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Five Schools Face Delays in Repairs as V.I. Dept. of Education Prepares for New School Year

Eulalie Rivera, Central High, Charlotte Amalie, Ivanna Eudora Kean, and Lockhart School repairs postponed; VIDE emphasizes commitment to safe learning environments

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Entrance of the St. Croix Central High School. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Dept. of Education announced on Friday that repairs have been delayed at five schools across the territory, raising concerns as the new school year approaches.

These schools include Eulalie Rivera and Central High School on St. Croix, and Charlotte Amalie High School, Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, and Lockhart School on St. Thomas. The department assured that every effort is being made to expedite work orders and fulfill other

internal requirements to ensure timely completion.

Despite these delays, the department confirmed the official Back to School opening date of Monday, August 5, 2024, for the return of students, faculty, and staff. To maintain transparency and keep the community informed, videos of the walk-throughs will be publicly available on July 30. These videos will provide insight into the preparation process and reaffirm VIDE's dedication to delivering safe and conducive learning environments for all students.

Key inspection agencies, including the Department of Health, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Department of Public Works, and Fire and Emergency Medical Services, played crucial roles in these inspections, VIDE said. Additionally, members of the Board of Education, St. Croix Coalition, and school PTA representatives were actively involved, ensuring a thorough review process.

Each public school in the territory was meticulously inspected to ensure compliance with safety and operational standards, the department said. With all walk-throughs now concluded, VIDE stated it will await detailed reports from the respective agencies. These reports will include findings, recommendations, and necessary approvals for each school's opening.

According to the release, the department continues its commitment to completing all school repairs, from minor fixes to significant projects. Cleaners and landscapers have been deployed across districts, and maintenance directors have led the walk-throughs, providing critical updates on action plans and next steps for each school site, according to the release. Ongoing maintenance efforts aim to ensure that all campuses provide safe and conducive environments for faculty, staff, and students, VIDE added.

VIDE acknowledged that some maintenance work remains at various school sites, but assured parents, students, faculty, and staff that maintenance teams are fully aware of each school's needs and the progress of ongoing work. While some campuses, due to their age, may not look brand new, they have been retrofitted to enhance both interior and exterior areas, VIDE shared. Some sites require more extensive work beyond routine maintenance, with pending contracts for repairs necessitating additional time for completion.