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Dept. of Education Apologizes After Lunch Shortage Leaves Eulalie Rivera 8th Graders Without Meals

Department acknowledges error, vows increased meal portions and swift improvements to prevent future incidents

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The Eulalie Rivera K-8 School. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Dept. of Education has issued an apology to the students and parents of Eulalie R. Rivera K-8 School following a lunch shortage incident on Tuesday, September 17 that left a portion of the 8th-grade students without meals. The department acknowledged this as a one-time occurrence and took full responsibility for the situation.

VIDE emphasized the seriousness of the incident, recognizing the importance of ensuring that all students have access to proper meals during the school day. "The Department remains committed

to the well-being of our students and to preventing such occurrences from happening again," the statement read.

VIDE said the current challenge stems from an ongoing total renovation of the school's kitchen, which has faced delays due to required processes. As a result, meals are being prepared at St. Croix Educational Complex High School (SCEC) and transported daily to Eulalie Rivera. While this interim arrangement has generally been effective, the incident on September 17 highlighted inefficiencies in the system that need addressing.

In response to the issue, the Department of Education announced several immediate measures:

- **Transition to Batched Meals:** Meals will continue to be prepared at SCECHS and transported to Eulalie Rivera. However, rather than providing prepackaged portions, the Department will switch to batched meals, allowing kitchen staff at the school to manage portions more effectively and ensure all students are served.
- **Increased Meal Quantity:** To accommodate the fluctuating number of students opting for school lunch, the department will increase the total number of meals delivered daily. This measure aims to guarantee that every student has access to lunch, regardless of demand.

Following the incident, VIDE Assistant Commissioner Victor Somme III, Assistant Director of the Bureau of School Construction and Maintenance Bobby Ferris, District Director of the School Food Authority Leah Christian, and Principal Loretta Moorehead conducted a walkthrough of the school's kitchen and cafeteria on Wednesday. This assessment was to ensure that necessary steps are implemented promptly.

VIDE highlighted that this was the first time such an issue had occurred at Eulalie R. Rivera School. Historically, meals have been adequately provided, and the department remains committed to upholding this standard moving forward.

The department assured parents and the community that steps are being taken to prevent a recurrence of this incident. "The VIDE assures the public that this will never happen again," the statement declared. The department also promised to maintain transparency regarding the kitchen repairs and future meal distribution at Eulalie R. Rivera K-8 School.