



GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT AND REOPEN USVI PUBLIC SCHOOLS REENTRY ACTION PLAN

The Virgin Islands Board of Education's (VIBE) School Plants and Facilities Committee provides additional guidance to support and reinforce the VI Department of Education's (VIDE or Department) "Guide to Safely Reopen Public Schools." There are three color phases associated with the current reopening of public schools in the territory. The VIBE is cognizant of the risks and transmission rates connected with COVID-19 as regularly reported by the Virgin Islands Department of Health. The three levels identified by VIDE's COVID-19 reopening plan phases are:

1. Goals-1/2022

Phase Green – 100% in-person instruction

2. Current status as of 9/8/2021 for grades PreK-3rd

Phase Yellow – Combination of Hybrid/Virtual and in-person instruction

3. Current status as of 9/8/2021 for grades 4th-12th

Phase Red – 100 % Virtual instruction

VIBE's baseline concern:

While the VIBE acknowledges that students and staff are all safer at home, VIBE also recognizes that returning safely to face-to-face instruction can better meet Virgin Islands students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

The VIBE's recommended starting point: VIBE supports a mandate made for all school-based personnel to return to assigned school campuses on **Monday, November 29, 2021, after Thanksgiving break.**

Based on formal reporting from the VIDE, the VIBE supports the continued use of local public/private health agencies monitoring for COVID-19 outbreaks and surges in cases through testing, case investigation, contact tracing, isolation, quarantine, site-specific closures, and enforcement of public health orders.

Through an expedited roll-out plan, the VIBE understands the VIDE has utilized millions of dollars in CARES Act and other pandemic related funding to redesign VI public schools to be deemed ready for in-person instruction. The Department designed a year-long testing protocol that intends to address COVID-19 school site exposures. The VIBE believes that VI



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school sites are large enough to return to 100% in-person instruction safely. With all supports and identified transmission risk, the VIBE encourages VIDE to begin an expedited approach to transition from the current phase yellow to phase green. The VIBE strongly believes that by allowing the 9th - 12th grade population to start in-person instruction on **Monday, December 6, 2021**, and the continued roll-out of all middle/junior high school students on **December 13, 2021**, the VI students can all participate in in-person instruction before the conclusion of 2021.

The VIBE's incorporation of risk levels to scale in-person instruction will assist school administrators in identifying transmission risk levels within the school site during in-person instruction. Transmission risk assessments are essential to forming an integral reopening action plan that ensures an effective safety management plan. The VIBE encourages VIDE to adopt risk levels as part of best practices for in-person instruction. Levels will help identify schools at risk (e.g., employees, persons/entities responsible for cleaning, visitors, contractors, the public, etc.). Most importantly, administrators can determine whether a controlled environment is required for a particular transmission risk ensuring a consistent protocol approach from schools across the territory. All risk levels can be tied directly to VIDE's yellow and green phases. The VIBE also encourages the VIDE to promote staff and student vaccination by hosting vaccination drives during phase Red implementation.

1. **Risk Level Orange - Low-Risk transmission schools**

(based on DOH data): This is a more restrictive than an in-person setting. Level Orange limits in-person sports, recess, group lunch, and school assemblies for schools experiencing less than 5% increases in the transmission. In person, instruction continues, but the school population may justify less engagement and movement.

2. **Risk Level Blue - Severe Risk transmission schools**

(based on current school level percentage): Student/Staff transmission over 5% are considered high, all in-person instruction is put on flexible schedules or strictly limited contact, and indoor/outdoor sports and activities are prohibited.

3. **Risk Level Purple - Extreme Risk transmission schools:**

Transmissions are very high, all in-person activities are prohibited, and individuals should limit contact with people outside their household as much as possible.

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Reopening Matrix Considerations

	What is currently in place that we can build/fortify?	What action steps do VIBE need to take? Note priority areas.	Stakeholders involved in action steps.	When will actions take place? Set timeline & monitor.
School Critical Action #1: Establish a School capacity Plan Identify individual <u>school</u> capacity for in-person with district support using principal's report.	- All school sites have sufficient spacing capacity - VIBE invested CARES Act and other pandemic related funding to prepare school sites for in-person - VIBE's yearlong protocol designed to address COVID-19	- Review VIDE data from last school year and the hybrid learning to make informed decisions and focus of expectations (e.g., engagement as expectation or prioritizing school needs & risk in transitioning from Yellow to Green) - Encourage consistency through stakeholders' outreach	- Parents - VIBE - VIBE leadership	Teacher/staff Nov. 29, 2021 High School December 6, 2021 Middle/Jr. High December 13, 2021 100% In person January 2022
Establish systems aligned with district expectations for COVID-19 testing and screening that prioritizes territory-wide and other informal resources.	- VI Dept. of Health - CDC regulations - Vaccination for children 12 years and over	Encourage consistency through stakeholders' outreach	- VI Dept. Health - Government House - VIBE	Ongoing monitoring

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School critical Action #2: Plan for all faculty and staff return to school sites Maintain consistency of expected practices as appropriate and prioritize new and/or updated supports using risk levels based decision-making process.	<u>VIDE Classroom Teaching scheduling Plan:</u> - District established COVID teaching schedules <u>Staff Teaching/Support Plan:</u> - set schedule for students needing Hybrid instruction to include time to connect/instruction/practice (Based on Union contract)	<u>Classroom Support:</u> (in-person &/or Hybrid) - determine teachers need in classroom for in person safety - Based on identified needs of staff ensure a continuum of supports are available and communicated	- School Administrators - VIBE - VIDE leadership - Teachers/staff - STX/STT AFT	November 29th 2021
School Critical Action #3: Develop a Plan for High school & Middle/Jr. High school start date Maintain consistency of expected practices as appropriate and prioritize new and/ or updated	<u>Territory wide Plan:</u> - All schools' sites updated for safety return to in person learning - Identified income source for risk	- Ensure VIDE checks in with all students and families before the next cohort for in person school begins in 2022. - Develop outreach PSA to families to determine specific needs/concerns	- School Administrators - VIBE - VIDE leadership - Teachers/staff - Students - Parents	High School December 6, 2021 Jr High/Middle school December 13, 2021



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supports using risk levels based decision-making process.	management and tracking <u>Territory wide monitoring plan:</u> established in person grade level usage on critical health rules (mask, hands, distance, etc.)	- Prepare schoolwide specific information to share with families - ID point person if families have questions		