



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Public Relations

1834 Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie * St. Thomas * U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-6746
Telephone: 340.774.0100 Ext. 8136 Fax: 340.774.1168
340.773.1095 Ext. 7064 Fax: 340.773.4624

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Contact: Keva D. Muller
Director of Public Relations
(340) 774-0100, Ext. 8136 | (340) 643-4784
Keva.muller@vide.vi
www.vide.vi
www.facebook.com/usvi.vide

Chantel Acosta
Public Information Officer
(340) 773-1095
chantel.acosta@vide.vi

GRANNY PRESCHOOL SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES WITH 11 PRESCHOOLERS ON SEPTEMBER 10

ST. CROIX, USVI - The Virgin Islands Department of Education, Division of Curriculum and Instruction launched its Granny Preschool Pilot Program in the St. Croix District on September 10 with the goal of preparing preschoolers for Kindergarten in SY 2019-20.

Jeselle Cruse-Peter, St. Croix District elementary programs coordinator, spearheaded the implementation of Granny Preschool in collaboration with Jose Perez, the district's language acquisition coordinator. Both coordinators welcomed students at two sites on St. Croix, including Pearl B. Larsen and Claude O. Markoe elementary schools.

"Welcome to Granny Preschool, where you will get to meet new friends and others along the way," Cruse-Peter said to the youngsters clad in a red polo shirt and khaki pant/skirt uniform at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary site.

Five students were received at the Pearl B. Larsen site, with teacher Goldine Charlemagne and para educator Melodie Malone; and six at Claude O. Markoe, under the tutelage of teacher Cathy Daniel and para educator Frances Ferrol. Up to 10 students can be accommodated at each site.

Cruse-Peter pointed out that when a child is adequately prepared for Kindergarten, he exhibits a mastery of performance in academics, as well as good cognitive and language skills. Granny Preschool promises to both enhance these skills and to track students' progress.

"Data has shown that most of our incoming Kindergarteners have not mastered many of the skills needed as they transition into Kindergarten," she said, noting that some children have not been enrolled in Head Start programs offered through the Department of Human Services nor in private preschool programs.

“Granny Preschool seeks to bridge this gap and prepare students with the skills they need to be successful in Kindergarten.”

The program is being viewed as a trial run to the official start of the Department of Education’s Pre-K initiative, which is expected to launch at the start of the 2019-20 school year.

Cruse-Peter noted that Granny Preschool does not compete with current Head Start programs and focused on recruiting students who did not qualify for or were not enrolled in Head Start. It offers a fully structured school day with the use of instructional tools, to include Waterford. The online tool, which students and teachers can access through new Google Chrome Books purchased for their classrooms, allow children to practice important skills.

“Students will use Waterford to enhance cognitive skills and increase learning through music, dance, problem solving, and repetition,” Cruse-Peter said, adding that the Waterford technology generates reports to show parents their children’s progress.

Funding through the Well-Rounded Education section of the Federal Consolidated Grant Application annually received by the Department of Education was used to fund the pilot program. The grant award covers the cost of teacher and para educator salaries, consultant services, and all materials and supplies required for the program.

Granny Preschool students will attend classes Monday-Friday through June 2019, beginning at 7:45 a.m. and ending at 2:30 p.m. daily.

To register children for open slots, email Jeselle Cruse-Peter at jeselle.cruse@vide.vi.

The Granny Preschool Pilot Program is a combined effort between the Department of Education’s State Office, Office of the Insular Superintendent, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Division of Special Education, Division of Student Services, as well as outside stakeholders.

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