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VIDE and Suffolk-CBNA Joint Venture Hosts Project Launch Ceremony Marking the Start of the Modernization of the Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky PreK-8 School

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), in partnership with the Suffolk-CBNA Joint Venture, the Government of the Virgin Islands, and the Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR), officially launched the modernization of Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky PreK-8 School during a ceremonial event held Monday, September 28, at the school's campus on St. Thomas.

The Project Launch Ceremony marked another significant milestone in the Territory's ongoing efforts to transform and modernize public school facilities. The renovation and expansion of Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky PreK-8 School will create a new 490-student campus that supports a changing educational vision for U.S. Virgin Islands public schools. The project is designed around a commitment to educating the whole student within a values system that prioritizes resilience, flexibility and adaptability, access to quality education, and sustainable, high-performance design**.**

A key component of the project is a new gymnasium that will allow the current dining/gym space to function as a single-use dining/commons facility, consistent with the approach for PreK-8 schools throughout the Territory. Renovations of the administration and media building and the lower classroom level will allow for existing classroom space to appropriately support future activities associated with the new PreK-8 configuration. Other improvements include a new Wastewater Treatment Plant and improved site access, circulation/parking and fields.

"This is not simply another construction project. This is the second school of the St. Thomas Billion Dollar Bundle– this is significant." said Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Ed.D., Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Education. "We are moving from a vision to execution. We are taking plans that have been discussed for years and turning them into buildings. They are learning environments and opportunities that our children can experience for generations to come. We said that we would reform, rebuild and rebrand public education in the Virgin Islands. This is what commitment looks like."

"This project represents far more than the construction of a school; it is an investment in the future of the Virgin Islands and in the generations of students who will learn and grow here," said Jean Baptiste Baudin De La Valette, Bouygues Construction Regional Director USA and Caribbean, on behalf of the Suffolk-CBNA Joint Venture. "We are proud to bring our collective expertise to this important

program and to work alongside the Government of the Virgin Islands to deliver resilient, high-performing learning environments that will serve this community for decades to come."

"With two school projects completed and five under construction, today's launch reflects the territory's commitment to expending federal disaster recovery funds efficiently and effectively," remarked ODR Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien. "This $7 million modernization project is the sixth to break ground this year, and there is more to come. As school projects on St. Thomas continue to advance, the community can look forward to additional projects mobilizing this year. Thank you to FEMA for its support and partnership in achieving this milestone."

"I believe deeply that we must continue building a future that our children and grandchildren can inherit with pride. The transformation of Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky School is another example of our recovery moving from plans on paper to construction on the ground, and of our commitment not simply to rebuild what was here before, but to build something better. We have come a long way, but there are still many miles to go. We cannot allow the momentum to slow. We must continue preparing our young people with the skills, knowledge and opportunities they need to succeed and, together, keep doing the work to build a stronger Virgin Islands for generations to come," said Governor Bryan.

The modernization of Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky PreK-8 School is part of the Virgin Islands Department of Education's broader vision for rebuilding and modernizing public school facilities throughout the Territory. Through strategic investments in school infrastructure, VIDE and its partners are working to provide students and educators with safe, resilient, sustainable, and high-performing learning environments.

To learn more about the New Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky PreK-8 School and the Virgin Islands Department of Education's plan to build new schools in the Virgin Islands, visit www.newschoolsvide.com**.**

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