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Central High Reopens; Education Hails Return a Success

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Central High Principal Yves Abraham speaks during an assembly in the school's cafeteria on December 2, 2019. By. The Dept. of Education

ST. CROIX — Students and staff successfully returned to the St. Croix Central High School campus today and was given the opportunity to engage with officials from government agencies that partnered with the Department of Education to rectify air-quality issues that closed the school for several weeks in November, the Dept. of Education said Monday.

D.O.E. said school-wide assemblies were held with 9th and 10 graders, and then with 11th and 12th grade students that featured employees from the Department of Health's Behavioral Health Division presenting students with information on how to cope with trauma, the importance of

talking with others about their experiences over the last month, and even encouraging students to express their concerns about their grades and opportunities to make up their school work.

Other participating agencies including VITEMA, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, V.I. Fire Service, Waste Management Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, and DOH's Division of Environmental Health provided students with an overview of the work the respective agency performed in order to ensure the campus was safe to occupy, D.O.E. said.

St. Croix Insular Superintendent Carlos McGregor was pleased with the outcome of the assemblies and students' return to school.

"The information that was shared was well received by students and they seemed excited to return to school," he said. "They asked a variety of excellent questions, primarily about the smell reoccurring, and we were able to provide them with assurances that the Department would be more proactive with ongoing maintenance, such as regular flushing of sewer lines."

As for students making up the lost time, Mr. McGregor has instructed the Central High School Improvement Team to develop a plan for students to do make-up work by completing additional assignments.

"We are looking at make-up work and not make-up days at this point," he said.

"All in all, everything went well at Central High today, and we are happy to have the students and staff return," Mr. McGregor said.