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Starting Salary For USVI Teachers Climbs to \$50,000 Beginning in September, Governor Bryan Has Announced

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The starting pay for all teachers in the U.S. Virgin Islands will be \$50,000 beginning in September of this year, Governor Albert Bryan announced Thursday evening.

Speaking during an interview with the Consortium at Gov't House, the governor spoke about the importance of education, stating that it is the only way to prepare the next generation of leaders. "I am one person who definitely believes in education.... I'm going to say [education] is the only way," he said. "And that's where we've got to start broadening our minds."

Mr. Bryan spoke of skills that were taught to him by his parents — from upholstery to mechanic work, and even changing the stereo of a vehicle — that he said prepared him for the work

environment. "I think as a community we have to recognize that these kids, they are not little dollies, they are young adults that we want to make fully sufficient adults so teach them," he said.

His comments were to convey the importance of teachers in the USVI and his commitment to ascertain that their salaries match their contribution to the territory.

Regarding when the starting pay increase will take hold, the territory's leader said, "Yes, by September they're going to be to \$50,000."

Mr. Bryan on a lighter note said, "Rosa, you hear that?" as he spoke directly to Rosa Soto-Thomas, president of the American Federation of Teachers Union Local Chapter 1826 on St. Croix, and a fierce advocate for educators.

The new starting pay will take effect September because the current contract has expired and a new agreement has to be reached by September. The governor also spoke of reaching agreements with other unions, a process he says can take some time because there are over 30 unions to negotiate with. Even so, Mr. Bryan said he is committed to working with the various groups to reach desired outcomes.

The governor first spoke about raising the starting pay for teachers to \$50,000 [during his fifth State of the Territory Address](#) as governor on Monday. "It is downright ridiculous that our teachers are working second jobs to meet their needs instead of earning that money to enrich our children. We have the money; we will pay the teachers," he said.