

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. of Education Partners With VI National Guard To Supplement Summer Maintenance Of Schools In St. Thomas-St. John District

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The Virgin Islands Department of Education has entered into an agreement with the V. I. National Guard (V.I.N.G.) on St. Thomas to retain the volunteer services of national guardsmen and guardswomen to help complete critical summer maintenance projects at four schools in the St. Thomas-St. John District, D.O.E. said Thursday.

From July 15-26, approximately 40 National Guard members will complete either plumbing, electrical or carpentry work at Charlotte Amalie High School, where they are replacing walls that were previously removed to facilitate asbestos abatement; at Yvonne

Milliner Bowsky Elementary School, where they are constructing walls for an employee restroom; and at Ivanna Eudora Kean High School and Uller F. Muller Elementary School, where they are completing plumbing work, the department said.

According to Department of Education Chief Operations Officer Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Ed.D., the partnership was set in motion when the National Guard approached St. Thomas-St. John Insular Superintendent Stefan Jürgen and offered to help.

According to the release, the agreement is a win-win for D.O.E. and V.I.N.G., ensuring some of the department's summer maintenance projects are completed for the September 3 opening of the 2019-2020 school year, while providing the volunteers with valuable training opportunities.

On St. Croix, the Bureau of Corrections assisted D.O.E. with transporting and offloading various building materials at Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School (now Pearl B. Larsen K-8) donated by Home Depot, through the efforts of Senate President Novelle E. Francis, Jr. The materials, amounting to a \$900 donation, will be used to complete work at the newly reconfigured K-8 school, D.O.E. said.

"The Department of Education is grateful for the support of community partners like the V.I. National Guard, Bureau of Corrections, Senate President Novelle Francis and Home Depot," said D.O.E. Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin. "It is exactly through partnerships like these that we will continue to move forward as a Department, but most importantly, as a community."

Materials for work being done at the St. Thomas schools were purchased through D.O.E. funds allocated for school maintenance.

Feature Image: Members of the Virgin Islands National Guard on St. Thomas construct walls at the Charlotte Amalie High School Music Suite. V.I.N.G. is providing volunteer labor support at four schools in the St. Thomas-St. John District from July 15-26, 2019. (Credit: D.O.E.)