



St. Thomas-St. John Federation of Teachers
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POINT OF CONTACT

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STT-STJ Local 1825 Responds to Recent School Site Visits by Gov. Bryan, Conditions ‘Are Not Normal’ According to Union President

Visit comes days before April 20 ‘Day of Action’ demonstration for better schools

ST. THOMAS, USVI – St. Thomas-St. John Federation of Teachers Local 1825 President Leontyne Jones believes conditions in the district’s schools “are not normal” and conveyed her thoughts and the concerns of Local 1825’s members during her April 11, 2022 tour with Gov. Albert Bryan.

Pres. Jones candidly discussed with Gov. Bryan and Virgin Islands Department of Education leadership the repairing and rebuilding of the schools, along with safety hazards and the schools’ antiquated equipment, as they visited Jane E. Truitt Elementary School and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School. She later visited Charlotte Amalie High School’s band room with maintenance supervisors. American Federation of Teachers National Representative George Bordenave was also on-island to voice his concerns regarding the poor conditions of the district’s schools.

“I’m happy Gov. Bryan took our concerns serious enough to visit a few of our most challenged schools,” Pres. Jones said after the visit. “I’m optimistic about the administration dealing with the public school system’s challenges. I think Gov. Bryan physically seeing the shape of these schools helped.”

Since her inception as president of Local 1825 last year, Pres. Jones and Rep. Bordenave have discussed vigilantly with education administrators ways to improve the welfare of the district’s teachers, staff and students, especially regarding institutional infrastructure concerns. As president, she has visited every public school in the community, and there is not one school without outstanding issues that affect educators’ abilities to instruct students effectively. Pres. Jones believes that if the Bryan Administration and VIDE are able to address the small things first, what she refers to as “low-hanging fruit,” the major improvements will soon follow.

“My major concern is that I don’t want people to start looking at this as normal,” Pres. Jones said. “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.”

Gov. Bryan’s site visit precedes the “Day of Action” Local 1825 plans for Wednesday, April 20, 2022. Members led by the union’s executive leadership will gather at 4 p.m. at Emancipation Garden in St. Thomas and march to the Legislature to demonstrate solidarity and voice concerns regarding unhealthy and unsafe working environments. The sister union Local 1826 will march simultaneously in St. Croix. Pres. Jones urges parents and concerned citizens to join them.

For more information on the **STT-STJ Local 1825 Day of Action** and the **St. Thomas-St. John Federation of Teachers Local 1825**, please call (340) 776-1825 or go to www.sttj1825.vi.aft.org.

