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Brawl Breaks Out Among Students at Central High, Prompting Huge Police Presence as Proliferation in Fighting at Schools Continues

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The St. Croix Central High School. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Multiple fights at the St. Croix Central High School Tuesday among various groups of students prompted the V.I. Police Department to dispatch several units to the learning facility with an aim of bringing the situation under control.

The fights, which have been making the rounds on social media including WhatsApp, were yet another display of violent behavior among students that has been proliferating territory-wide, leading the V.I. Dept. of Education to announce the formation of a School Security Bureau to address the increasingly dangerous problem.

In one video, several girls are seen ganging up on one female student who backs into a wall while the throng approach. An officer intervened and quelled the attack, though one female student is seen in the video attempting to continue, prompting the officer to produce a baton.

In another video, a throng of students are seen brawling and adults who intervened were welcomed with blows, too, as they attempted to part the fights.

The Consortium made contact with the V.I. Police Department about 1:49 p.m. Tuesday, and the department's director of communications, Glen Dratte, said the matter was being investigated and that arrests were possible.

The V.I. Department of Education has condemned the violence, with Commissioner Nominee Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington suggesting recently that a lot of what has been happening at school over the years have been a result of situations that stem from outside of school and are brought on to the campus. "What we need our parents to do is to speak to your children; what we need the community to do is to be alert and vigilant when you see things transpiring with our students outside of our premises, to inform us so that we could always be prepared to deal with situations when they arise," [she said](#) during a recent meeting late August.

Early Wednesday, former educator and current senator, Kurt Vialet, [called on](#) parents and guardians to do a better job with their children.

"Parents our schools are not battlegrounds, the situation at CHS today was chaotic and involved over twenty students. I urge all parents/ guardians to have a serious discussion with their children to refrain from fighting and disrupting school," said Mr. Vialet, who is also challenging Governor Albert Bryan for the territory's highest office.

"Parents need to talk to their children daily, smile with them, nurture, hug and love them with all your heart. We must teach our children that violence is not normal," the former educator added. He said the USVI community "has normalized violence" and that children think this behavior is okay.

"Multiple videos show that they are also willing to hurt adults who intervene. We must send a strong message that fighting is not tolerated and hitting an adult who is assisting is off limits. We are running out of time. Thanks to all the adults who are consistently assisting and intervening to quell these disturbances," Mr. Vialet said.

He urged the Dept. of Education to penalize the students involved, "or they will believe that we are giving them a stamp of approval. It will only gets worse. There is a need for grade level assemblies, group and individual counseling," he said.

Ms. Wells-Hedrington said efforts must also be made to address the root causes of these incidents. "We've got to cure the root in order to change the behaviors and the mindset of our children. I believe every child could be good; I believe that every child has the potential to be great but along the way our community and the influences of life has changed our students' trajectory especially those that are fighting and displaying all of this aggression – there's a reason for that."

"So while we are protecting the masses, we still want the community to know we've got to focus on what it is that is causing that child or those children to act outside the norm," Ms. Wells-Hedrington concluded.