



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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## **60-Ton AC Unit Installed in Gardine Auditorium, Covered Outdoor Stage Erected at Tuitt**

*Schools continue year-round maintenance and upgrades*

ST. THOMAS, USVI – As part of year-round maintenance efforts and ongoing upgrades to Virgin Islands Department of Education schools, a 60-ton air conditioning unit was recently installed in the auditorium at the Juanita Gardine K-8 School on St. Croix and a covered, outdoor stage was erected at the Jane E. Tuitt Elementary School on St. Thomas.

Territorial Facilities Director Davidson Charlemagne said the upgrades were completed at both schools in late May.

The installation of the high-powered AC unit in Gardine's auditorium is a first in the school's history. The campus was constructed more than 60 years ago as a fresh-air structure and had previously been home to the Christiansted High School in the 1950s and the Elena L. Christian Jr. High School in the 1970s.

The unit began operating during the school's promotional exercise on May 25.

"We are grateful to Director Charlemagne for being able to put all the pieces together to make it happen," Gardine Principal Barbara McGregor said. "It's a lovely space. You could see that our auditorium was built with a vision to have performances and a place the community will be able to use. As we continue to upgrade various other fixtures in the auditorium, such as stage lighting, we will be able to hold very nice functions and performances for our students and open the building for use by our community."

Charlemagne further explained that the covered stage at Tuitt was necessary to provide much-needed shelter from the elements when hosting school-wide functions, which are held outdoors in the courtyard. The structure was constructed over a three-day period and was completed in time for the school's promotional exercise on May 23. Additional features are planned for the stage and other upgrades are underway for the courtyard, which doubles as a playground for students.

For more information on the Department's plan to build new public schools, visit [www.newschoolsvid.com](http://www.newschoolsvid.com).

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