Alivio and Laurissa Ellis, Juanita Gardine teachers and PBIS team members, gave a brief overview of what is expected of students. The teachers took turns asking students if they knew what was expected of them.

Sixth-grade students shared their version of the school’s PBIS expectations with chanting, stepping and clapping to a catchy beat.

“Be responsible and kind and be responsible and be safe,” they chanted and were soon joined by their peers in the audience.

Students then took turns by grade level, beginning with Kindergarten, showing their peers how to behave appropriately through the use of skits and other performances. The skits targeted behavioral expectations in the cafeteria, walking/standing in a line, disposal of trash, on the school bus, and in the community.

During the program, Assistant Principal Gordon recognized sixth-grader Sana Joseph for her participation in the Girls in S.T.E.A.M. territory-wide contest held last school year. Joseph, who was in fifth grade at the time of the contest, was presented with a special medal for being one of four students who participated in the project, which sought to encourage girls to seek careers in Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics. Joseph’s other teammates received medals at their 6th grade promotional exercise in June, the release said.

To conclude the program, Principal McGregor said, “PBIS is not just for today; PBIS is for every day.” Each student received a bookmark featuring a message touting the school’s mascot: “Hurricanes Expectations: Be Respectful and Kind; Be Responsible; Be Safe” as they left the auditorium.

PBIS is established by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education to emphasize “school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments.” The Virgin Islands Department of Education’s State Office of Special Education (SOSE) implements PBIS policies for the school districts.