

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Resumption of In-Person Learning in St. Thomas-St. John District to Commence March 16; Grades 4-12 to Continue Learning Virtually

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A Special Education self-contained classroom and a general education classroom at Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky Elementary School. By. THE V.I. DEPT. OF EDUCATION

The V.I. Dept. of Education has announced the resumption of in-person learning for public school students in the St. Thomas-St. John District beginning March 16, with additional student groups returning on March 22 and March 29.

According to D.O.E., District Superintendent Dr. Stefan Jurgen expressed his pleasure at the reopening of school campuses.

“The St. Thomas-St. John District is pleased to welcome students and faculty back to our classrooms for in-person instruction after nearly a year,” he said. “We have met our targeted goal of reopening during the month of March, and this is an exciting time for all of us in the district. Our school administrators and employees have worked diligently, with the help of the Department of Health and many other partners, to ensure schools can reopen safely.”

Mr. Jurgen pointed out that the district received approval to resume in-person instruction from the Virgin Islands Board of Education after undergoing a series of inspections from the Board itself, the V.I. Department of Health-Environmental Health Division, the V.I. Fire Service-Fire Prevention Unit, AFT Local 1825, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and members of the 34th Legislature, D.O.E. said.

Who Returns and When

Students will return to school on a staggered schedule:???

- Tues., March 16, 2021 - PreK & Kindergarten ?
- Mon., March 22, 2021 – First & Second Grades, Special Education (self-contained), Career & Technical Education (CTE) high school seniors?
- Mon., March 29, 2021 - Third Grade?

School schedules are as follows:?

- Jane E. Tuitt Elementary K-5 |?8:00am-2:30pm?
- Joseph E. Gomez School K-8:00-2:00pm?1-5|?8:00-2:00pm?
- Joseph Sibilly School K-6 |?8:15am-2:00pm?

- Julius E. Sprauve School Pre-K-8 | 8:00am-2:00pm?
- Lockhart Primary School K-3 | 8:15am-2:00pm?
- Ulla F. Muller Elementary School K-6 | 8:00am-2:30pm
- Yvonne Milliner-Bowsky School PreK-5 | 8:15am-2:15pm??
- Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School 6-8 | 8:30am-2:30pm?
- Charlotte Amalie High School | 8:00am-2:05 pm
- Ivanna Eudora Kean High School? | 8:00am-2:05pm?

Instruction will follow a hybrid model of in-person and virtual learning on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, with a few exceptions where social distancing requirements can be met for students to attend in-person classes five days per week, according to the release.

On Wednesdays, all students will learn online at their own pace, as well as engage in small-group intervention supports.?

Virtual Learning

The department said general education students in grades 4-12 will continue learning virtually. Some PreK-3rd grade parents have opted to continue to have their children learn virtually; these students will follow the same schedule as their classmates who are engaged in in-person instruction.?

?Preparations to Return to In-Person Instruction?

According to D.O.E., early preparations for students and staff to safely return to in-person instruction began last summer when the Department of Education received funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.?

Mr. Jurgen pointed out that while funding was made available to reopen school buildings safely, the process to secure required items on island has been lengthy.

“The department has continued to procure these resources and outfit schools with the recommended items, in compliance with CDC requirements for in-person learning,” he said.

Newly installed or retrofitted features include:

- Signage throughout campuses reminding students and staff of safety protocols, ?

i.e., staying six feet apart, washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, wearing masks, etc.?

- Floor decals and/or paintings depicting the six-feet social-distancing requirement?
- Dispensers strategically placed throughout campuses to readily provide soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels?
- Handwashing stations
- Classrooms with students' desks arranged six feet apart with U- and L-shaped Plexi-shields
- Teachers' desks outfitted with U- and L-shaped Plexi-shields
- Bathrooms fully repaired and functioning?

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Additional Safety Procedures on Campuses

Students, faculty and staff returning to campuses will find a variety of new safety procedures in effect.

- Temperature checks upon arrival?
- Minimized movement on campuses?
- Breakfast and lunch served in classrooms (community lunches will continue to be available at designated distribution sites)?
- Mask breaks?
- Protocols for addressing students and employees with elevated temperatures?
- Cleansing cloths for wiping classroom desks
- Custodial staff in proximity of restrooms for regular cleaning and monitoring of common areas?

Bus Transportation ?

- Parents are encouraged to transport their children to and from school
- Bus transportation will begin on?March 22 for Special Education self-contained students
- Bus transportation for all other students will begin on March 30, but at reduced loads in compliance with CDC social-distancing requirements

Uniforms?

- Students should wear their school uniform in its entirety for in-person instruction; however, families facing unique circumstances that prevent students from wearing the full uniform should ensure students wear their respective school uniform shirt along with a long-length jeans pants or skirt.