

Image not found or type unknown

Toast to Success: Complex High School Students Bring Energy and Excitement to Graduation Ceremony

Education / **Published On May 19, 2022 05:35 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **May 19, 2022**

Image not found or type unknown



The St. Croix Educational Complex High School 2022 graduating class at the school's gym on Wednesay, May 18, 2022. By. REEMY-REEMZ PHOTOGRAPHY/VICONSORTIUM

The 2022 St. Croix Educational Complex High School graduating class knew better than anyone else that their achievement was significant, so like champions they danced to class song Toast from artist Koffee, clapped, screamed and made speciality moves walking onto a stage at the school's gym to receive their diplomas.

The group, 194 strong, named themselves the "Brilliant and Iconic" class of 2022, and among them were 105 honor students who maintained high grades throughout the year. This fact was not lost on school principal Rodney Moorehead. "We were able to increase our test scores for the last

three years consistently through the hard work of our students and we are proud that we have 105 students here that are honor students," he said during the ceremony on Wednesday.

Like their peers in other high schools, the students were in the tenth grade when the Covid-19 pandemic turned upside down everything considered normal. School campuses were immediately closed with no clear return date, and students were forced to learn virtually from home with all the distractions thereof.

Class Valedictorian Karim T. Henry spoke about the challenges faced as a result of the pandemic and lauded his peers for not giving up. "At times I wondered if I could effectively learn virtually, however I continued to learn and top my grades," he said, adding that during the 12th grade he became a University of the Virgin Islands early admission scholar.

Ericilda Ottley-Herman, acting insular superintendent for the St. Croix district, told the students that "life has a funny way of using your brilliance to shine through some of the most uncertain times."

Just as she did at the St. Croix High School graduation on Tuesday, Dept. of Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin used a song from USVI Reggae artist, Pressure Busspipe to convey her message. "In observing the graduations that we have already done this week so far, you would have known that I am dedicating songs to all of our graduates but specifically, songs from a Virgin Islands child," she said. "Songs from someone who graduated from our public education system just like you are doing today."

The song, Bless the Children, says, "Jah Jah bless the children of today... There is so much going on within this world, Jah Jah bless the youths and keep them safe."

Keynote Speaker Dr. Peter John-Baptiste gave students the classic encouragement: make wise decisions. "In life you will be confronted with many different challenges, and what you do during those moments of stress becomes so important. You can choose to see every roadblock and challenge you face in life as an obstacle or as an opportunity," he said.

Governor Bryan had to testify before Congress on Wednesday and therefore was not present for the event. However, Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach commended the students and told them that life's path is never straightforward. "You have weathered this path of a different high school education and that is what life is. Life is not a straight line," he said. "It is made up of every single decision that you will make going forward."

Today, the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School will hold its graduation ceremony, while the Charlotte Amalie High School event is scheduled for Friday.