



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Office of Public Relations

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Virgin Islands Department of Education Announces Continued School Closures Amid Post-Tropical Storm Ernesto Cleanup Efforts

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) informs the public that significant cleanup and preparation efforts are underway across all school campuses following the impact of Tropical Storm Ernesto. Essential school staff and workers have been on-site since the storm's passing, initiating both exterior and interior maintenance to ensure that our campuses are safe and ready for the return of students and faculty.

Schools across the territory have faced a range of exterior challenges, including downed trees, debris, and other hazardous materials scattered across the premises. While much progress has been made, some debris—particularly large-scale trees causing blockages and dangerous conditions—will require outsourcing to secure the appropriate equipment for their safe removal.

Despite the collective efforts and commitment of our school staff and workers, cleanup activities have been impeded by electrical outages affecting both districts. The lack of power has significantly hindered the ability to conduct deep cleaning and other essential maintenance tasks inside classrooms and school facilities. Power is a critical component for ensuring that these tasks are completed effectively and efficiently.

Given the current conditions, the Virgin Islands Department of Education has determined that all public schools will remain closed on Friday, August 16, 2024. At this time, our campuses are not yet adequately prepared to welcome back faculty, staff, and students into a safe and conducive learning environment. Cleanup efforts will continue on Friday, with the hope that electrical service will remain uninterrupted, allowing us to make further progress.

Essential school staff, including principals, assistant principals, kitchen managers, custodians, school monitors, maintenance workers, and laborers, are once again required to report to their respective school sites on August 16th at 8:00 a.m. All district and state-level employees are also required to report to their work locations on August 16th at 8:00 a.m., as Government Offices are all open.

We urge students and faculty to remain at home during this time to avoid interference with ongoing cleanup activities and to ensure everyone's safety. It is our goal to have all schools ready for reopening on Monday, August 19, 2024, so that instruction can resume without further delay.

The Virgin Islands Department of Education extends its gratitude to our partner agencies, who have been instrumental in the recovery efforts following Tropical Storm Ernesto. We also recognize and appreciate the challenges that the Water and Power Authority is facing during this time. We ask for the continued patience and understanding of all stakeholders as we work diligently to restore normal school operations. For further updates, please stay tuned to official VIDE communications channels.

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