

**GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
**Virgin Islands Career and Technical Education Board**



**St. Croix Office**  
 (#6035 Castle Coakley, Suite#6)  
 P. O. Box 5166  
 Christiansted  
 St. Croix, VI 00823  
 (340) 719-0031

**St. Thomas Office**  
 8000 Nisky Center  
 Suite 210  
 Charlotte Amalie  
 St. Thomas, VI 00802  
 (340) 714-7437

*Board of Directors*

**Ms. Jo Murphy**  
*Chairwoman & Certifications*  
[jo.murphy@victneb.com](mailto:jo.murphy@victneb.com)

**Dr. Anastasie Jackson**  
*Vice-Chair & Curriculum*  
[anastasie.jackson@victneb.com](mailto:anastasie.jackson@victneb.com)

**Dr. Michael Francois**  
*Immediate Past Chair*  
[michael.francois@victneb.com](mailto:michael.francois@victneb.com)

**Dr. Suzanne Magras**  
*Secretary*  
[suzanne.magras@victneb.com](mailto:suzanne.magras@victneb.com)

**Ms. Jenny Hawkes**  
*Treasurer*  
[jenny.hawkes@victneb.com](mailto:jenny.hawkes@victneb.com)

**Senator. G. Whitaker**  
*Scholarships*  
[genevieve.whitaker@victneb.com](mailto:genevieve.whitaker@victneb.com)

**Monique Faulkner Ed.D**  
*Ex-Officio*  
[monique.faulkner@victneb.com](mailto:monique.faulkner@victneb.com)

**Mr. Anton W. Döös III**  
 WCEC, FMP, CFSE, EDK  
*Executive Director*  
[admin@victneb.com](mailto:admin@victneb.com)

**Diafra A. Payne**  
 Legislative Assistant  
 Office of Senator Marise C. James  
 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands  
 3022 Estate Golden Rock, Christiansted, U.S. Virgin Islands

November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Subject: Testimony for the **Thursday, November 16, 2023**, Committee on Education & Workforce Development Meeting

Chairman, the Honorable Senator Marise C. James, and Members of the Committee on Education and Workforce Development,

I express my deep appreciation for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Virgin Islands Career and Technical Education Board (VICTEB) regarding our pivotal role in the Virgin Islands' workforce development system. Our steadfast commitment to quality and inclusivity underpins our contributions to the workforce development system. We have meticulously addressed the key elements of our mission and outlined proposals crucial for the future of CTE programs in the Virgin Islands.

**Cooperation and Certification:** The foundation of our work rests on close collaboration with the Department of Education, specifically the State Office of Career, Technical & Adult Education (SOCTAE). This collaboration ensures the proper administration of federal Acts (Perkins), thereby guaranteeing the quality of education in the Virgin Islands.

**High School Career Readiness:** Our dedicated focus on career readiness in grades nine through twelve is central to preparing our students for the workforce. By providing pathways to vocational careers, we equip our youth with the skills they need to succeed. The Board actively researches and supports the DOE in finding sustainable programs.

**Communication with DOE & VIBE:** Maintaining an open-door policy is one of our fundamental principles. We foster transparent and collaborative relationships with the Virgin Islands Department of Education (DOE) and the Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBE). Our partnership extends to organizing town hall meetings, utilizing radio and TV platforms to educate the community, and fulfilling Perkins mandates. These efforts ensure that our CTE programs align with national standards, offering our students the best possible education.

Email:

[CTEB@victneb.com](mailto:CTEB@victneb.com)

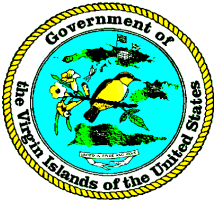


Learning that works for the Virgin Islands

Website: <https://www.victneb.org>

Twitter: [VICTEB1](#)

Facebook: [VICTEB](#)



**GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
**Virgin Islands Career and Technical Education Board**



**St. Croix Office**  
**(#6035 Castle Coakley, Suite#6)**  
P. O. Box 5166  
Christiansted  
St. Croix, VI 00823  
(340) 719-0031

**St. Thomas Office**  
8000 Nisky Center  
Suite 210  
Charlotte Amalie  
St. Thomas, VI 00802  
(340) 714-7437

**Comprehensive Program Components:** The Board stipulates that our CTE programs are carefully designed to include classroom instruction, mentorship, and national certification components. This multifaceted approach ensures that our students are both job and college ready upon program completion.

**Ensuring Accessibility:** Working closely with the Board of Education, we strive to eliminate barriers preventing students from pursuing CTE pathways, ensuring inclusivity in our programs. Our investments in META goggles and financing software for career exploration have been distributed to instructors in both districts.

While we take pride in our achievements, we acknowledge the looming proposals to address the future needs of CTE in the Virgin Islands.

**Lena Schulerbrandt Fund:** Our recent advocacy for the creation of a \$250,000 fund serves a multifaceted purpose. The proposed 'Lena Schulerbrandt Fund' would address emergencies that could disrupt the continuity of CTE programs; pilot the 'Journeyman Instructor' program, allowing us to hire part-time journeymen/professionals at \$30 per hour up to 9 hours per week in 'hard-to-field' CTE fields, and strengthen CTSO Development.

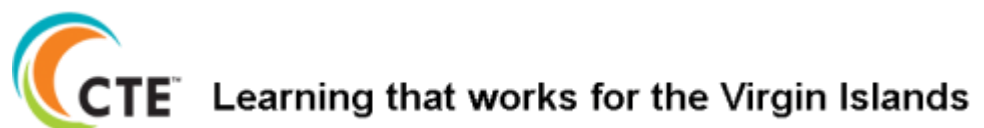
**CTE Emergency:** An example of such an emergency is when our office was contacted just weeks ago to fund emergency repairs for refrigeration at Kean High School. We were the apparent last resort, and the repair was urgent to preserve hundreds of dollars in supplies previously purchased.

**Journeyman Pilot:** The ongoing instructor shortage is a pressing concern, and we propose the creation of a pilot program for Journeyman training to address this challenge. This would entail hiring instructors at \$30 per hour up to 9 hours per week to provide expert training in fields including the construction trades, diesel mechanics, heavy equipment operation, architecture, etc. These positions are not being filled by full-time instructors, and frankly, cannot be filled due to low salaries. This fund is vital to explore this possibility, outside of the usual DOE HR requirements.

**CTSO Development:** Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are essential components of CTE programs, offering students valuable experiences and skills. The proposed Schulerbrandt fund would also support the development and enhancement of CTOSs, ensuring they thrive, and students can attend national conferences and competitions, which are crucial to student development.

Without adequate and transparent local CTE financing, we foresee the risk of CTE education shifting further into the private sector, eventually being absorbed from public education, leaving most of our students ill-prepared for a successful career after high school.

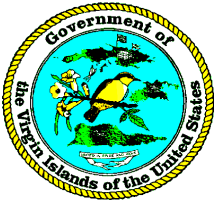
We firmly believe that investing in CTE is an investment in our students' future and the workforce of the Virgin Islands. In the past, the senate allocated \$30K per high school to support OJT (On-the-Job-Training) and summer programs—gone today! OJT for our high school programs of study, which was the norm 10 years ago, has been removed from most of our programs of study due to a lack of funding.



**Website:** <https://www.victeb.org>

**Twitter:** [VICTEB1](#)

**Facebook:** [VICTEB](#)



**GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
**Virgin Islands Career and Technical Education Board**

**St. Croix Office**  
**(#6035 Castle Coakley, Suite#6)**  
P. O. Box 5166  
Christiansted  
St. Croix, VI 00823  
(340) 719-0031

**St. Thomas Office**  
8000 Nisky Center  
Suite 210  
Charlotte Amalie  
St. Thomas, VI 00802  
(340) 714-7437



We implore this Chair and all our Senators to consider funding both the ‘Lena Schulterbrandt’ proposal and reinvesting in OJT for our high school students. These vital proposals will strengthen both CTE and Workforce Development.

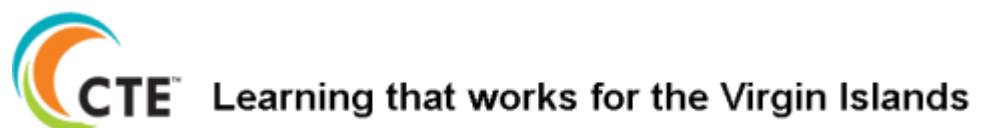
Furthermore, we persist in advocating for the establishment of a separate pillar within the Department of Education dedicated to CTE. The complexity of CTE education necessitates a unique approach and dedicated resources. We draw a parallel to the scenario of a shoemaker needing to send roller skate boots to a specialized mechanic division. Academia, in its current form, is not equipped to handle the intricacies of CTE. Therefore, we emphasize the need for a separate pillar within the DOE, housing the state office of adult and CTE, district CTE coordinators, and all CTE-related tasks, including curriculum development and maintenance.

In conclusion, we sincerely appreciate your support for the VI CTE Board's ongoing efforts to enhance the workforce development system in the Virgin Islands. We firmly believe that the proposed fund and the establishment of a separate CTE pillar within the DOE are vital steps in ensuring the success and sustainability of our CTE programs. We are dedicated to the betterment of education and workforce development in our community.

Thank you for your time, dedication, and unwavering support.

Sincerely,

Ms. Murphy Chairwoman of the VI CTE Board



**Website:** <https://www.victeb.org>

**Twitter:** [VICTEB1](#)

**Facebook:** [VICTEB](#)