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Teachers' Union to Stage Protests Bringing Attention to Mold-Infested Schools, Broken AC Units and Other Issues

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Governor Albert Bryan met with teachers outside Gov't House on St. Croix in 2019, where they were protesting a number of issues, including pay. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The American Federation of Teachers union local chapters in the St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix districts will stage protests today outside Government House on St. Croix and at Emancipation Garden in St. Thomas in an effort to bring attention to what they say are major issues affecting learning in public schools.

AFT president on St. Croix, Rosa Soto-Thomas said it is important that the public knows "many children are attending mold-infested classrooms which are inadequately ventilated with broken,

non-existing AC units. Classrooms and activity centers are extremely hot. Students' learning conditions and educators' working environments are subpar."

Ms. Soto-Thomas added, "We are demanding updated information from the Bryan-Roach administration as to the plans to fix and retrofit our schools and facilities. When will the new cafeteria equipment be installed? What is the status of Arthur Richards School? Where is the GVI with the Masterplan of Schools and Facilities? Where are we with our contracts? When will construction of the nine classrooms at Claude O. Markoe School be erected? The district of St. Croix is still without an insular superintendent, a post which critically needs to be filled."

The St. Thomas-St. John district AFT president, Leontyne Jones said she has visited every public school "and there is not one school without outstanding issues that affect educators' abilities to instruct students effectively."

She added, "My major concern is that I don't want people to start looking at this as normal. People shouldn't look at our children's closed cafeterias as normal. They shouldn't think it's normal for our kids not to have a green space to play. It isn't normal for kids and teachers to be in moldy classrooms. Are we telling our children that being less than mediocre is the best we can do? I know we can do better than this and we should do better. And we should take it seriously because I don't think we are."

The planned protests follow [recent action by faculty and staff](#) of the Claude O. Markoe School on St. Croix last month. Both events will start at 4:00 p.m. and end at 6:00 p.m., according to the AFT.