

VIDE Remains Silent on Administrative Leave of CAHS Officials Amid Abuse Reporting Investigation

Amid an inquiry into potential negligence surrounding convicted sex offender Alfredo Bruce Smith, the Department of Education refuses to comment, raising concerns over systemic failures to protect students

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The Charlotte Amalie High School in St. Thomas.

After former Charlotte Amalie High School coach Alfredo Bruce Smith was convicted earlier this year of the rape and sexual assault of a number of students over a 15-year timespan, uncomfortable questions began to arise about which school officials may have known about his crimes and failed to report them.

In April, Smith was sentenced to [35 years in prison](#), to be followed by a lifetime of supervised release, after pleading guilty to a 20-count indictment on both federal and territorial child sexual exploitation offenses. During the trial, it was revealed that many of his crimes took place at the school itself, with Smith using his position as hall monitor to remove minor male students from classes during school hours to sexually abuse them in empty offices and classrooms. Smith was found to have abused children in his office, next door to the principal's office. He also used the school's official vehicle and camcorder to transport the minors and record himself abusing them at various locations on St. Thomas.

The fact that Smith's abuse went on for so long seemingly under the noses of teachers and administrators raises serious questions about whether his colleagues were in violation of the territory's mandated reporter laws. Title 5 of the Virgin Islands Code, Section 2533 requires any and all school personnel with reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to sexual abuse to report their suspicion to the head of that school, who in turn is required to report the matter to the police or the Department of Social Welfare. The knowing failure to make such a report is an offense under Title 5 V.I.C. Section 2539.

During Smith's trial, prosecutors alleged that school officials were alerted more than once that the former track coach was assaulting students, but no action was ever taken against him, leaving him free to continue terrorizing his victims. After his conviction and sentencing, a [report by the Praed Foundation](#) in September found systemic failures in abuse reporting within the territorial school system. However, the specific lapses that allowed Smith to exploit students for years at Charlotte Amalie High School remained unexamined.

Last month, the Department of Education published a draft [mandatory reporting policy](#) and procedures for public comment. On Monday, the Consortium learned that several school officials at CAHS were sent on administrative leave amidst an investigation by VIDE into their alleged failures to report Smith's ongoing abuse of students at the school. The Department, however, while acknowledging the ongoing investigation, has indicated that it will not comment on the matter at this time.