

BUDGET TESTIMONY

Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education

Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Budget Hearing

July 7, 2026

Earle B. Ottley Legislative Hall
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands (U.S.)
Committee on Budget, Appropriations and Finance

PRESENTED BY

Anthony Mardenborough Jr., Chairman
Genevieve Whitaker, JD, MPM, MCJ, CPM®, Executive Director

I. Opening Statement

Good afternoon, Senator Novelle Francis Jr., Committee Chairman; Vice-Chairman; Senator Marvin A. Blyden; other members of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance; the other Honorable Senators present; and members of the public.

My name is Genevieve Whitaker, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education. I am joined by our Chairman, Anthony Mardenborough Jr., and together we are honored to appear before you today to present the Board's Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget testimony, to speak to the work of the Board and the Office of the Executive Director, and to provide a fuller picture of the system-building efforts that have been underway across the Territory. The other members of our Board are Vice-Chair Dr. Anastasie Jackson and Secretary Dr. Suzanne Darrow-Magras.

This testimony is offered in the spirit of accountability, transparency, and partnership. It reflects not only a request for financial support, but also the story of the work that has been done, the systems that are being strengthened, the relationships that are being built, and the opportunities we are working to create for students, educators, adult learners, and the workforce of the Virgin Islands. Throughout this period, the Board has continued to engage in curriculum development, stakeholder collaboration, professional development planning, legislative advocacy, communications upgrades, student support initiatives, and efforts to align education with real economic opportunity.

We come before you to understand that career and technical education must be viewed not as a narrow program area, but as a vital public investment in the future of this Territory. It sits at the intersection of education, workforce development, public service, innovation, and economic resilience. The Board's work, therefore, is not limited to the administration of programs. It includes creating pathways, strengthening systems, modernizing processes, connecting institutions, and helping to ensure that students are prepared not only to graduate, but to thrive. This work includes outreach with school administrators, union leaders, senators, the Workforce Development Board, the Board of Education, entities involved in rebuilding schools and infrastructure, advisory boards, Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), curriculum development partners, communications partners, and other stakeholders essential to strategic planning.

II. The Board's Mandate and the Meaning in Practice

As the Board has consistently understood and carried out its role, the mandate of the Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education is rooted in the Virgin Islands Code and strengthened by subsequent legislative action, including the authorities set forth in Title 17, Chapter 23. Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation, Sections: 261. Acceptance of Federal benefits; 262. Powers and duties of the Board and 263. Career-Technical Education Training Fund. Based on this mandate and funding authority, the Board's work has centered on administering and strengthening career and technical education, aligning educational pathways with workforce demands, supporting teacher and program quality, and working in partnership with education, labor, industry, and community stakeholders. The Board's operational practice has been to treat career and technical education as a system that must be actively led, coordinated, and modernized rather than passively maintained.

In practical terms, that mandate has meant convening stakeholders, engaging schools, supporting instructors, strengthening policy and certification work, coordinating curriculum review, improving public communication, and advocating for adequate resources. It also means that career and technical education must reach multiple populations: traditional high school students, middle school students exploring pathways, adult learners, instructors who need support and credentialing, and broader community stakeholders who must understand the value of these programs.

The Board has also approached its mandate as one that requires both stewardship and imagination. Stewardship means careful attention to processes, policies, finances, and compliance. Imagination means building what does not yet fully exist: stronger pathways, modern systems, clearer messaging, deeper partnerships, and more visible opportunities for students. Guest presentations and Board discussions emphasized industry partnerships, professional development, career advising, community awareness, articulation agreements, and stackable credentials, and Board members tied those ideas to ongoing efforts with the proposed VI Technical College and the University of the Virgin Islands.



III. Office of Executive Director: Building Coordination, Presence Momentum, and CTE Costs Survey-Based Program Needs

Since stepping into the role of Executive Director on October 6, 2025, I have worked to move the Board from a posture of administrative maintenance to one of structured coordination, system response, and public-facing engagement across the Territory.

This work began with direct engagement with school administrators across the Territory, recognizing that any meaningful effort to strengthen Career and Technical Education must be grounded in the realities of program delivery at the school level.

A central focus of this work has been engaging school administrators, instructors, and program stakeholders to identify real-time conditions affecting the delivery of Career and Technical Education. Through coordinated outreach to schools, program discussions, and sustained follow-up, the Office of the Executive Director has systematically gathered input on instructional needs, program gaps, certification challenges, and resource limitations.

This effort resulted in **17 formal meetings with principals, program administrators, and education leaders across the St. Thomas–St. John and St. Croix districts**: primary and

secondary schools, alternative education programs, adult education, and the Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC).

These engagements reflect near-complete coverage of the Territory’s Career and Technical Education system.

These engagements resulted in:

- Direct identification of program-level challenges
- Documentation of instructional and equipment needs
- Validation of certification and staffing gaps
- Alignment of program offerings with workforce expectations

Expanded Stakeholder Engagement and System Reach

Beyond school-level engagement, the Office of the Executive Director has conducted **more than 95 meetings, events, and engagements** across education, workforce, government, and community sectors between October 2025 and June 2026.

This includes coordination with:

- Virgin Islands Department of Education
- Virgin Islands Board of Education
- Workforce Development Board
- Department of Labor
- Apprenticeship Council
- Bureau of Economic Research
- Industry partners and infrastructure development teams
- Advisory boards and Career and Technical Student Organizations

This includes critical efforts such as engagement with the **Bureau of Economic Research** on data systems integration, workforce tracking, and the coordination of education and economic data systems.

Total Engagement Activity

Engagement Area	Volume
Administrator Meetings	17
Stakeholder & Agency Meetings	30+
Industry & Workforce Engagements	15+
Advisory Boards & CTSOs	15+
Public Events & Community Outreach	18+
TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS	95+

Student Leadership, Advisory Alignment, and Program Support

The Board continues to support **Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), academies, and advisory boards** as essential components of student leadership development, workforce readiness, and program alignment.

These include:

- Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Virgin Islands
- SkillsUSA, Virgin Islands
- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
- St. Croix Educational Complex Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC), including:
 - National Academy Foundation (NAF) Academy of Business & Finance
 - NAF Academy of Culinary Arts, Hospitality & Tourism
- St. Croix Central High School NAF Academy of Business

Both **Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker and Chairman Anthony Mardenborough Jr. actively serve on advisory boards and workforce-aligned structures**, strengthening coordination between education, industry, and program development.

In addition, advisory engagement includes participation in:

- National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) programs and advisory structures
- Child Care Management Advisory Board

These efforts ensure alignment with **industry standards, workforce demand, and student leadership opportunities**, while strengthening collaboration between education and workforce partners.

Scholarship Programs and Student Impact

The Board's scholarship initiative continues to reflect strong student engagement and commitment to Career and Technical Education pathways.

This year:

- **29 students applied for scholarships**, demonstrating meaningful interest and participation

Scholarship opportunities administered through the Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education include:

- **The James Albert Petersen, Jr. Scholarship Fund**
(for graduating high school students entering college for the first time)
- **The Albert Ragster, Sr. Scholarship Fund**
(for college or technical school students)

The Board reviews **applications and selects scholarship recipients**, with awardees to be finalized and announced in the coming period.

These efforts reflect the Board's continued commitment to **supporting student advancement beyond program completion**, ensuring that Career and Technical Education students are connected to opportunities for continued education, credentialing, and workforce success.

System Impact

This work reflects a coordinated, Territory-wide effort to:

- Align education with the workforce and industry
- Strengthen student leadership and career readiness
- Expand opportunities through partnerships
- Support a connected Career and Technical Education system

Through this approach, the Office of the Executive Director has moved from activity-based coordination to **outcome-driven system development**, directly supporting the Board's Fiscal Year 2027 funding request.

Media, Strategic Communications, and Public Awareness

In addition to program coordination, a major focus has been on expanding the visibility and accessibility of Career and Technical Education across the Territory.

This includes:

- A **complete website overhaul project** resulting in a new, modern platform to improve access to information and program visibility
- Expansion of **multi-platform social media engagement**, including:
 - Facebook (revitalized platform)
 - Instagram (new)
 - LinkedIn (new)
 - X (new platform, established due to account transition limitations)

These efforts have resulted in measurable growth in public engagement. The Board's Facebook platform increased from approximately **200 followers to over 700 followers**, representing an increase of approximately **250% in audience reach and engagement**.

These strategic communications efforts support:

- Increased public awareness of Career and Technical Education programs
- Promotion of student success and program visibility
- Strengthened stakeholder communication
- Positioning CTE as a central component of workforce and economic development

Construction Trades and Industry Alignment: Outcomes for Students

A critical area of focus has been aligning Career and Technical Education programs with real workforce opportunities in the construction trades sector.

Through engagement with key industry partners:

- Suffolk / Suffolk-Americaribe
- MCN Build
- Haugland Virgin Islands
- Consigli-Benton
-

The Board has advanced coordination efforts that move toward **student-facing outcomes**.

These efforts resulted in:

- Direct interaction between industry partners and CTE programs
- Identification of workforce pathways tied to active Territorial construction projects
- Workforce exposure opportunities for students

- Early integration of workforce partners into program alignment efforts

These engagements ensure students are connected to **live projects, real employers, and workforce opportunities tied directly to the Territory’s economic development.**

Workforce Development Board Collaboration and Youth Pathways

The Office of the Executive Director has worked closely with the Workforce Development Board to align Career and Technical Education with workforce initiatives.

This includes:

- Alignment with workforce priorities
- Exploration of **YouthBuild and similar grant-funded initiatives**
- Expansion of opportunities for high school-aged students
- Strengthening advisory and workforce partnerships

YRC Initiative and Cross-System Impact

The Office of the Executive Director also led coordination of a cross-agency initiative focused on youth within the Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC).

This effort engaged:

- Department of Human Services
- Department of Labor
- Department of Education
- Virgin Islands Housing Authority
- Bureau of Corrections
- UVI CELL

That body of work should be understood not as a series of disconnected meetings, but as a continuous effort to build a stronger system. It means making sure the Board remains informed, that partners remain engaged, and that emerging opportunities are translated into concrete follow-up, identifying problems early, whether those involve curriculum delays, certification bottlenecks, school needs, communications gaps, or missed opportunities for partnership. The Board has also been intentional about broadening the voices and expertise that inform its work, including engaging presenters and external partners to address financial literacy, soft skills, workforce development, and CTE best practices.

Survey-Based Program Needs Assessment

As a continuation of the Office of the Executive Director’s work in coordination, engagement, and system-building, comprehensive survey efforts were conducted to document program needs across the Territory.

These efforts, led by Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker, included direct outreach to Virgin Islands Department of Education leadership, administrators, the St. Croix District Coordinator, the St. Thomas–St. John Program Assistant, instructors, advisory boards, Career and Technical Student Organization leaders, and academy program leads.

Two distinct surveys were conducted to capture both instructional and student-centered needs:

A. Career and Technical Education Program Costs, Courses, and Equipment Survey

This survey identified critical programmatic and operational needs across districts, including:

- Districtwide textbooks (St. Croix): **\$300,000**
- Cosmetology annual program costs: **\$30,000**
- Electronics tools and components: **\$50,090**
- Information Technology/Engineering and National Center for Construction Education and Research tool packages: **\$100,538.97**
- Building and mechanical trades equipment and supply needs: **\$176,596.36**
- Academy of Health Sciences program costs: **\$6,813.50**
- School-reported Career and Technical Education program needs: **\$334,000**
- Computer Engineering annual costs: **\$95,000–\$115,000**
- National Center for Construction Education and Research Core annual costs: **\$55,000**
- Virtual Reality (Transfr) expansion: **\$250,000**

B. Student Organizations, Advisory Boards, and Academy Program Survey

A second survey focused on Career and Technical Student Organizations, advisory board engagement, and academy-based programming needs, identifying requirements related to:

- Student participation in local and national competitions
- Travel and conference support
- Program materials and operational needs
- Advisory board engagement and workforce alignment
- Academy program support across schools

These figures represent a **cross-section of Career and Technical Education programs and costs**, and not the full scope of all programs or students across the Territory.

Strategic Significance

These survey efforts further ensure that the Board’s support for program planning and funding requests is grounded in direct input from educators, administrators, and program leaders, reflecting actual classroom, program, and student needs rather than assumptions.

As part of the Office of the Executive Director’s continued coordination and engagement efforts, the Board has begun documenting student outcomes across Career and Technical Education programs using available graduation and certification data.

At this time, confirmed outcomes include:

- **189 high school Career and Technical Education students** across the St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center (Educational Complex and Central High School), as well as Charlotte Amalie High School and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School
- **151 graduates of the Raphael O. Wheatley Skill Center**, representing adult and postsecondary certification programs

Students completed programs across the following course areas:

St. Croix and St. Thomas-St. Districts, High Schools & St. Croix District Adult Education Career and Technical Education Programs (CTEC, CAHS, IEKHS)

- Barbering
- Nail Technology
- Natural Hair Care
- National Academy of Finance / Academy of Business (NAF)
- Academy of Hospitality and Tourism
- Office Administrative Systems
- Culinary Arts
- Cosmetology
- Carpentry
- Automotive Mechanic Repair
- Auto Body and Fender
- Electricity
- Plumbing

Career & Technical Postsecondary and Industry-Aligned Programs

- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- Clothing Construction and Design
- Commercial Baking and Cake Decorating
- Electric Vehicle Technician
- Nail Technology (postsecondary)
- Natural Hair Care (postsecondary)

Construction and Trades (NCCER-Aligned Programs)

- NCCER Core
- NCCER Electrical I
- NCCER Electrical II
- NCCER Electrical IV

Raphael O. Wheatley Skill Center (ROWSC) Certification Programs

Health Sciences

- Phlebotomy
- Medical Administrative Assistant
- Practical Nurse

- Clinical Medical Assistant
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Patient Care Technician

Human Services

- Cosmetology
- Esthetics
- Nail Technology
- Barbering
- Hair Braiding

Hospitality and Tourism

- Culinary Arts

Information Technology

- Computer Applications

Transportation

- Auto Mechanic
- Auto Body

Architecture and Construction

- Plumbing
- Carpentry
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVAC/R)

Acknowledgment

The Board and Staff extend **congratulations to all the 2026 graduates, certifications recipients, and student promotees at the primary level**, recognizing their achievement, discipline, and commitment to their respective career pathways.

Data Context

While administrator engagement and program validation have supported confirmation of these outcomes, a comprehensive system-wide count will continue to be refined upon the resumption of Board school tours and receipt of complete data currently requested from the Commissioner of Education.

III. Staff Management and Organizational Capacity

The work of the Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education is supported by a dedicated administrative team across both districts, whose professionalism and commitment are essential to the execution of the Board's mandate.

Organizational Capacity

The Board currently operates with a **small core staff across both districts**, including:

- **Executive Director**
- **Administrative Assistants (three positions):**
 - Teacher Certification, Human Resources & Budget Liaison
 - Receptionist, Scholarships and Stipend Management
 - Satellite Office Manager & Executive Liaison, St. Thomas

The Administrative Assistants are distributed across districts, with **two positions supporting St. Croix operations and one supporting the St. Thomas-St. John district**, ensuring daily operational continuity, program coordination, and administrative support.

In addition, the Board is supported by **two Department of Labor Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP) interns** in the St. Thomas Office:

- One intern serving in a media and communications, **pre-legal capacity**, an aspiring attorney entering their second year of college
- One intern serving in an **information technology support role**, assisting with technical and digital operations

These internship placements provide valuable workforce experience while also contributing to operational capacity.

Led by Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker, and in response to the expanding scope of the Board's work across program implementation, stakeholder engagement, communications, and executive coordination, the Board has actively recruited for a position in the St. Thomas district that has remained vacant for a few years. Interviews for this role are scheduled to take place next week.

- **Programs, Outreach, Media & Executive Projects Coordinator (St. Thomas Office)**

This position is intended to strengthen coordination of programs, outreach initiatives, communications, and executive-level priorities, ensuring more effective execution of the Board's work across both districts.

IV. Board Work and Programmatic Development

The work of the Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education reflects a coordinated and deliberate effort to advance curriculum development, strengthen workforce pathways, and align education systems with the Territory’s economic and workforce priorities. These efforts are not isolated initiatives, but part of a broader strategy to ensure that Career and Technical Education programs remain relevant, rigorous, and responsive to both student needs and workforce demand.

This work has been carried out in close collaboration with the Virgin Islands Department of Education, workforce partners, postsecondary institutions, and industry stakeholders. It reflects the Board’s role in supporting program approval, curriculum alignment, pathway development, and system integration across multiple sectors.

A. Agriculture Curriculum Development and Approval

One of the most significant areas of Board engagement has been advancing the Agriculture Curriculum, a foundational component of the Territory’s efforts to strengthen food security, sustainability, and economic resilience.

Agricultural education in the Virgin Islands is not simply about adding another course — it is about food security, sustainability, territorial resilience, stewardship of land and resources, and entrepreneurship.

The Board acknowledges the leadership and partnership of **Dr. Renee Charleswell, Deputy Commissioner of State Curriculum and Instruction**, and **Cydney Meadows, Territorial Director of Sustainability and Agricultural Education**, along with the entire Virgin Islands Department of Education Division of Curriculum and Instruction team, whose work spans Pre-K through 12th grade, Career and Technical Education, and continuing education.

The curriculum supports sustainable agricultural practices, environmental stewardship, and workforce-aligned training in agribusiness and related fields, reinforcing its importance as both an educational and economic development priority for the Territory.

B. Teacher Pre-Apprenticeship Program and Education Profession Pathway

Another meaningful development reflected in the Board’s work is the strengthening of the education profession pathway for younger learners through the **Teacher Pre-Apprenticeship Program**, formally developed as the **Teacher Apprenticeship Exploration Program**, a seventh- and eighth-grade Career and Technical Education elective designed to introduce students to the teaching profession through structured, real-world learning experiences.

This initiative has been advanced in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Department of Education under the leadership of **Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Commissioner of Education**, with continued support from the Department’s curriculum leadership team and policy coordination through **Sana Joseph Smith, Policy Advisor**, reflecting a shared commitment to building a sustainable educator pipeline through early exposure, curriculum alignment, and system-level planning.

As reflected in the finalized Teacher Apprenticeship Exploration Program m is designed as a **two-semester, full-academic-year elective that introduces** middle school students to the field of education through leadership, service, peer mentoring, and classroom-based experiences.

Students participate in an **apprenticeship-style instructional model**, engaging in classroom placements three to four days per week while participating in structured reflection and instruction led by a teacher Leader.

The program incorporates:

- Leadership development through guided and independent learning experiences
- Mentorship structures connecting students with classroom educators
- Portfolio-based assessment and reflective practice
- Progressive responsibility through observation, co-teaching, and independent facilitation

The instructional model follows a structured progression of **“I Teach, We Teach, You Teach,”** **allowing students to move from observation to collaboration and ultimately to independent instruction and the application of leadership.**

The program has been fully developed with a comprehensive implementation framework, including curriculum design, mentor training, assessment structures, and equity-focused instructional strategies, and is planned to begin in **August 2026**. This initiative represents a forward-looking investment in the Territory’s educator workforce pipeline, aligning Career and Technical Education with long-term workforce sustainability, while providing students with early, structured exposure to the teaching profession and opportunities to develop leadership, communication, and professional skills.

Component	Details
Program Title	Teacher Apprenticeship Exploration Program (RTAP)
Target Population	Grades 7–8 CTE Elective
Cohort 1	10 students per district

Component	Details
Model	Apprenticeship-style elective, 2-semester (full academic year)
Delivery	3–4 days/week in field placements; 1 day/week reflection & instruction with Teacher Leader
Assessment	Portfolio-based; weekly reflection journals; final presentation (no summative exam)
Implementation	August 2026
Focus Areas	Leadership, mentoring, communication, and workforce alignment

Strategic Impact

- Builds a long-term educator pipeline
- Aligns certification with practice
- Strengthens workforce sustainability

D. Teacher Certification Reform and System Modernization

The Board has made significant progress in advancing teacher certification reform, including the approval of an exemption policy that allows the waiver of the student-teaching requirement in exchange for verified on-the-job experience. This policy reflects a practical and experience-based approach to certification while maintaining rigor through required coursework, licensure assessments, and verified teaching experience. The Board is also working to modernize certification systems, including relaunching the certification portal to improve efficiency, tracking, and accessibility for educators.

E. University of the Virgin Islands Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning (UVI CELL) and Offshore Real Estate Course Partnership

The Board’s programmatic work also includes collaboration with the **University of the Virgin Islands Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning (UVI CELL)** to expand workforce-aligned learning opportunities. This includes the approval of the **Offshore Real Estate Course**,

developed as part of a partnership between the Board, UVI CELL, and industry professionals to expand Career and Technical Education into emerging and non-traditional sectors.

The Offshore Real Estate Course is offered in collaboration with **Steve Shore, Principal Broker and REALTOR® of Offshore Real Estate**, who serves as an industry partner, contributing professional expertise, real-world applications, and guidance on real estate career pathways.

This partnership supports:

- Delivery of a **real estate-focused curriculum aligned with workforce needs**
- Exposure to **real estate practices, licensing pathways, and industry expectations**
- Opportunities for both **high school and University of the Virgin Islands students** to engage in practical learning experiences

The course is designed to diversify participation within the real estate profession while providing students with foundational knowledge, professional exposure, and a pathway toward licensure and careers in real estate.

This initiative reflects a forward-looking approach to Career and Technical Education by recognizing emerging sectors and expanding programming beyond traditional pathways, while strengthening alignment between education, industry, and economic opportunity.

F. Strategic Innovation, Partnerships, and Board-Led Initiatives

In addition to curriculum development, the Board has advanced strategic initiatives to strengthen innovation, expand funding capacity, and align Career and Technical Education with emerging workforce trends, informed in part by a Career and Technical Education study tour in Massachusetts led by Senator Kurt Vialet from March 30th to April 1st, 2026, during which **Board Chairman Anthony Mardenborough Jr. and Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker participated in the delegation visit** to Worcester Technical High School and Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School.

Building on best practices observed during that experience, the Board approved establishing a **nonprofit foundation** to support trade students, classroom resources, and student participation in competitions, with implementation advanced in coordination with Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker.

In addition, the Board, through the Office of the Executive Director, has taken active and ongoing steps to strengthen oversight, transparency, and access to **Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education funds**. This has included direct engagement with federal partners, coordination with the U.S. Department of Education, and continued efforts to clarify the current administration, utilization, and reporting of Perkins resources. This work reflects the Board's statutory responsibility to ensure that federal funds are effectively aligned with documented program needs, and supports broader efforts to position the Territory to fully leverage available Perkins funding in support of Career and Technical Education programs

The Board is also advancing an **artificial intelligence initiative** in partnership with the University of the Virgin Islands, building on the leadership of former Chairman Dr. Michael Francois and collaboration with Secretary Dr. Suzanne Magras in her capacity as Director of the University of the Virgin Islands Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning, expanding access to future-focused, technology-driven pathways.

G. Student Readiness, Financial Literacy, and Workforce Skills Development

Led by Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker, another important aspect of the Board's work has been the intentional effort to connect students not only to technical knowledge but also to leadership, employability, communication, financial literacy, and career awareness. This work includes engagement with **curriculum-based resources and instructional tools** designed to support both technical and non-technical skill development, including:

- **Money Movez**, developed by St. Croix native Ray Parris, a gamified financial literacy and entrepreneurship curriculum featuring scenario-based learning, a mobile application, and applied decision-making activities
- **Career Tree**, a structured career pathway exploration curriculum that supports long-term planning and workforce alignment (back on February 6, 2026, Board Members and

staff participated in a Workforce Development Key Stakeholder Session hosted by Commissioner Gary Molloy and the Virgin Islands Department of Labor. The session featured **Mark C. Perna**, Founder and CEO of TFS Results and creator of the **Career Tree** framework, who shared insights on strengthening education-to-career pathways and workforce development strategies, we also met him at the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) **CareerTech VISION 2025** Conference in Nashville, Tennessee and we will moving forward with collaboration with the Department of Labor (Commissioner Dr. Molly) for the Career Tree licenses to support our CTE programs.

- **IMAGO**, a soft skills curriculum focused on communication, emotional intelligence, leadership, and workplace readiness
- **NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research)**, including the **HAMMER Math curriculum**, which supports foundational math skills within construction trades instruction
- **Stukent**, a digital curriculum platform providing real-world coursework in business, marketing, and entrepreneurship

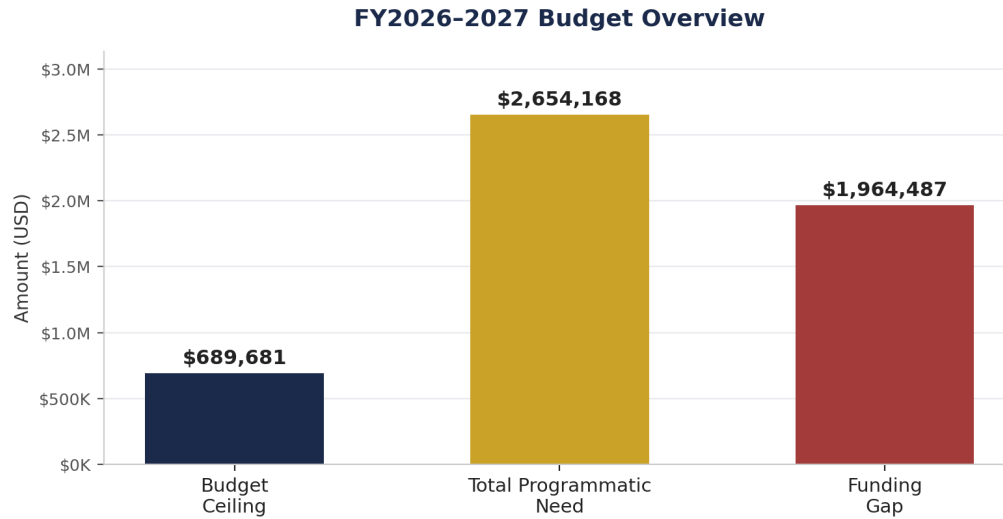
These resources have been shared with Virgin Islands Department of Education leadership, curriculum teams, and instructors, with ongoing engagement to align them with existing programs and identify opportunities for pilot implementation.

This work reflects a broader understanding that Career and Technical Education is both **instructional and developmental**, requiring a curriculum that supports not only technical competence, but also financial literacy, communication, problem-solving, and real-world decision-making.

V. Budget Context and Why More Support Is Needed

Budget Summary Overview

Category	FY2027 Amount
Budget Ceiling	\$689,681
Total Programmatic Need	\$2,654,168
Funding Gap	\$1,964,487



Priority Investments

- Instructional materials and textbooks
- Certification systems and platforms
- Workforce simulation and immersive technology
- CTSO programs and student leadership

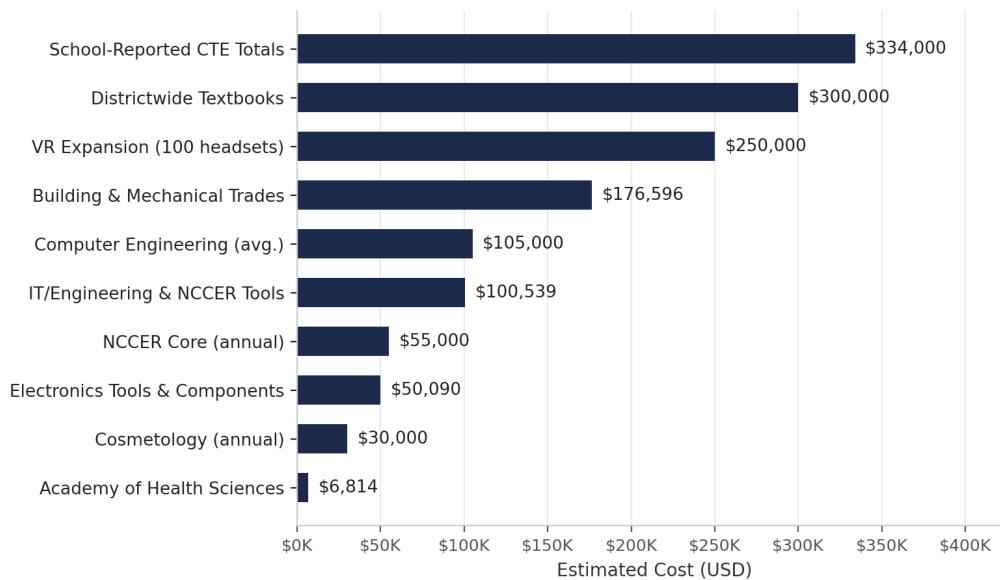
Funding Context

The financial case for stronger investment in Career and Technical Education is directly tied to the **documented needs identified through the Executive Director’s survey and engagement efforts**, which captured program, equipment, and student support requirements across districts, programs, and schools

These figures represent a **cross-section of programmatic and operational needs**, not the full scope of all Career and Technical Education programs across the Territory.

Strong Career and Technical Education programming carries real and necessary costs. These include instructional materials, consumable supplies, industry-specific tools, modern technology, access to certification, and the infrastructure required to deliver meaningful, workforce-aligned training.

FY2027 Program Needs by Category (Total ≈ \$1.41M)



Investment Rationale

The Board's budget request reflects both:

- **Necessity** — the documented needs identified through survey findings demonstrate that current funding is insufficient to sustain program delivery at the level required for students to succeed
- **Opportunity** — strategic investment allows the Board and its partners to strengthen program quality, expand student access, and build a more coordinated and effective Career and Technical Education system

The request also reflects **organizational capacity needs**, including filling a critical position in the St. Thomas office to support program coordination, outreach, communications, and executive operations.

Current Expenditure Context (Appendix B Reference)

Appendix B: VIBCTE Post Audit Statement 1 and Expenditure Summary (FY 2026)

A detailed breakdown of current expenditures is provided in Appendix 2, which reflects the Board's operational spending and financial activity under its existing budget allocation of approximately **\$689,681**.

As of June 30, 2026, expenditures to date total approximately **\$451,258.78**, reflecting costs associated with personnel, fringe benefits, operational supplies, contracted services, travel, and program support.

This expenditure profile demonstrates that the Board's current funding is largely allocated to core operational and administrative functions, limiting the resources available to fully support program expansion, student engagement activities, and the broader instructional and workforce development needs identified in survey findings.

VII. Closing Statement

The Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education is working to build something larger than a budget line and larger than a set of disconnected programs. It is working to build alignment—between education and work, between policy and practice, between schools and industry, between instructional need and public awareness, and between student potential and real opportunity.

We extend sincere appreciation to our staff across both districts for their professionalism, consistency, and dedication to daily operations.

We also acknowledge the interns, educators, school leaders, advisory board members, Board of Education representatives, guest speakers, external partners, union representatives, industry partners, and students whose energy gives this work meaning. Career and technical education belong to the people and future of this Territory. It grows stronger not when it is isolated, but when it is shared, championed, and continuously improved through partnership.

The Board's work over this period has included stakeholder engagement, curriculum advancement, teacher certification reform, communications modernization, advisory board development, student-support initiatives, pathway planning, public awareness efforts, and serious attention to the financial requirements of quality programming.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully ask for your support not only for the Board's budget, but for the broader project of building a stronger, more modern, more equitable, and more visible career and technical education system in the Virgin Islands. Our students deserve it, our educators need it, and our Territory will benefit from it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We stand ready to answer any questions regarding our budget request.

Appendix A: Technical College Tour Delegation (March 30 – April 1, 2026)

- Senator Kurt Vialet
- Senator Avery Lewis
- Senator Carla Joseph
- Senator Clifford Joseph
- Chairman Anthony Mardenborough Jr.
- Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker
- Staff Members of the Office of Senators Vialet, Lewis, and Carla Joseph



Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School



Worcester Technical High School

Appendix B: VIBCTE Post Audit Statement 1 and Expenditure Summary (FY 2026)

LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POST AUDIT DIVISION EXPENDITURES BY PRIME ACCOUNTS STATEMENT 1

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY/OFFICE NAME: VI Board for Career and Technical Education

Fiscal Period	Oct. 1, 2024- Sep. 30, 2025	Oct. 1, 2025 - PRESENT
PERSONNEL SERVICES		
CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE SALARIES	\$194,667.00	\$86,660.32
UNCLASSIFIED EMPL. SALARIES	\$92,966.33	\$52,966.73
TEMP/PART TIME SALARIES	\$0.00	\$0.00
OVERTIME SALARIES	\$2,686.99	\$6,606.41
LUMP SUM PAYMENTS	\$0.00	\$23,644.70
NIGHT DIFFERENTIAL COMP	\$0.00	\$0.00
OTHER DIFFERENTIAL COMP	\$0.00	\$0.00
FEES & COMPENSATION NOC	\$472.32	\$0.00
HOLIDAY PAY	\$17,096.20	\$11,926.22
ALL OTHER		
SUB-TOTAL	\$307,888.84	\$181,804.38
CAPITAL OUTLAYS		
MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT	\$0.00	\$0.00
VEHICLES	\$1,550.00	\$4,280.72
ALL OTHER		
SUB-TOTAL	\$1,550.00	\$4,280.72
FRINGE BENEFITS		
EMPLOYER CONTR. RETIREMENT	\$51,453.79	\$39,533.50
F.I.C.A.	\$17,339.00	\$11,947.61
MEDICARE	\$3,630.39	\$2,892.98
HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM	\$51,608.13	\$38,041.45
WORKERS COMP. PREMIUMS	\$1,206.32	\$0.00
UNIFORM ALLOWANCE	\$282.00	\$1,356.97
ALL OTHER		
SUB-TOTAL	\$125,519.63	\$93,772.51
SUPPLIES		
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$760.90	\$921.66
OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$771.35	\$1,819.00
SMALL TOOLS/MINOR EQUIPMENT	\$237.20	\$3,424.60
ALL OTHER		
SUB-TOTAL	\$1,769.45	\$6,165.26
OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES		
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$10,505.00	\$2,295.00
COMMUNICATION	\$3,216.28	\$20,246.14
TRAVEL	\$31,325.11	\$27,775.16
TRANSPORTATION - NOT TRAVEL	\$1,020.00	\$284.46
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION	\$3,638.00	\$11,086.47
PRINTING AND BINDING	\$0.00	\$360.00
INSURANCE	\$10,953.36	\$0.00
REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	\$9,330.00	\$12,282.00
RENTAL- LAND/BUILDING	\$51,660.87	\$44,624.60
RENTAL - MACHINES/EQUIPMENT	\$0.00	\$0.00

TRAINING	\$11,500.00	\$0.00
SECURITY	\$0.00	\$2,410.00
ALL OTHER		
SUB-TOTAL	\$133,148.62	\$121,363.83
UTILITY SERVICES		
ELECTRICITY	\$2,157.09	\$210.06
WATER		
SUB-TOTAL	\$2,157.09	\$0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$569,876.54	\$407,386.70