

# GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION



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## VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION SUPPORTS COVID TESTING FOR RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING

The Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBE) supports the Virgin Islands Department of Education's intention to provide COVID-19 testing to students, teachers, and staff in preparation for the return to in-person learning. The Board has been a strong advocate for COVID-19 testing, and offered its own guidance on testing in its proposal that would have returned public school students to in-person learning in late November 2021.

"Best practices across the country show that a successful return to in-person learning and keeping our school population as safe as possible is centered on aggressive and regular testing," said Board Chair Kyza A. Callwood. The VIBE appreciates the effort of the VIDE in crafting a plan that would test students in the 48-hour period before they return to school. However, we believe this plan lacks the detail needed to ensure full participation and compliance with the mandatory testing.

The Board is recommending:

- (1) a testing schedule in alphabetical blocks, i.e. A-F, etc. to support order and minimize lines and wait time.
- (2) availability of the consent form at the testing sites, recognizing that not all families have access to a printer.
- (3) Specific public messaging on the consent form, so that parents understand that they are agreeing to randomized testing during the school year.
- (4) Better public messaging on in-school management of students who test positive during school hours.

The VIBE is also advocating for the Department of Education and the Department of Health to provide weekly pop-up sites for COVID-19 testing and vaccination at each school.

"The sustainability of the return to in-person learning greatly depends on the buy-in and compliance of our school community," chairman Callwood stated. "More than ever, it's important to meet people where they are, as we work towards the shared goal of maximum participation in testing that is critical to the safe return to in-person learning."

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### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Virgin Islands Board of Education is to provide leadership and oversight, set policy and advocate for continuous improvement of the Public Education System of the Virgin Islands of the United States.

### VISION STATEMENT

Each child is provided with the best quality education which guarantees academic excellence, promotes our history and culture, and builds strong local and global communities.