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Land Swap Legislation for New St. John School Will Soon Head to Senate, Bryan Announces at Promotional Exercise

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Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. JOHN — During the promotional exercise for the eighth-grade class of 2023 at the Julius E. Sprauve Elementary School, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. suggested that their academic futures could be transformed by moves being made at the highest levels of government.

During his speech on Wednesday, Governor Bryan praised the students for their resilience and determination before suggesting that they might be pioneers for their island, as plans move forward to facilitate the construction of a new public K-12 school on St. John by effecting a land swap with the National Park Service (NPS).

“We are almost there and we have the plans being drawn,” said Bryan. “This class may be able to graduate from St. John. You might be looking at the first graduating class from St. John in 2027.”

Of course, the school the governor dreams of is not yet built. First, both the NPS and the territory’s legislative body will have to sign off on the deal. Bryan said that he expected the deal with NPS to be finalized within the next 60 days, and disclosed that he would soon submit proposed legislation on the land swap for the Senate’s approval.

The search for suitable land to establish a school on St. John has been a long journey, spanning over 50 years. Bryan emphasized the transformative impact of the new school, highlighting a dramatic shift in how easily students would be able to access secondary education.

“That will be the first time no one will have to catch the boat over to St. Thomas,” he pointed out, indicating a significant change in the daily lives of St. Johnian children if the new school were to be built.

The governor rallied the support of the students, parents, and friends of the graduates. “I cannot do it all by myself. It is finally coming to a reality,” he pleaded. “I need all of your prayers and your voices to speak to our legislators to make this happen for all of you once and for all.”