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Dept. of Education Seeking Retirees and Degree Holders for Substitute Teacher Positions as Severe Shortage Impacts Schools

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The V.I. Dept. of Education announced Tuesday that in an effort to curb teacher shortages impacting public schools, Education Commissioner Nominee Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington launched a campaign to recruit substitute teachers territory-wide.

In a one-minute video message released online Tuesday, Wells-Hedrington urged “local retirees and anyone with a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution who want to make a difference in the lives of Virgin Islands children” to apply to the open substitute positions in both school districts.

The part-time position offers a flexible work schedule, bi-weekly pay, and an hourly wage of \$22, according to the department.

“We are looking for caring, enthusiastic individuals to fill these critical roles so that we can have continuity of education as our recruitment efforts for full-time teachers are ongoing,” Wells-Hedrington said. “Teacher shortages are not unique to the Virgin Islands—they’re happening everywhere across the country. However, we are calling on our local community to be a part of the solution and encourage all retirees and anyone with a college degree from an accredited institution to apply.”

Nearly 200 teachers and support staff resigned or retired from the public school education system between June 2022 and August 2022, Wells-Hedrington [told lawmakers recently](#).

“These challenges, especially in the separation that we are experiencing, it’s really because of a misconception that if you resign during the summer months, for some reason people think that they’re not going to be paid and so they wait until the opening of the school year,” she explained.

Melene Cooper-Shelford, acting human resources director said the department has recorded almost 200 separations since the end of the 2022 school year from elementary, special ed and secondary level teachers. That number includes teachers’ assistants and administrative staff.

From June 2022 to as late Aug. 15, 99 resignations and retirement letters were submitted by employees in the St. Thomas-St. John district inclusive of support and teaching staff; while 90 people resigned in the St. Croix district. Between August 8th and August 16th, an additional 11 staffers resigned in the St Thomas/St John district.

While 39 local and 20 international staff have been hired to fill some of these vacant positions, many more educators are needed. With the increased number of vacancies, schools have integrated classes and have out of need, unintentionally increased class sizes.

But even that effort leaves a significant shortage of educators, as the department noted that more students have enrolled this school term.

In St. Croix, as of Tuesday registered student were at 5,128 and 5,146 on St. Thomas – a slight increase from last school year's numbers.

Applications are available on the front page of www.vide.vi and through the “Job Listings” tab at the top of the page (go to “vacancies” and click the link for the district in which you wish to work).

For more information, call (340) 774-0100 or send email to subteacher@vide.vi.