

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Board of Education Approves This Year's School Management Accountability Report

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A brief meeting by the V.I. Board of Education was convened on Wednesday to approve the annual school management accountability report, which is required to be submitted to the Governor and Legislature every June 15.

Board Chair Dr. Kyza Callwood noted that this year, efforts by stakeholders have resulted in the board being able to meet that deadline. Member Nandi Sekhou emphasized that the report accepted by the board was the final version adopted after revisions were made in a Tuesday evening meeting.

Last year's [report](#) found major safety violations in a number of schools across the territory. The VI Fire Service's contribution to the report found that schools were in deplorable condition. St. Croix Fire Marshal Henry Joseph said that in his honest and professional recommendation, several educational institutions should be torn down and rebuilt in line with the most recent health, fire, life safety, and national electrical codes. At least one school - John H Woodson Jr. High – reportedly had no fire extinguisher system, no fire alarm system and no smoke detectors.

At the St. Croix Educational Complex, leaking pipes across the facility and exposed wiring in male locker rooms and restrooms were found, while other schools were not built with sufficient escape routes in the event of a fire emergency.

The Department of Health also had concerns about conditions in the territory's schools. An inspection of food trailers in the yard of the old Curriculum Center found foodstuffs owned by the School Food Authority that was "smelly, moldy with weevils, outdated, and slimy." It was not until nearby residents concerned with a foul odor coming from the trailers raised the alarm that the spoiled food was discovered.

Last year's report did not include any information from the Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration and the Department of Planning and Natural Resources regarding the annual air and water testing the agencies are required by law to perform.

During Wednesday's meeting, board members did not discuss whether those agencies, as well as the VI Department of Public Works, have made their required contribution to this year's report, which will be published on the VIBOE [website](#) once it has been formally submitted to government officials.