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Dept. of Education Adjusts School Hours in St. Croix District Due to Heatwave

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An aerial shot of the St. Croix Educational Complex High School. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

In response to the severe heatwave affecting the St. Croix District, the V.I. Department of Education has announced schedule adjustments for six schools within the district. The changes, effective Monday, September 25, aim to mitigate the challenges of extreme heat affecting students, faculty, and staff.

On September 18th, updated heat risks led to [the issuance of a Heat Warning](#) for the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ongoing heatwave has resulted in unfavorable learning conditions, prompting the district to take immediate action.

School Assessment Changes

D.O.E. officials in the St. Croix District conducted comprehensive assessments of its school facilities and identified six schools where more than 50 percent of the campus lacks functional air conditioning units. These schools are prioritized for immediate attention.

Revised Daily Schedules:

- Juanita Gardine and Eulalie Rivera PreK-8 Schools: Will now begin at 7:30 am and end at 12:30 pm. Class periods will last 45 minutes each, and lunch will be staggered to accommodate the early end time.
- John H. Woodson Jr. High School: Will operate from 8:00 am to 1:15 pm, with class periods reduced from 55 to 45 minutes.
- St. Croix Central High School, St. Croix Educational Complex, and the Career & Educational Technical Center: Will maintain their regular start time of 7:40 am but will end earlier, at 1:05 pm. Class periods have been reduced from 75 to 65 minutes.

Transportation and Parental Pickup

Bus transportation will continue to be available for students commuting to and from each school campus. Morning routes for Juanita Gardine, Eulalie Rivera PreK-8, and John H. Woodson Jr. High School can commence as early as 6:45 am. In the afternoon, buses will be provided as each school dismisses, and parents can begin pickups at scheduled dismissal times.

Temporary Measures

D.O.E. assured the public that these schedule adjustments are temporary measures aimed at creating a more comfortable learning environment during the current heatwave. The department said it will monitor temperatures and heat conditions closely to assess when regular school hours can be resumed.

D.O.E. also acknowledged that these adjustments are not a long-term solution and is actively working to improve the operational needs of the schools within the district. During this challenging period, the department will seek the support and cooperation of parents, students, faculty, and staff.