

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. of Education Sticking to Jan. 10 Phased Reopening of In-Person Learning for All Public School Students

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The V.I. Dept. of Education appears to be sticking to the Jan. 10 date announced by Governor Albert Bryan for returning all public school students to in-person learning, with Mr. Bryan stating the administration would utilize a phased approach.

The V.I. Board of Education, following Mr. Bryan's announcement [which came during a press briefing on Tuesday, Oct. 26](#), held an emergency meeting days later and [issued a press release](#) immediately after announcing a date that would see students returning to classrooms a month earlier, Dec. 6.

The board said it formulated its proposal after months of carefully monitoring Covid-19 infection rates and public health protocols, in addition to evaluating best practices of school jurisdictions across the country that have successfully navigated the return to in-person learning.

But in a media alert issued Nov. 3, the V.I. Dept. of Education stated clearly that it intends to start returning all public school students to physical classrooms early 2022, on Jan, 10. The department is hosting a press conference on Monday "to share details of the January 10, 2022 return to in-person learning for students in grades 4-12."

"We are really making a resolve to return our students to in-person learning, and we're looking to phasing in the school population no later than January 10 following the Christmas break," Mr. Bryan said during the Oct. 26 press briefing. The governor also said the downward trend in active Covid-19 infections "may allow us to consider an earlier return, so be alert to that."

As of Saturday there were 90 active cases territory-wide, with St. Croix continuing to lead infections with 81 cases, followed by St. Thomas with 8, and St. John with 1, [according to the V.I. Dept. of Health](#).

Speaking at the 10:00 a.m. Monday D.O.E. press conference will be Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin, Assistant Commissioner Victor Somme III, St. Croix District Insular Superintendent of Schools Carlos McGregor, and St. Thomas-St. John District Insular Superintendent of Schools Dr. Stefan Jurgen.

The Dept. of Education [on Sept. 7](#) resumed in-person learning for students in grades PreK-3rd, Special Education self-contained classes, and Career & Technical Education students enrolled in a specific career pathway. Students in grades 4-12 continue to learn virtually.