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Juanita Gardine K-8 School to Begin Half-Day In-Person Learning Sept. 27

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Juanita Gardine K-8 School By. ERNICE GILBERT/VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — The Juanita Gardine K-8 School on Monday will begin a half-day schedule for students in grades K-3rd attending in-person classes due to elevated classroom temperatures this time of year, the V.I. Dept. of Education has announced.

In-person classes will be held from 8:15 a.m. to 12:10 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the remainder of the school day conducted virtually, according to the release. Students will continue to receive breakfast and lunch while on campus.

The school's faculty, staff, parents, and students were informed of the new schedule last week, D.O.E. said.

St. Croix District Insular Superintendent Carlos McGregor said the decision to shorten the in-person school day at Gardine was made in the best interests of students and staff. “We have met with the unions and are committed to ensuring that our teachers and students have optimal classroom environments in which to teach and learn,” he said, according to D.O.E. “While classrooms have natural air ventilation through their windows and doors, the added COVID-19 safety requirements of facial masks and desk shields have contributed to higher-than-normal indoor temperatures in classrooms that do not yet have air conditioning.”

According to the release, the installation of air conditioning units is planned for all Gardine classrooms and are being purchased through the Education Stabilization Fund (CARES Act II). Special education self-contained students are not affected, as air conditioning units were previously installed in those classrooms.

The half-day schedule will remain in effect through the remainder of the First Semester, which ends on Dec. 23.