

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Expresses Full Confidence In D.O.E. Commissioner Berry-Benjamin

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Governor Albert Bryan on Tuesday issued a statement conveying his steadfast support for Dept. of Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin. Ms. Berry-Benjamin was flanked by members of her senior staff on the steps of the Charlotte Amalie High School on Tuesday morning to announce major changes affecting C.A.H.S., Cancryn and Lockhart schools. Full details [here](#).

The changes disrupt the learning of students who had only recently gotten accustomed to the routine adapted following Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Mr. Bryan said today he shares the concerns of families whose children have to once again change their pattern.

"Our administration shares the concerns families have for a safe and conducive school environment for their children and continues to make the safety of the students, faculty, and staff in our territory's schools our top priority," the governor said.

"School maintenance for the Department of Education is a continuing process, and that process has its challenges. We are dealing with aging structures, like the Charlotte Amalie High School. These challenges are decades-old and not new to this administration. School maintenance is further complicated by the damages our school campuses have endured since the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria," he continued.

During the 2018 primary and general election campaigns, Mr. Bryan harshly criticized the Mapp administration for the deteriorating state of schools; he also protested with teachers who were expressing grievances with not only the state of school facilities, but pay raises they contended were long overdue.

The governor committed to confronting the issues facing education in the territory. "That is why we have, in our proposed fiscal year 2020 budget, set aside \$2 million for school maintenance -- a figure that is substantially more than has been allocated in recent years."

"I have full confidence that Commissioner Berry-Benjamin, and our District Insular Superintendents, along with DOE's Operations team, our teachers and the rest of the DOE staff will ensure a safe and conducive school environment for our students this school year," the governor concluded.