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D.O.E. Aims To Provide On-Campus Vaccinations by the Week of September 20

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The Croix Educational Complex is one of three school campuses on St. Croix where the V.I. Dept. of Education aims to provide vaccination availability in conjunction with the V.I. Dept. of Health. By. VI CONSORTIUM

While there is no mandate for teachers to be vaccinated against Covid-19, the Department of Education said Wednesday it is aiming to provide vaccination facilities on three campuses on St. Croix, three campuses St. Thomas and one campus on St. John in an effort to increase staff vaccination rates. The announcement was made Wednesday during an emergency board meeting called by the V.I. Board of Education.

Victor Somme, assistant D.O.E. commissioner, said the American Federation of Teachers union has joined with the D.O.E., the V.I. Department of Health and the Office of the Governor “to begin the vaccination process in our schools.” He said the week of September 20 has been targeted as the date of availability.

On St. Croix, the locations will be the Claude O. Markoe School, the St. Croix Educational Complex and the Juanita Gardine School. In the St. Thomas-St. John district, the locations will be the Ulla Muller School, Charlotte Amalie High School, Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School and the Julius Sprauve School.

Mr. Somme said all Education employees interested in getting vaccinated are encouraged to go to the school nearest to them, and the A.F.T. will be providing incentives and information along with D.O.H.

“During the week of September 20th the Department of Health will mobilize and begin encouraging all employees who wish to be vaccinated,” Mr. Somme said. "Once we get as many employees vaccinated as possible, we will begin focusing on parents because students require parental consent to become vaccinated.”

D.O.E. Commissioner Raquel Berry-Benjamin stressed that the department does not have a mandatory vaccination policy, an action she said would have to be initiated by Government House and the Dept. of Health if those government arms deem it necessary. The commissioner said a survey seeking to collect data on vaccination rates among staff has been sent out. The survey includes an option not to reveal this information if participants are uncomfortable doing so.

The likelihood of a mandatory vaccination policy throughout the central government seems unlikely, as Governor Albert Bryan has [softened his stance](#) even on mandatory weekly testing.