

The Virgin Islands Consortium

John H. Woodson And Arthur A. Richards Schools To Remain Closed Through Jan. 16 Pending Environmental Test Results

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ST. CROIX -- John H. Woodson and Arthur A. Richards junior high schools will remain closed through Wednesday, January 16, pending the results of comprehensive environmental tests planned for Thursday, January 10 to determine factors that may have contributed to an odor affecting the shared campus, and skin irritations experienced by students and staff when school opened on January 9 following the holiday break, the Department of Education has announced.

[In September of last year](#), educators had taken a job action for inadequate pay and poor working conditions, including mold, at John H. Woodson.

D.O.E. said test results for air quality, mold spores, chemicals and other possible airborne allergens are expected to be received on or about January 16. The Woodson campus will be thoroughly sanitized over the weekend as an extra measure of safety.

Today, in a meeting and walk through of the Woodson campus (where Arthur Richards Jr. High is temporarily housed) with school, Government House, and Education officials, as well as a representative from Adcon Environmental, Acting Education Commissioner Dionne Wells-Hedrington directed the campus to be closed so tests could be conducted.

Parent and Staff Meetings, Student Resources

Acting Insular Superintendent of the St. Croix District Maria Encarnacion and Acting Deputy Superintendent Ericilda Ottley-Herman will hold informational meetings for parents of both junior high schools on Saturday, January 12 at the following locations:

- Arthur A. Richards Jr. High School parents: 10-11 a.m. at Alexander Henderson Elementary School auditorium
- John H. Woodson Jr. High School parents: 12 - 1 p.m. at Alfredo Andrews Elementary School auditorium

On Friday, January 11, Encarnacion and Ottley-Herman will hold informational meetings for Woodson and Richards staff at the Ricardo Richards Elementary School auditorium:

- John H. Woodson Jr. High School staff: 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- Arthur A. Richards Jr. High School staff: 12:30-1:30 p.m.

The schools are preparing educational materials, which will include online resources for students to access in order to remain engaged in the learning process during the closures, D.O.E. said.

D.O.E. apologized for the inconvenience and thanked the community for its patience as personnel work to ensure the safety of the school environment for students and staff.

Feature Image: In September of 2018, John H. Woodson teachers took a job action protesting inadequate pay and poor working conditions. (Image Credit: Ernice Gilbert, VIC)