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## Dept. of Education's Permanent Online School, Called VIVA, to Commence Pilot Program in January 2022

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Linda Straker **November 09, 2021**

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Approximately 200 students from various education districts between grades six and 12 will be the first pupils of the Virgin Islands Virtual Academy (VIVA) when it commences operations in January 2022.

“The Virgin Islands virtual academy is a pilot program of the Virgin Islands Department of Education as we seek to establish a permanent online school as part of our educational product,” said St. Croix Superintendent of School Carlos McGregor during a news conference on Monday.

The objective of the news conference was to [explain the standards and requirements](#) that will apply when students resume in-person classes on January 10th, 2022. The Academy is also expected to commence the same day.

Mr. McGregor explained that the Academy's students will be those in grade six to 12 who applied and was accepted into the Academy, and they will receive additional information concerning their participation in the Academy prior to the close of the September to December semester.

Sharing a small detail about a module of the academy, the superintendent said, "A new component of the academy now allows for limited numbers of parents to elect to have their children enrolled in VIVA."

Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin said that in the St. Thomas/St John district, 94 students have applied for the VIVA program while on St Croix 90 students applied and were accepted into the initiative.

"We will continue to lead and transform public education in the U.S. Virgin Islands," said Ms. Berry-Benjamin, who declared that the territory was able to send students back to school for in-person classes long before other Caribbean islands. The commissioner was referring to students in grades PreK-3rd, Special Education self-contained classes, and Career & Technical Education students enrolled in a specific career pathway, who [started in-person learning on Sept. 7](#).

In order to ensure that parents and students are prepared for classes to resume in-person, each school will hold reopening orientation sessions which could be done in person or via pre-recorded video.