

The Virgin Islands Consortium

1,814 Students Welcomed Back To School In St. Thomas-St. John District

Education / **Published On October 11, 2017 08:44 AM /**

Staff **October 11, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- One thousand eight hundred and fourteen (1,814) students and 271 teachers reported to schools in the St. Thomas – St. John District (STTJ) as it opened the 2017-18 school year on Tuesday, the Department of Education announced late Tuesday.

D.O.E. Commissioner Sharon Ann McCollum and STTJ District Superintendent Dionne Wells-Hedrington visited all six school sites which opened to students and reported that the opening “went well.”

Students attending the Addelita Cancryn Junior High School, who are in split session with the Charlotte Amalie High School (CAHS) will attend their six period class schedule on a Monday/Wednesday—Tuesday/Thursday schedule. For four days, classes will be an hour and a half long and on Fridays, they will have all six classes for forty minutes each.

Cancryn Principal Dr. Lisa Forde assured parents who attended the orientation sessions on Tuesday that Cancryn will still offer all of its services to students while temporarily housed at CAHS, and further noted that the quality of education will not change.

The Joseph Gomez Elementary School and the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle (BCB) School began their school day with minor generator complications which were resolved by midday. BCB Assistant Principal Michelle Wilkinson proudly stated that through the brief power outage, teachers and students took their chairs outdoors and continued lessons.

Thelca Bedminster, principal of the Jane E. Tuitt Primary School welcomed some of the District's youngest learners and echoed Education officials with her sentiments that the opening went great. "I could tell my students were ready and excited to be back," said Bedminster. "The Kindergarteners, especially, were all smiles and so bright and beautiful in their uniforms."

Bedminster also made special mention of one of her English Language Learner (ELL) students who transferred to an elementary school in St. Croix after Hurricane Irma but before Hurricane Maria hit that island. "We made great progress with him last year and I'm happy to learn that he'll be back at Jane E. Tuitt soon."

The District encourages parents to send their children to school and to utilize the bus services provided. Additional bus routes for split session schools have been added.

"All of the schools that have opened are fully functional. This school year will be challenging but we are making significant progress towards normalcy and we are ready to receive students," Commissioner McCollum stated.

The Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, originally scheduled to open on Thursday, October 12 will be postponed until Monday, October 16. In addition, some schools in the St. Croix District will also open on Monday, D.O.E. said, although the schools set to open were not named. The STTJ District Curriculum Center staff is now housed at the Edith Williams Alternative Academy (EWAA) and the small population of EWAA students are housed at BCB.

Students will continue to be served sandwiches for breakfast and lunch boxes for midday meals this week. Drinking water is provided at all schools and hot meals are scheduled to begin on Monday, October 16.

Numbers for the STTJ District's October 10 opening are as follows:

Leonard Dober Elementary

Teachers: 10

Students: 95

BCB Middle

Teachers: 41

Students: 327

Jane E. Tuitt Primary

Teachers: 12

Students: 82

Joseph Gomez Elementary

Teachers: 26

Students: 245

Cancryn* (school officially begins 10/11)

Teachers: 73

Students: 175

Joseph Sibilly

Teachers: 14

Students: 153

Edith Williams

Teachers: 5

Students: 4

Charlotte Amalie HS

Teachers: 90

Students: 733