

Image not found or type unknown

Career & Technical Education Board Says New Exploratory Course for Seventh and Eighth Graders Is Expected Next School Year

Officials said the course would revive a practice once more common in the territory's schools and give younger students a clearer view of available CTE options before they begin choosing longer-term pathways in high school.

Education / **Published On April 16, 2026 05:40 PM /**

Staff Consortium **April 16, 2026**

Image not found or type unknown



Career and technical education officials expect a new exploratory course to be available in Virgin Islands public schools for the upcoming school year, a move they say is intended to give seventh- and eighth-grade students earlier exposure to available career pathways before they enter high school.

The update was delivered Wednesday during the monthly meeting of the Career and Technical Education board, where members also heard that teacher certification efforts in the field are gaining momentum after what committee chair Anastasie Jackson described as an initially difficult start.

Ms. Jackson, who chairs CTE's committee on teacher certification, curriculum and programs, told board members that the new course would mark a return to an approach once more common in the territory's schools.

"Maybe 15 years ago, 20 years ago, we had several teachers doing exploration at the junior high school level," she said. "But in the last perhaps 10 years...not as many instructors really wanted to work on that level in terms of CTE."

With the exploratory course now expected to return, and with all students being encouraged to take it, Ms. Jackson said young Virgin Islanders will gain a clearer understanding of what career and technical education has to offer.

"This is going to open up the eyes of basically all our students on the seventh and eighth grade level, so that by the time they get to the ninth grade, they are very familiar with what's available and how these possible pathways can lead into their careers later," she said.

Ms. Jackson also told the board that the education policy advisor in the Office of the Governor has been working to ensure the new apprenticeship exploration course is available in the territory's public schools for the new school year.

In addition to the course rollout, Ms. Jackson said progress is being made on CTE teacher certification.

"Initially, it was a struggle," she noted.

However, she said collaboration with the Department and Board of Education has led to improvement.

"Many of the teachers are responding positively...we can see that many of the teachers [are] now doing the coursework necessary...and the other criteria that are necessary in order to become certified," she informed.

"We are working, and the battle is not as uphill as it used to be," Dr. Jackson concluded.