

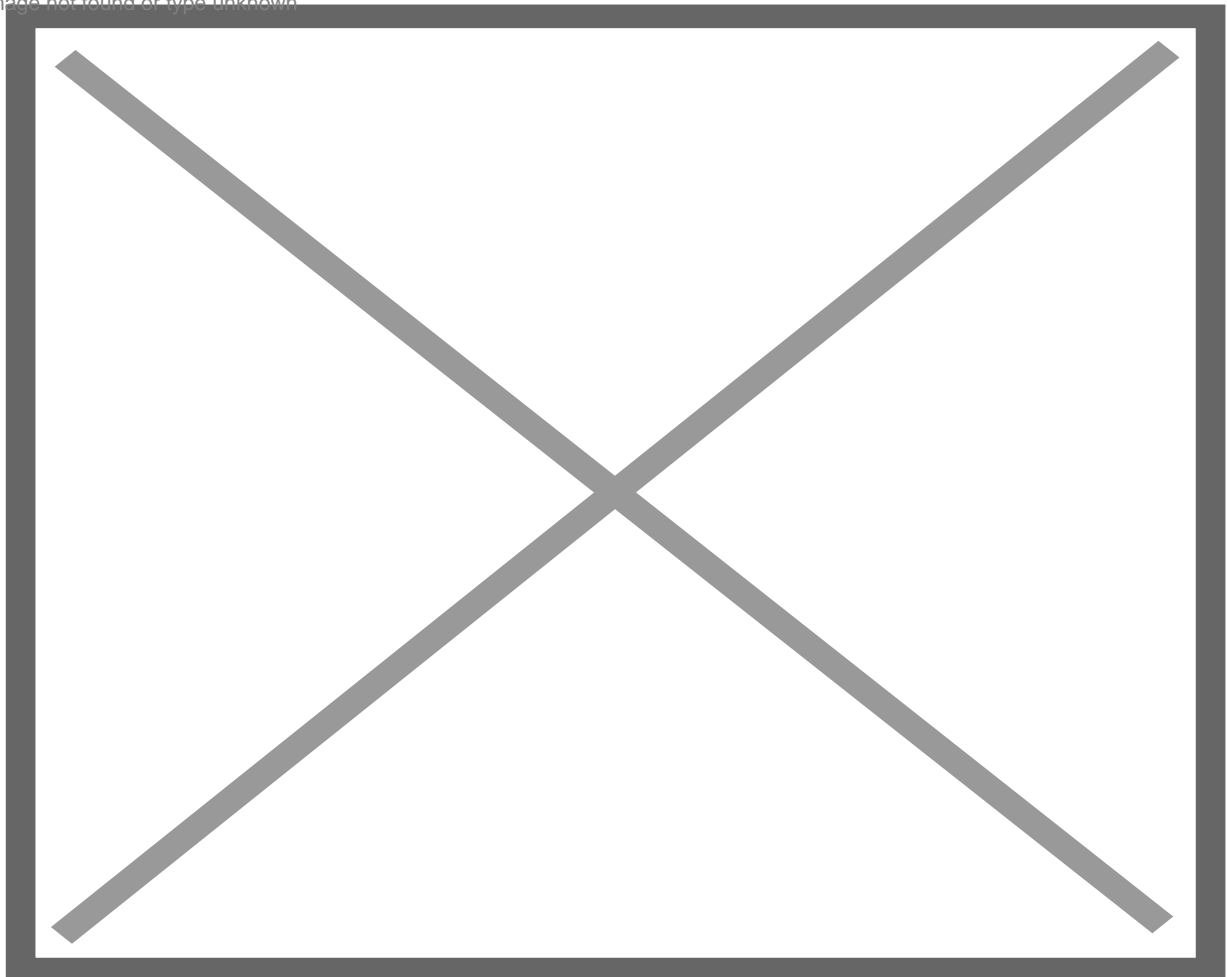
Starting Salaries for VI Teachers Set to Reach \$52,503 by 2025 Under New Wage Agreement

Governor Bryan's new agreement grants teachers a 4% salary increase in the first year, raising starting salaries to \$50,974, followed by a 3% increase in the second year to \$52,503; paraprofessionals and support staff will also see wage increases

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Governor Albert Bryan announced on Tuesday a new wage agreement with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Locals 1825 and 1826, resulting in salary increases for the territory's teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff.

This agreement, which covers a two-year period from September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2025, marks an important step in recognizing the efforts and dedication of educators in the Virgin

Islands, the administration said.

Government House said Mr. Bryan has been committed to enhancing compensation for teachers, and this agreement reflects a continued effort to improve the education system's workforce.

Under the new terms, teachers will receive a 4 percent salary increase in the first year, followed by an additional 3 percent increase in the second year. Notably, the starting salary for teachers with a bachelor's degree will be raised to \$50,974.12 in the first year and will increase to \$52,503.35 in the second year. The administration's goal is to bring starting teacher salaries to at least \$50,000, a commitment that has been met with this agreement.

Paraprofessionals and support staff are also set to benefit from the wage increases outlined in the agreement, which aims to reflect their vital roles within the education system. Additionally, the Government of the Virgin Islands and AFT Locals 1825 and 1826 have agreed to a wage reopener. This measure will allow for further negotiations for the period from September 1, 2025, through August 30, 2028, ensuring that compensation and professional growth for educators continue to be prioritized.

Governor Bryan emphasized the importance of this wage agreement in acknowledging the contributions of educators and support staff in the territory. "As we look toward the future of our public education system, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the dedicated teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff who give so much to the students of the Virgin Islands," the governor said. "This wage agreement is not just about salary increases—it is about recognizing the value of those who shape the minds and futures of our young people."

Mr. Bryan also highlighted the agreement's role in alleviating financial pressures on educators amidst rising costs. "In a time when rising costs are placing additional financial pressure on hardworking Virgin Islanders, I take particular pride in our administration's ability to negotiate a fair and timely wage increase that supports our educators. The work of the American Federation of Teachers is critical to the progress of our Territory, and we are committed to ensuring that their contributions are met with the respect and compensation they deserve."

This agreement is the second wage agreement between the administration and AFT Locals 1825 and 1826.