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Dept. of Education Encouraging Fathers and Male Caregivers to Take Their Children to School on Aug. 8 - the First Day of School

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The V.I. Dept. of Education is inviting the territory's fathers and male caregivers to take their children to school on Aug. 8, the first day of school, as part of the DADS (Dedicated Achievement Demonstrates Success) Take Your Child to School Day national initiative that supports and encourages fatherhood engagement in education.

According to the department, DADS is designed to recognize the significant role men play in children's educational development, create an environment where males feel welcomed, and to foster supportive partnerships with fathers/male caregivers to further the academic and personal growth of children. Participants are also encouraged to voluntarily pledge to remain involved throughout the child's educational journey.

Department of Education's DeShawn Williams, program manager for Social-Emotional Learning, who organized the event in the St. Thomas-St. John District and Karen Chancellor, director of School and Community Relations, who organized the activity in the St. Croix District, encourage uncles, brothers, fraternities, and the like to adopt a child who may be without a biological father and take him or her to school.

Upon arrival at school campuses territory-wide on Aug. 8, fathers and male caregivers will be given the opportunity to take photos with their children and be treated to other activities.

Assistant Education Commissioner Victor Somme III encouraged the Territory's fathers and male caregivers to participate in the important initiative.

"As the father of a daughter, I took her to school everyday and I thoroughly enjoyed the times she and I spent in the mornings going from home to school, talking about her life and the things that were important to her," he said. "I urge all fathers to take their children to school on August 8. Let's do this, fathers."

St. Thomas-St. John District Superintendent Stefan Jurgen recounted a childhood where his own father took him and his siblings to school.

"In my childhood household, my dad was responsible for taking my siblings and I to and from school, and those are some of my fondest childhood memories," he said. "So, I'm calling on all fathers, brothers, uncles, and papas to take a child to school on August 8. In the V.I., fathers that show up, rock."

Local father, Terence Corbett, offered motivational words to other men.

"Calling all dads, fathers, and male role models to bring your children to school on August 8," he said. "I plan to be there for my daughter and son. Enjoy and have a blessed school year."

DADS participants who wish to have their photos featured on the Department's social media platforms, may send email to public.relations@vide.vi.

The Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, Government of the Virgin Islands, and the Virgin Islands Department of Justice have partnered with the Department of Education to ensure the success of this year's activity.