

# **REFORMING, REBUILDING, AND REBRANDING PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HEARING**

**PRESENTED ON JUNE 17, 2024  
DR. DIONNE WELLS-HEDRINGTON COMMISSIONER**



**Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Ed.D.**  
Commissioner

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**



**St. Thomas:** 1834 Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie  
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-6746

**St. Croix:** 2133 Hospital Street, Christiansted  
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands 00820-4665

Tel: (340) 774-0100  
dionne.wells@vide.vi  
www.vide.vi

June 17, 2024

Honorable Marise C. James, Chairwoman  
Committee on Education and Workforce Development  
No. 20 Estate Golden Rock  
Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00820

*Sent electronically via [mjames@legvi.org](mailto:mjames@legvi.org).*

Dear Senator James:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the status of school facilities, the Bureau of School Construction and Maintenance, and a detailed breakdown of federal grants and utilization of funds for their respective purposes or programs they support.

This handbook provides testimony and accompanying information. Thank you for your continued support and attention regarding the needs of the Virgin Islands Department of Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dionne Wells-Hedrington".

Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

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## Statement by the Commissioner

Good morning, Committee Chairwoman, Senator Marise C. James. Vice-chair, Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory, other committee members: Senator Diane T. Capehart, Senator Dwayne M. DeGraff, Senator Javon E. James, Sr., Senator Franklin D. Johnson, and Senator Carla J. Joseph; other members of the 35<sup>th</sup> legislature, listening and viewing audience. I am Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Education where we remain committed to ensuring that every single child that walks through our doors can be educated, empowered, and enriched to be the best version of themselves. I want to thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the end of the year data review, to include accomplishments, challenges, and next steps for the 2024-2025 school year.

With me are members of my leadership team: Mr. Victor Somme III, Assistant Commissioner; Dr. Renee Charleswell, Deputy Commissioner of Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Carla Bastian-Knight, Acting St. Croix Insular Superintendent; Dr. Stefan Jürgen, St. Thomas-St. John Insular Superintendent; Mr. Alan Fleming, Chief Operations Officer; Ms. Nicole Jacobs, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Yauncey Milligan, Director of Maintenance-St. Croix District; and Mr. Gene Weekes, Director of Maintenance-St. Thomas-St. John District.

My testimony today begins with commending the hard-working employees of the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) for their commitment, dedication, and passion for our children as we embark on yet another year of enriching, inspiring, and educating the young minds of this territory. We have had our share of challenges, but together we have been able to weather every storm as we work to improve the level of service to our children and families. At the VIDE, we share in the common vision that we are “*Transforming Today's Learners into Tomorrow's Leaders.*” Communication is key to our rebranding, and we will continue our efforts to keep the internal and external stakeholders informed. It is important that we identify our issues, own our issues, find solutions to them, and execute.

At VIDE, we aren't accepting excuses, but our mindsets must be one that is solution-driven through accountability. The VIDE cannot fix all the ailments of our public education system without the involvement of every single stakeholder, to include this body. At this time, I would like to commend all of you for your commitment to the people of this community, and more importantly, to the children of the Virgin Islands as we improve the public school system.

## Enrollment Data

Public school enrollment has declined, as shown in the table below, over the past five years. This has been influenced by many factors. Key contributors include demographic shifts such as declining birth rates leading to fewer school-age children and an increasing senior population. Economic factors also play a role, with families facing financial challenges that may affect their ability to afford living costs required to reside in the Virgin Islands. The closing of housing communities is a contributing factor that has caused a major shift in the population, more so in the St. Croix district. Additionally, there has been an increasing trend towards alternate education methods, such as homeschooling and online learning, which can divert students away from traditional school settings. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated

these trends, as many families reassessed their educational choices amidst health concerns and disruptions to conventional schooling systems.

Over the past five (5) years, the St. Thomas-St. John School District enrollment decreased from 5,415 in 2019-2020 to 5,220 in 2023-2024 school year (SY) which is a difference of 185 students. Please note however, that from the 2022-2023 SY to 2023-2024 SY we had a 136 increase. The projections suggest that we will see signs of growth moving forward in the St. Thomas-St. John District. In the St. Croix District, we saw similar trends with a decline over the five (5) years from 5,492 in the 2019-2020 SY to 5,082 in the 2023-2024 SY, which is a difference of 410 students. What was very striking to us was the analysis from the 2022-2023 SY enrollment of 5,072 to 2023-2024 SY of 5,082, which was only an increase of 10 students. Pay close attention to our high school data which shows that our enrollment is significantly lower. For example, Charlotte Amalie High School has a capacity of 1,600 students and historically it has had 1,350 students, and now only has 1,076 students. As a territory, we are closely monitoring our enrollment data to ensure that we are maximizing our human capital to ensure that all our schools are adequately staffed.

**Table1: Enrollment**

<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
<b>St. Thomas-St. John District</b>	<b>5,415</b>	<b>5,542</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>5,094</b>	<b>5,230</b>
Jane E. Tuitt Elementary School	218	225	178	169	154
Joseph Gomez Elementary School	527	531	459	420	462
Joseph Sibilly Elementary School	239	237	239	231	226
Lockhart Elementary School	372	328	284	298	977
Ulla F. Muller Elementary School	457	477	437	420	401
Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky Elementary School	380	397	381	428	433
Julius E. Sprauve School	209	224	199	202	225
Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School	547	577	515	507	538
Addelita Cancryn School	770	763	744	686	
Charlotte Amalie High School	1,016	1,063	1,000	1,031	1,076
Ivanna Eudora Kean High School	680	720	707	702	738
<b>St. Croix District</b>	<b>5,492</b>	<b>5,451</b>	<b>5,091</b>	<b>5,072</b>	<b>5,082</b>
Alfredo Andrews Elementary School	495	478	439	460	495
Claude O. Markoe Elementary School	428	429	414	383	403
Eulalie Rivera	398	412	587	619	645
Juanita Gardine	378	371	348	321	305
Lew Muckle Elementary School	328	355	324	342	339
Pearl B. Larsen	414	418	410	443	432
Ricardo Richards Elementary School	435	427	380	407	392
Arthur A. Richards	486	487			
John H. Woodson Junior High School	376	401	579	538	461
St. Croix Central High School	829	796	764	726	717
St. Croix Educational Complex High School	925	877	846	833	893
<b>Virgin Islands</b>	<b>10,907</b>	<b>10,993</b>	<b>10,234</b>	<b>10,166</b>	<b>10,312</b>

## Demographic Data for Student Enrollment

Our demographic data shows that most of our students are of African American decent. However, it is important to note that the Hispanic population is steadily increasing and has increased from the 2022-2023 SY to the 2023-2024 SY by 96 students. This increase signifies the urgency for us to appropriately allocate resources to support our learners.

**Table 2: Demographic Data**

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>St. Thomas-St. John District</b>	<b>5,415</b>	<b>5,542</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>5,094</b>	<b>5,230</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	8	7	8	8	8
Asian	36	48	59	47	47
Black or African American	4,486	4,579	4,227	4,216	4,322
Hispanic	757	789	740	726	754
Multi-Racial	19	23	18	15	16
Native Hawaiian / Other Pac Islander	2	3	1	0	0
White	107	93	90	82	83
<b>St. Croix District</b>	<b>5,492</b>	<b>5,451</b>	<b>5,091</b>	<b>5,072</b>	<b>5,082</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2	1	2	1
Asian	29	21	17	23	33
Black or African American	3,865	3,869	3,641	3,676	3,611
Hispanic	1,515	1,487	1,365	1,306	1,365
Multi-Racial	14	15	13	14	9
Native Hawaiian / Other Pac Islander	5	3	3	1	1
White	63	54	51	50	62
<b>Virgin Islands</b>	<b>10,907</b>	<b>10,993</b>	<b>10,234</b>	<b>10,166</b>	<b>10,312</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	9	9	9	10	9
Asian	65	69	76	70	80
Black or African American	8,351	8,448	7,868	7,892	7,933
Hispanic	2,272	2,276	2,105	2,032	2,119
Multi-Racial	33	38	31	29	25
Native Hawaiian / Other Pac Islander	7	6	4	1	1
White	170	174	141	132	145

**Table 3: Demographic Enrollment Data by Gender**

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>St. Thomas-St. John District</b>	<b>5,415</b>	<b>5,542</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>5,094</b>	<b>5,230</b>
Female	2,608	2,635	2,434	2,427	2,509
Male	2,807	2,907	2,709	2,667	2,721
<b>St. Croix District</b>	<b>5,492</b>	<b>5,451</b>	<b>5,091</b>	<b>5,072</b>	<b>5,082</b>

Female	2,702	2,714	2,496	2,469	2,487
Male	2,790	2,737	2,595	2,603	2,595
<b>Virgin Islands</b>	<b>10,907</b>	<b>10,993</b>	<b>10,234</b>	<b>10,166</b>	<b>10,312</b>
Female	5,310	5,349	4,930	4,896	4,996
Male	5,597	5,644	5,304	5,270	5,316

## Academic Performance Data

Academic performance data serves as a cornerstone in the quest to enhance student achievement. This data, encompassing grades, test scores, attendance records, and behavioral reports, plays a pivotal role in shaping educational experiences and outcomes.

Imagine a school where each student's journey is closely monitored through comprehensive performance data. Teachers can pinpoint the exact areas where students excel and where they need extra help. For instance, a student struggling with math might receive additional resources and personalized attention, while another excelling in science might be offered advanced coursework to further their skills. This targeted approach ensures that every student receives the support they need to thrive.

The data also enables personalized learning, allowing educators to tailor their teaching methods and materials to individual student needs. This means that a student who learns best through visual aids can have their lessons adapted to include more diagrams and videos, while another who prefers hands-on activities can engage in more practical exercises. Such customization helps each student learn in the way that suits them best, maximizing their potential for success.

Monitoring progress is another critical function of academic performance data. By tracking students' performance over time, educators can see whether students are meeting their academic goals and standards. If a student's performance dips, immediate interventions can be implemented to get them back on track. This continuous monitoring ensures that no student falls through the cracks. Such programs include the iReady intervention program in reading and math.

Beyond the classroom, academic performance data holds schools and educators accountable. It provides a clear picture of how well a school is performing and where improvements are needed. This accountability fosters a culture of continuous improvement, encouraging schools to adopt best practices and innovative teaching methods.

Resource allocation is another area where performance data proves invaluable. Schools can make informed decisions about where to allocate their limited resources, ensuring that areas with the greatest need receive the necessary support. Whether it's additional funding for a struggling school or new technology for a classroom, data-driven decisions ensure that resources are used effectively.

Moreover, academic performance data informs educational planning and policymaking of the Commissioner's Office. We use this data to develop curricula and policies that address the

specific needs of their student populations. It also supports school improvement plans, ensuring that strategies are grounded in real, actionable data.

Parents, too, benefit from access to academic performance data. By staying informed about their child's progress, they can engage more deeply in their education. Regular updates on performance help parents support their children’s learning at home, fostering a collaborative effort between home and school.

For students preparing for higher education and their future careers, performance data is crucial. It helps students identify their strengths and areas of interest, guiding their choices for college majors and career paths. Additionally, this data is often required for college admissions and scholarship applications, making it an essential part of their educational journey.

Finally, performance data guides the professional development of school administrators, teachers and staff. By highlighting areas where educators need further training or support, schools can provide targeted professional development programs. This continuous learning helps educators stay current with the latest teaching strategies and technologies, ultimately benefiting their students.

### Subgroup Data

The VIDE has been working to meet the needs of exceptional populations. This has been challenging because of limited human resources. Despite the challenges both districts have found ways to navigate to ensure that staff are trained in techniques and strategies that can be used to assist those learners. Special education has experienced challenges in staffing students on a timely basis in addition to providing services based on students’ individual educational plan. The VIDE is currently in negotiations to partner with an entity to assist us in this endeavor. Despite the significant challenges posed by limited resources, the State Office of Bilingual Education, in close collaboration with various stakeholders, has achieved remarkable progress. Together, we successfully established the ESOL Hub, which now boasts 45 active members, and enriched the ESOL Hot Spot with 317 valuable resources. The #GoOpen USVI/ESOL Hub initiative has been a significant focus, utilizing Microsoft in Education tools like Immersive Reader, Reading Coach, Dictation, and Translation to support our English language learners. We will continue to support our teachers by providing them with training as well.

**Table 4: English Language Learners (4yrs by district)**

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>St. Thomas-St. John District</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>1,074</b>
Limited English Proficiency	538	840	903	1,046
Student with Disabilities & Limited English Proficiency	26	36	30	28
<b>St. Croix District</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>270</b>



Limited English Proficiency	181	231	237	243
Student with Disabilities & Limited English Proficiency	24	37	33	27
<b>Virgin Islands</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>1,344</b>
Limited English Proficiency	719	1,071	1,140	1,289
Student with Disabilities & Limited English Proficiency	50	73	63	55

**Table 5: Special Education Student Enrollment (4yrs by district)**

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>St. Thomas-St. John District</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>310</b>
Student with Disabilities	261	346	317	282
Student with Disabilities & Limited English Proficiency	26	36	30	28
<b>St. Croix District</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>394</b>
Student with Disabilities	273	424	403	367
Student with Disabilities & Limited English Proficiency	24	37	33	27
<b>Virgin Islands</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>704</b>
Student with Disabilities	534	770	720	649
Student with Disabilities & Limited English Proficiency	50	73	63	55

**Table 6: Homeschool Enrollment (4yrs)**

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
St. Thomas-St. John District	130	46	45	41
St. Croix District	131	86	69	63
Virgin Islands	261	132	114	104

## Absenteeism Data

Absenteeism data reveals that our schools are struggling with students who have issues attending school regularly. By examining this data, our administrators have been able to identify patterns such as which days of the week have higher absentee rates, whether absenteeism is more prevalent in certain grades or among specific student demographics, and if there are seasonal trends. Early identification enables timely intervention to address the root causes, whether they are academic, social or related to health issues. There is a strong correlation between attendance and academic performance. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to perform better academically.

With the identification of those chronically absent students, schools can take steps to ensure that students do not fall behind. This data can be used for the allocation of resources, and even identify issues such as bullying, lack of engagement, or other factors contributing to a negative environment. Data driven insights will assist VIDE through our interagency partnerships to develop policies and programs designed to reduce absenteeism. As you look closely at Addendum 1, the data reveals that the high absenteeism rates can be seen in the early grade levels like PreK to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in several of our elementary schools. Therefore, we are petitioning our parents to understand that bringing your child to school is not an option but a requirement. Every day missed puts your child behind in their academic journey.

For the 2024-2025 SY, ALL students with chronic absenteeism will be referred to the Department of Human Services to intervene, especially if contact is made with parents and no improvements are made. If necessary, the VIDE will also seek assistance from the Family Division of the Virgin Islands Superior Court for chronic absenteeism. Students with health-related issues will require our basic child study teams to put measures in place to bridge the gaps in their academics such as Section 504 plans. Schools will examine students' attendance case by case, but action will be taken by the VIDE to ensure that our children's education remains our priority.

**Table 7: Absenteeism Date by District**

<b>Chronic Absenteeism</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024*</b>
St. Thomas-St. John District	32.8	39.6	19.0
St. Croix District	33.7	40.8	38.4
Virgin Islands	33.3	35.1	28.5

## Dropout Rates

Reduced dropout rates in high schools are significant because they lead to a more educated workforce, higher earning potential for individuals, and reduced societal costs related to unemployment and social services. Additionally, lower dropout rates contribute to improved social outcomes, such as decreased crime rates and better health. Ensuring more students complete their high school education also promotes greater social equity and community stability. Our schools have been doing an exceptional job at tracking our students to ensure that early interventions are put into place to support the child and their needs. What we have observed is an increase in students having to work to help to support their families. This remains a societal concern as the VIDE continues to work with our partners to provide alternatives.

**Table 8: Dropout Rates by District – 5 years**

	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
St. Thomas-St. John District	5.0	4.6	2.5	4.3	2.2
St. Croix District	4.8	3.5	2.1	3.8	2.3
Virgin Islands	4.9	4.1	2.3	4.1	2.2

## Graduation Rates

Increased graduation rates at high schools are crucial for individuals, communities, and society. They enhance economic opportunities and personal development for graduates, leading to higher wages, better job prospects, and access to further education. For our communities, higher graduation rates stimulate economic growth, social stability, and civic engagement. At the VIDE, we have invested in a system through the PowerSchool platform called Naviance which will be rolled out in the 2024-2025 SY. Naviance is the leading college, career and life readiness (CCLR) platform equipping over 10-million students with pathways to success. Naviance provides students with impactful tools to plan for a future that aligns with their strengths and interests, whether that's continued education, military enrollment, or direct entry into the workforce. It ensures that every student has access to high-quality resources to achieve milestones toward their postsecondary goals. Multi-language support in 70+ languages help to provide increased access to more students and families. This platform implements holistic counseling in a single platform where students, families, and staff can collaborate to build and track students' plans for future success. Lastly, it provides school districts with data and insights to track, measure, and drive the effectiveness of their College, Career and Life Readiness initiatives. At VIDE our graduation rate is steadily increasing which shows that we are preparing our students to fulfill the requirements.

**Table 9: Graduation rates (by district 5 yrs.)**

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
St. Thomas-St. John District	57.1	60.2	66.5	72.1	76.8
St. Croix District	59.8	81.9	77.3	76.6	79.5
Virgin Islands	62.6	70.9	71.4	74.4	78.0

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Data

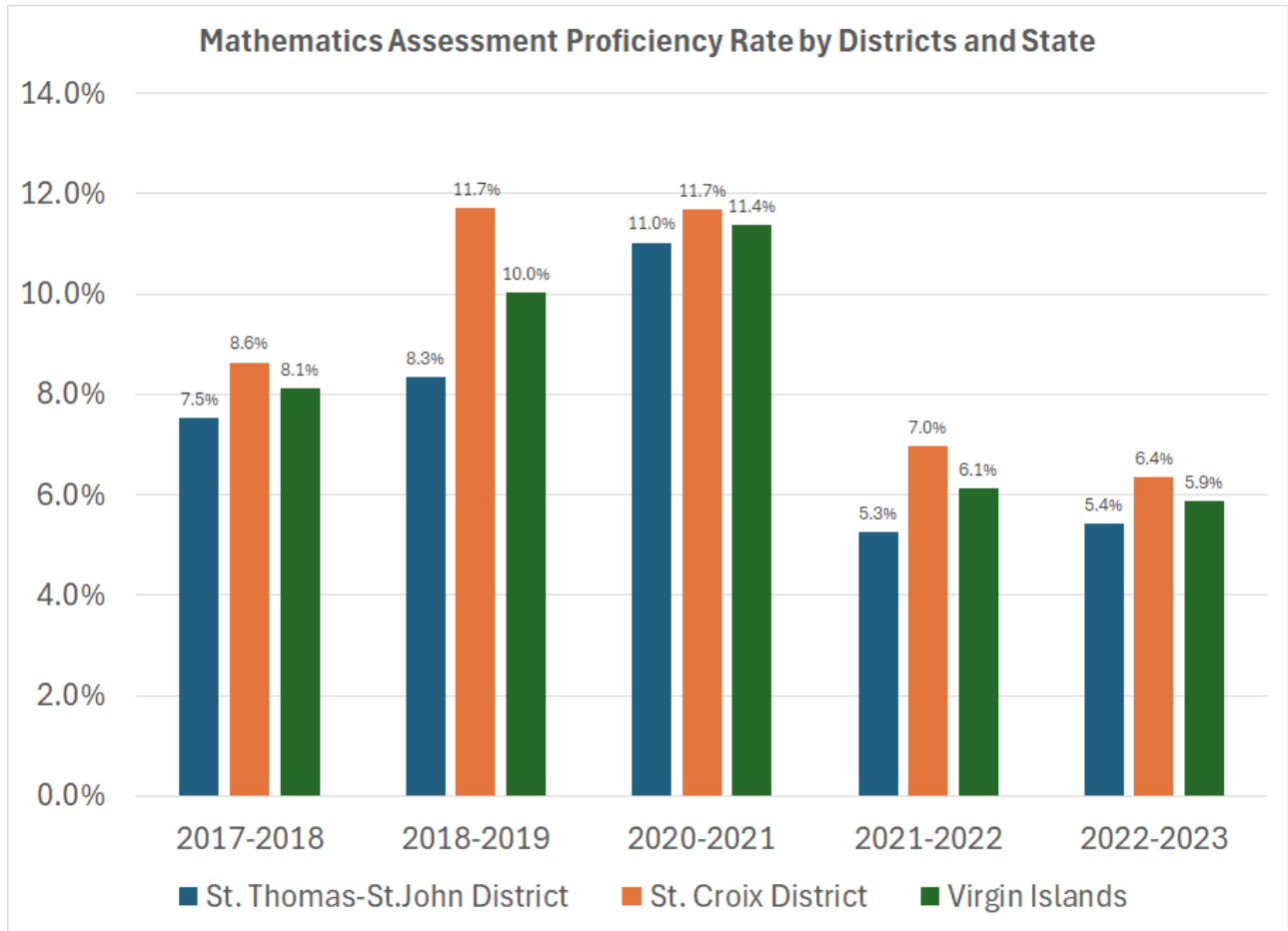
The VIDE uses the Smarter Balanced Assessment as the tool to measure our students and their adequate yearly progress. That data is reviewed longitudinally and latitudinally comparing cohorts and measuring students' data across grade levels. As the chief academic officers of their schools, principals have hosted data chats with teachers, students and parents as they review each student's overall performance. Each school has set a measurable goal as part of their school improvement process that focuses on academic growth. Schools are focusing and channeling resources towards the early childhood years with intentionally targeted training for this upcoming school year on the science of reading and explicit math instruction. We understand as a territory that we must guarantee that our children have a strong foundation and are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. These data chats have allowed the school teams to dive deep into the data and use their allotted federal funds to create plans to address student achievement gaps.

Tier One instruction, the primary level of support in multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), is paramount in ensuring all students have access to grade-level content and foundational skills. It establishes a strong academic foundation by providing high-quality, research-based instruction that meets the needs of most students. By targeting the whole class, Tier One instruction creates a supportive learning environment where students are actively engaged, receive differentiated instruction, and have opportunities to practice and apply their knowledge. Investing in Tier One instruction is vital for academic success, reducing the need for later interventions, and promoting equity by ensuring all students have access to the same high-quality learning experiences.

**Table 10: Smarter Balanced Data (5 yrs. by grade level for each district) Graph**

	2017-2018		2018-2019		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023	
	ELA	MAT	ELA	MAT	ELA	MAT	ELA	MAT	ELA	MAT
<b>STTJ District</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>5.4</b>
Grade 3	0.0	0.0	15.0	9.8	21.6	14.0	10.9	6.4	12.8	6.8
Grade 4	17.8	6.2	15.6	10.2	13.2	15.0	12.9	5.9	12.4	6.6
Grade 5	20.3	8.7	24.5	4.7	14.1	9.1	12.4	4.7	14.2	6.3
Grade 6	23.1	3.1	23.9	10.7	14.7	8.5	12.8	7.1	14.2	7.6
Grade 7	13.2	6.8	15.5	7.1	20.5	8.8	13.2	4.0	13.2	4.9
Grade 8	25.3	8.1	19.8	6.9	20.1	10.0	16.6	4.0	13.2	0.9
Grade 11	44.1	14.3	38.3	9.2	23.7	11.1	27.6	4.8	32.3	5.3
<b>STX District</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>6.4</b>
Grade 3			20.6	15.8	23.1	20.8	16.6	11.3	13.7	8.4
Grade 4	23.7	8.2	20.6	13.9	19.6	13.9	14.0	5.5	16.3	7.9
Grade 5	25.2	11.4	28.2	11.4	20.6	7.1	19.8	3.8	16.3	6.1
Grade 6	30.0	4.3	31.1	11.3	18.3	5.0	21.5	7.5	22.3	7.3
Grade 7	24.0	8.1	24.5	11.2	25.9	14.2	18.2	6.3	16.1	5.1
Grade 8	33.5	8.2	30.1	9.0	19.7	8.5	20.4	8.7	14.1	4.6
Grade 11	50.3	12.5	42.6	8.8	35.5	13.4	31.7	4.5	29.8	5.5
<b>Virgin Islands</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>
Grade 3	0.0	0.0	17.9	12.9	22.3	17.4	13.8	8.9	13.2	7.6
Grade 4	20.9	7.3	18.2	12.1	16.6	14.5	13.4	5.7	14.3	7.2
Grade 5	22.8	10.0	26.3	8.0	17.9	8.0	16.1	4.3	15.2	6.2
Grade 6	26.5	3.7	27.5	11.0	16.7	6.6	17.7	7.3	18.1	7.5
Grade 7	19.9	7.6	19.7	9.0	23.3	11.7	16.2	5.4	14.7	5.0
Grade 8	31.1	8.2	25.0	8.0	19.9	9.2	18.7	6.6	13.6	2.7
Grade 11	47.4	13.4	40.6	9.0	29.3	12.2	29.3	4.7	31.3	5.3

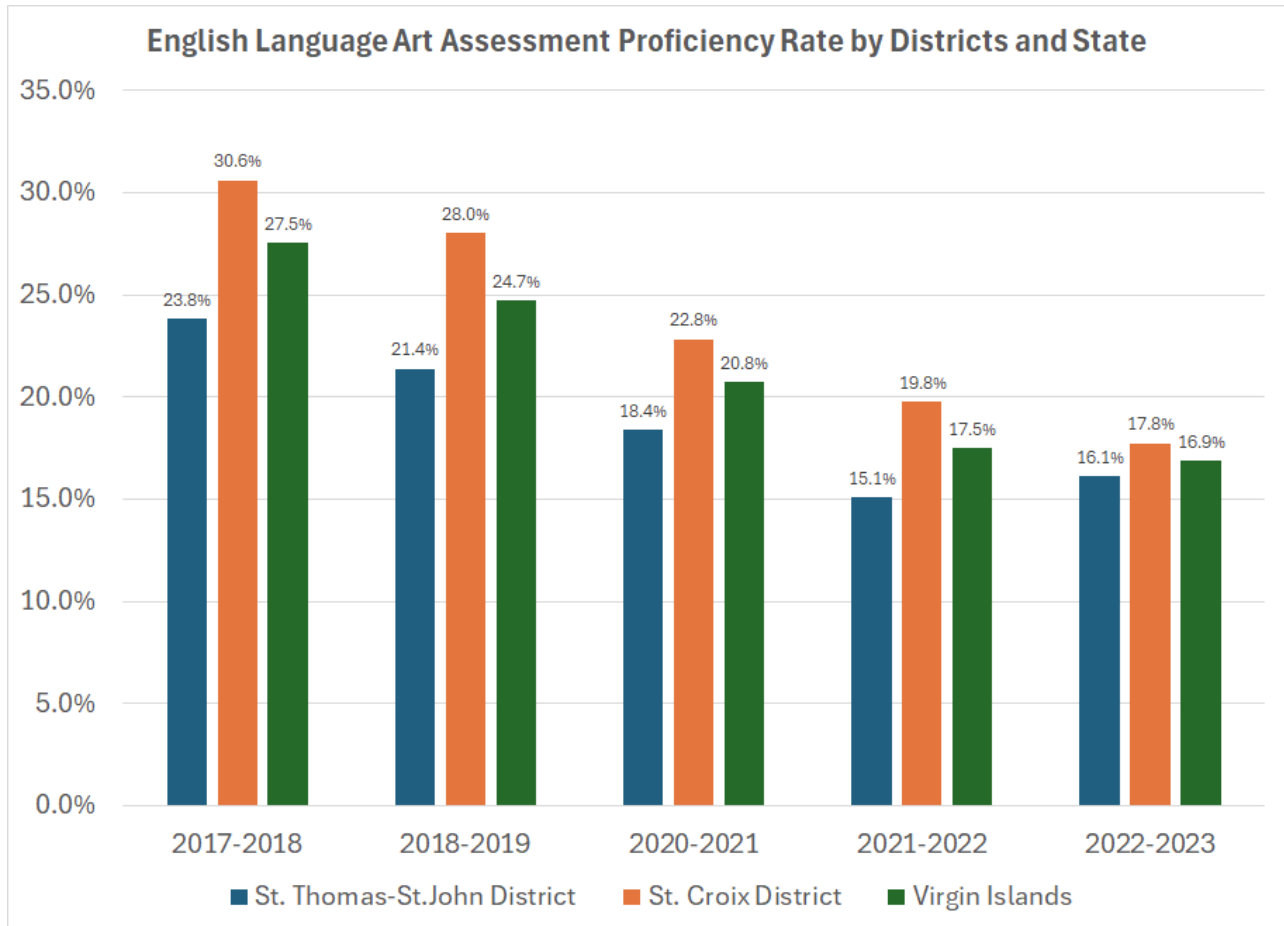
**Figure 1: SBAC Math Assessment Proficiency by District and State**



Historically, math proficiency rates have been significantly low. When speaking with administrators and educators, you'll hear various explanations for this trend. Our students can solve basic mathematical equations, but they struggle with word problems or multi-step computations. This difficulty often stems from their ability to understand what the questions are asking. Fundamental reading skills are at the core of our performance challenges in both English Language Art (ELA) and math.

In 2017-2018, the St. Thomas-St. John District had a proficiency rate of 7.5% and the St. Croix District was at 8.6%. The following year, 2018-2019, saw a slight increase for St. Thomas-St. John to 8.3%, while St. Croix experienced a 3.1% increase to 11.7% proficiency. In 2020-2021 the St. Thomas-St. John district increased to 11% and St. Croix maintained the same rate of 11.7%. However, this peak was followed by a decline in 2021-2022, where St. Thomas-St. John dropped to 5.3%, St. Croix to 7.0%, and the overall rate to 6.1%. The most recent data for 2022-2023 indicates a slight recovery with St. Thomas-St. John at 5.4%, St. Croix at 6.4%, which shows that the territory is beginning to make incremental increases. The unofficial glance at this year's data shows more sign of an increase.

**Figure 2: SBAC ELA Assessment Proficiency by District and State**



Research shows that students who are proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade are more likely to succeed academically in later years. By the 3rd grade, students transition from learning to read to reading to learn, making it essential for them to have developed strong reading skills by this stage. Early reading proficiency is linked to better academic outcomes, higher graduation rates, and improved opportunities in adulthood. Therefore, prioritizing the science of reading in early education is a focus for VIDE to set our students on a path to lifelong success. Analysis of our data shows that in the 2017-2018 SY, the proficiency rates were 23.8% for St. Thomas-St. John, and 30.6% for St. Croix, with the Virgin Islands at 27.5%. The following year, 2018-2019, saw a slight decrease in proficiency across all areas, with St. Thomas-St. John at 21.4%, St. Croix at 28.0%, and the Virgin Islands at 24.7%.

The 2020-2021 SY marked a significant dip in proficiency rates, particularly in St. Thomas-St. John, which fell to 18.4%, while St. Croix saw a smaller decrease to 22.8%, and the Virgin Islands overall dropped to 20.8%. This downward trend continued in the 2021-2022 SY, with St. Thomas-St. John at 15.1%, St. Croix at 19.8%, and the Virgin Islands at 17.5%. This was at the heart of the Covid-19 pandemic era.

By the 2022-2023 SY, the proficiency rates showed a modest recovery, with St. Thomas-St. John at 16.1%, St. Croix at 17.8%, and the Virgin Islands at 16.9%. This was the first full year of face-to-face instruction which serves as the baseline for our school improvement process. The Smarter Balanced reporting for the 2023-2024 SY will be released in October 2024. The unofficial data has shown that there are increases in the proficiency rates by schools. The data received this year will be compared to the previous year to determine the level of growth experienced at each school.

This data suggests that there are underlying challenges in achieving higher ELA proficiency rates across the territory, with the St. Thomas-St. John District facing more pronounced difficulties. The decline observed during the pandemic period emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to address learning losses and improve educational outcomes in these districts. Academic recovery action steps are included in each individual school improvement plans and we anticipate that their will continue to be growth across the territory as we work to improve our instructional strategies and utilize interventions to close those gaps.

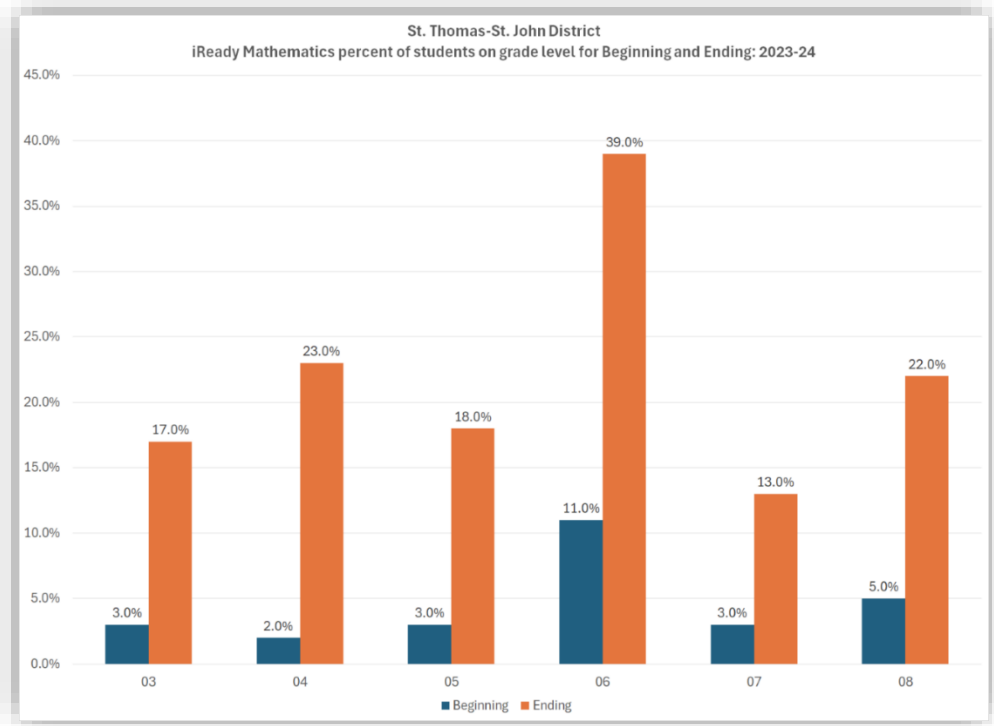
## iReady Intervention Program

The iReady intervention program is a comprehensive educational tool purchased by the Department designed to help students achieve their academic potential. Tailored to meet individual student needs, iReady provides personalized instruction in mathematics and reading, ensuring that each learner progresses at their own pace. One of the strengths of iReady is its adaptive assessment feature, which accurately identifies student proficiency levels and areas needing improvement. This ensures that the instruction is always relevant and appropriately challenging. The program also includes engaging and interactive lessons, which help maintain student interest and motivation.

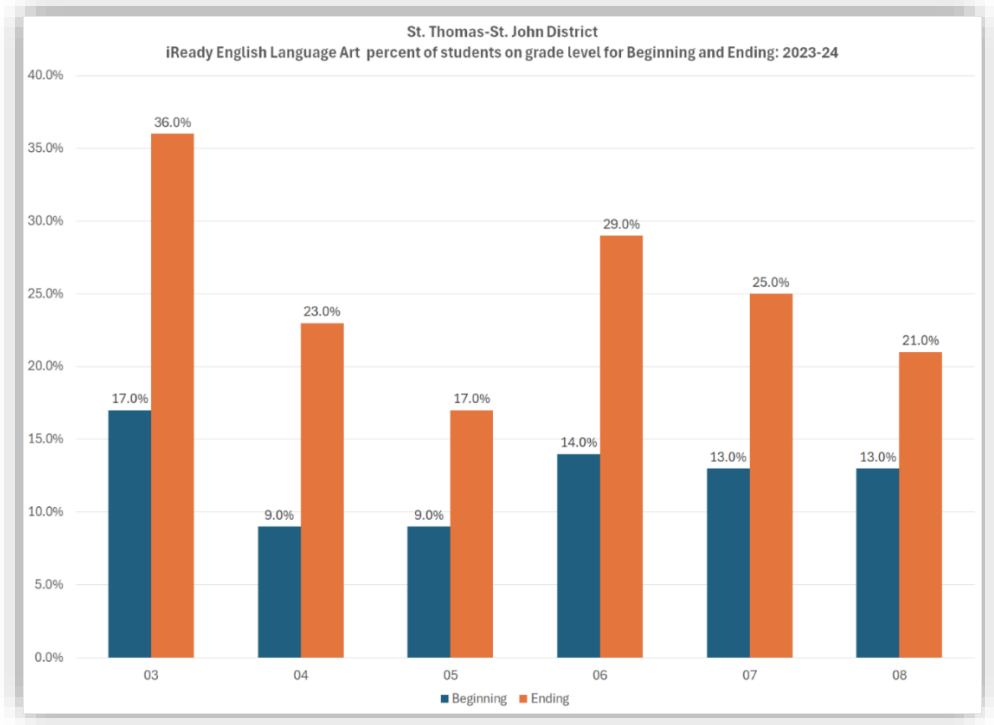
Teachers benefit from iReady's detailed reporting capabilities. The program provides real-time data on student performance, enabling educators to make informed decisions and adjust instruction as needed. This data-driven approach helps to target interventions more effectively, ensuring that each student receives the support they need to succeed.

Studies have shown that students who regularly use iReady demonstrate significant gains in both reading and mathematics. These improvements are particularly pronounced in struggling learners, who often see the most dramatic progress. Additionally, iReady has been praised for helping to close achievement gaps, ensuring that all students can succeed academically. The data provided shows student's performance at the beginning of the year versus the end of the year assessment. This program is available to students from kindergarten to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The recommended usage is 45 minutes a week. We suffered with challenges with Internet connectivity that impacted usage on some sites. However, overall, as displayed by the growth, our students have begun to close the gap.

**Figure 3: iReady Math Assessment Data – St. Thomas-St. John District**

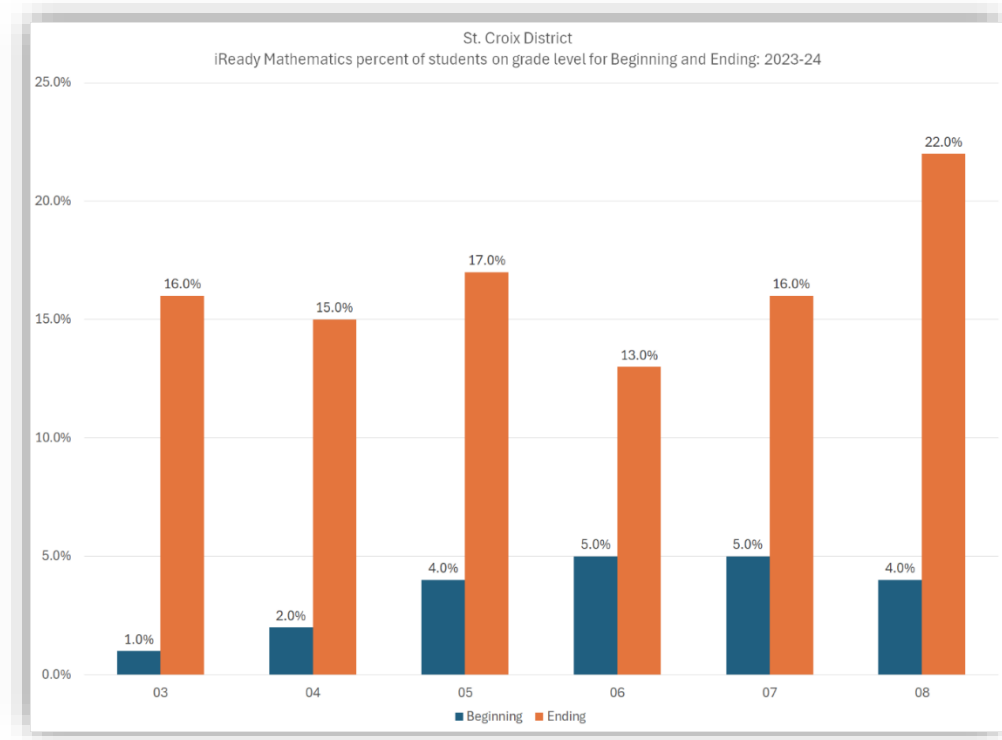


**Figure 4: iReady ELA Data – St. Thomas-St. John District**

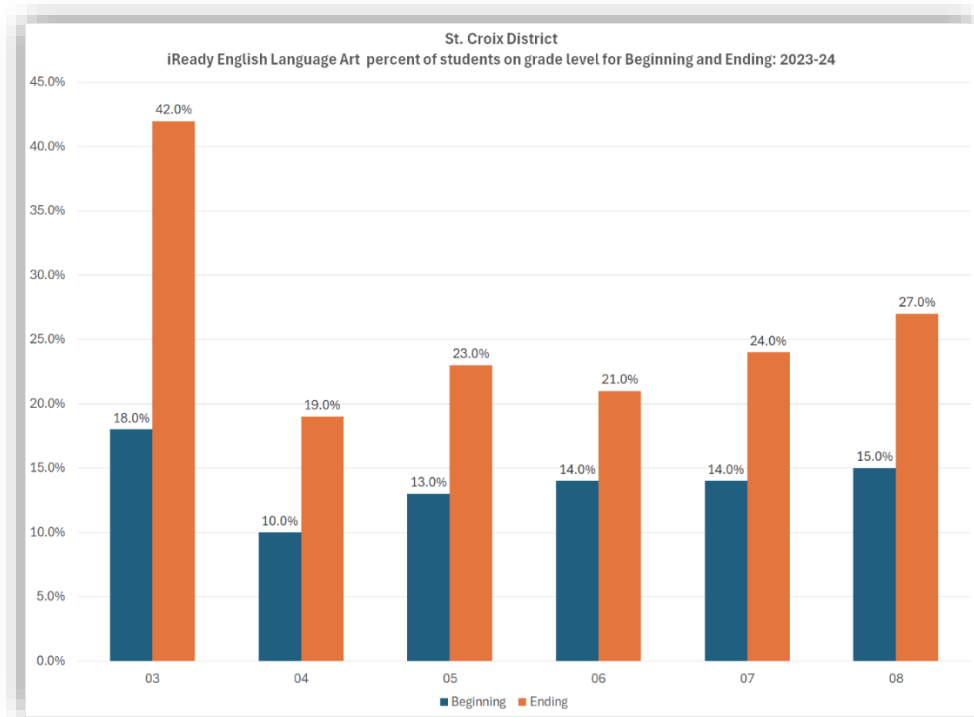




**Figure 5: iReady Mathematics Data – St. Croix District**



**Figure 6: iReady ELA Data – St. Croix District**



## Vacancy Data by Schools

The United States is currently grappling with a nationwide crisis in teacher vacancies, leaving many schools and districts struggling to provide quality education. This pervasive issue has been exacerbated by a combination of factors, including low salaries, inadequate support, and the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, classrooms are often left without qualified instructors, forcing schools to rely on substitutes or increase class sizes, which negatively affects student learning and engagement. The shortage of educators not only compromises the academic future of students but also places a significant strain on the remaining teachers, leading to burnout and further intensifying the vacancy problem. Urgent and comprehensive measures are needed to address this critical issue and ensure that every student has access to a dedicated and well-supported teacher. The VIDE continues to recruit on various platforms to include international teachers to fill those vacancies.

**Table 11: St. Croix District Vacancy Listing**

School	Quantity	Position
Educational Complex HS	1	Math
	1	Social Studies
	1	Physical Education
	1	Spanish
	2	Special Education Paraprofessional
	1	Band
Central HS	4	Science Teacher
	1	Art Teacher
	1	English
Ricardo Richards ES	1	Regular Elementary Teacher
Juanita Gardine K8	1	Primary Teacher
	2	SPED MOD IV Teachers
	1	SPED Resource Teacher
Career & Technical (CTE)	1	Carpentry Instructor
	1	Plumbing Instructor
	1	Small Engine Instructor
	1	Auto Mechanic Instructor
	1	Phlebotomy Instructor
	1	Childcare Instructor
	1	Custodian Worker
	1	Accountant
Eulalie Rivera K8	1	Health
	1	Agriculture
	1	Computer
	1	ESL Teacher
	1	Music Teacher
	1	Librarian

	4	Elementary Teachers
	1	Middle School Science
Pearl B Larsen K8	7	Elementary Teachers
	1	Resource
	1	Extended Resource Intensive
	1	Computer Teacher
	1	Junior High Elective Teacher
	1	Librarian
	1	Secretary
	1	Food Service Worker
	1	Nurse
Lew Muckle ES	1	PE Teacher
	1	Teacher
	3	Teacher
	1	Music Teacher
	1	Counselor
Claude O Markoe ES	1	Counselor
	1	Accountant
	2	Paraprofessional
	3	Food Service Workers
	1	Success Specialist
	2	Monitor
		No Teachers Needed
John H Woodson JHS	3	Science
	1	Math
	1	Student Success Specialist
	1	Nurse
Alternative Ed	1	ELA
	1	Math
	1	Social Studies
Adult Ed	1	English
	1	Spanish
	1	ESL
Youth Rehab. Center	1	Custodial Worker
	1	Counselor
	3	Teachers
Alfredo Andrews ES	1	Elementary Grade Teacher
	1	Paraprofessional
	1	Paraprofessional
	1	Teacher
	2	SPED Paraprofessional for MOD2
	1	School Monitor

**Table 12: St. Thomas-St. John District Vacancy Listing**

School	Quantity	Position	
Julius E. Sprauve	3	Teachers	
	1	Custodian	
	1	SPED Teacher	
	2	Paraprofessional	
Ivanna Eudora Kean High	1	School Nurse	
	4	English Teacher	
	2	Math Teacher	
	2	Social Studies Teacher	
	2	Foreign Language Teacher	
	3	Custodian	
	1	CTE Culinary Teacher	
	1	JROTC Teacher	
	Bertha C. Boschulte	1	English Teacher
		1	Mathematics Teacher
1		Social Studies Teacher	
1		ESL Social Studies Teacher	
2		Foreign Language Teacher	
3		Monitor	
1		Science Teacher	
2		Paraprofessional	
1		Librarian	
1		Custodian	
Joseph Gomez	2	Regular Teacher	
	3	Paraprofessional	
	1	Administrative Assistant	
	1	SPED Professional	
	1	Kitchen Manager	
	1	Cook	
	1	ESL Teacher	
	1	Music Teacher	
	1	Art Teacher	
Yvonne Milliner Bowsky	1	Principal	
	1	Administrative Secretary	
	1	Custodian	
Joseph Sibilly	2	Paraprofessional	
	2	Custodian	
Jane E. Tuitt	2	Paraprofessional	
	1	Counselor	
	1	Special Teacher	

	1	Custodian
	1	Nurse
	1	Kitchen Manager
	1	Pre-K Teacher
	1	Paraprofessional
	1	Music Teacher
	1	Regular Teacher
Charlotte Amalie High	2	English Teacher
	2	Custodian
	1	SPED Teacher
	1	Mathematics Teacher
	2	History Teacher
	1	Foreign Language Teacher
	1	Paraprofessional
	1	Administrative Tech
Lockhart K-8	2	Paraprofessional
	1	Custodian
	3	SPED Paraprofessional
	1	Secondary Teacher
	1	Elementary Teacher
	1	SPED Resource Teacher
	1	Food Service Worker
	1	Nurse
Edith Williams Academy	1	English Teacher
	1	Mathematics Teacher
	1	Social Studies Teacher
	1	Drug Prevention Specialist
	1	School Psychologist
	1	Paraprofessional
	1	Custodian

**Table 13: Eligible for Retirement**

Eligible for Retirement	Eligible on 9/1/2024		
Class	Eligible	Not Eligible	Grand Total
Administrators	42	74	116
Counselors	11	39	50
JROTC Teachers	3	6	9
Librarian	3	11	14
Nurses	4	8	12
Other Support Staff	107	640	747
Paraprofessionals	27	244	271
School Monitor	9	95	104
Teachers	126	781	907
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1898</b>	<b>2230</b>

## Certification Data

Our certification data remains very alarming. During our principal presentations last school year, principals reported high percentages of our educators and some administrators not being up to date with their certification. Certification fosters professional accountability, encouraging continuous learning and development through ongoing professional education and adherence to ethical standards. In essence, teacher certification is fundamental to maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the educational system, ultimately benefiting students, schools, and the broader community. In February of 2024, the Department sent letters to all professionals whose personnel records indicated that they were uncertified. This initiative aimed to raise awareness among the professionals and their leadership. Thus, ensuring that everyone involved understood the certification status and could take the necessary steps needed to update their status. Here are our current certification numbers.

**Table 14: Current Data on Teacher Certification**

Teacher Certification Status	as of 5/9/2024		
Island	STTJ	STX	Grand Total
Conditional Certification or Full Certification	189	177	366
Expired Conditional or Not Certified	248	293	541
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>907</b>

**Table 15: Current Data on Administrator Certification**

Admin Certification Status	as of 5/9/2024		Grand Total	
	Island	STTJ		STX
Certified		22	28	50
Conditional/Initial Certification		1		1
Not Certified		35	30	65
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>116</b>

Currently, the office of Human Resources and other members of the leadership team are conducting interviews with both U.S. and internationally qualified professional applicants, with job offers expected to be issued within the next week for the upcoming school year. However, it is important to note that our once-desirable sun, sand, and sea are no longer the primary attraction for many. As we compete with numerous school districts nationwide, our local economy has become a significant deterrent, complicating our ongoing recruitment efforts.

## Financial Overview

All schools received their funding through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Stronger Connections Grant. The goal was to allow schools to create budgets aligned to their school improvement plans to drive the improvements in student outcomes that they wanted to see on their campuses. The ARP funding was a one-time allotment to schools. Allocations for the Stronger Connections Grant were based on enrollment. Moving forward, all schools will have allotted funding through the Consolidated Grant for their activities tied to their improvement goals. Activities outlined in their plans range from professional development, coaching, operating supplies, resources, etc.

## Stronger Connections Grant Program

The Stronger Connections Grant is a federal initiative designed to enhance mental health support services within K-12 educational institutions. Recognizing the critical role schools play in promoting mental health and wellness, this grant provides financial assistance to address the mental health needs of students and support violence prevention initiatives.

Funded with \$1 billion through the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in 2022, the Stronger Connections Grant aims to help Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments. States can award subgrants to high-need LEAs to implement various programs, including school-based mental health services and measures to prevent and respond to bullying, violence, and hate incidents.

Administered by State Education Agencies (SEAs), the grant is awarded based on specific federal criteria and guidelines, with eligibility extending to all public and non-public schools.

The Virgin Islands Department of Education was awarded eight hundred nine thousand-eight hundred fifty-two dollars (\$809,852.00). The funds can be used in various ways, such as:

- Providing school-based mental health services, including suicide prevention, mentoring, and counseling.
- Implementing schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and support.
- Establishing community partnerships to offer additional resources and support for schools.
- Offering high-quality training for school personnel in effective practices related to mental health and violence prevention.

Overall, the Stronger Connections Grant is a resource for schools to create safer and more supportive learning environments for all students.

**Table 16: Breakdown of Stronger Connections Grant Funds per School**

<b>SCHOOL NAME</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>BALANCE</b> <i>w/ Indirect Cost as of 6/14/2024</i>
<b>St. Croix District (Public and Non-Public Schools)</b>		
Alfredo Andrews	\$27,403.44	\$15,247.52
Claude O. Markoe	\$25,842.88	\$25,842.88
Juanita Gardine	\$21,723.00	\$21,723.00
Eulalie Rivera	\$36,641.96	\$36,641.96
Ricardo Richards	\$23,720.52	\$17,452.02
Pearl B. Larsen	\$25,593.19	\$11,662.52
John Woodson	\$36,142.58	\$36,142.58
St. Croix Central High	\$47,690.72	\$47,690.72
St. Croix Educational Complex	\$52,809.36	\$33,469.81
Good Hope/St. Croix Country Day	\$16,729.21	\$16,729.21
Church of God Holiness	\$9,862.74	\$9,862.74
Freewill Baptist	\$11,610.57	\$11,610.57
Reading Rainbow	\$4,993.79	\$4,993.79
School of Good Sheppard	\$499.38	\$499.38
Seven Day Adventist	\$5,056.22	\$5,056.22
St. Croix Christian Academy	\$5,867.71	\$5,867.71
St. Croix Montessori	\$1,373.29	\$1,373.29
St. Joseph	\$2,809.01	\$2,809.01
St. Mary's	\$5,680.44	\$5,680.44
St. Patrick's	\$3,183.54	\$3,183.54
Coral Reef Academy	\$998.76	\$998.76
Leap and Learn Academy	\$499.38	\$499.38
<b>St. Thomas – St. John District (Public and Non-Public Schools)</b>		
Jane E. Tuitt	\$11,111.19	\$11,111.19
Joseph Gomez	\$28,651.89	\$28,651.89



Joseph Sibilly	\$14,918.96	\$10,554.16
Lockhart K-8 (ACJHS & LES Combined)	\$64,170.24	\$64,170.24
Julius E. Sprauve	\$12,422.06	\$12,422.06
Yvonne Milliner Bowsky	\$23,782.94	\$23,782.94
Bertha C. Boschulte	\$32,147.54	\$32,147.54
Charlotte Amalie High	\$62,422.41	\$53,183.52
Ivanna Eudora Kean	\$44,132.65	\$38,771.53
All Saints	\$9,176.09	\$9,176.09
Antilles School	\$20,661.82	\$20,661.82
Bethel Baptist	\$1,747.83	\$1,747.83
Faith Alive Christian Academy	\$1,872.67	\$1,872.67
Montessori School and International	\$13,982.62	\$13,982.62
Moravian School	\$7,365.84	\$7,365.84
New Testament Academy	\$4,244.72	\$2,244.72
Seventh Day Adventist	\$8,676.72	\$8,676.72
St. John Christian Academy		
St. John's School on Gift Hill		
St. Peter & Paul Catholic School	\$7,615.53	\$7,615.53
St. Thomas Calvary	\$12,983.86	\$12,983.86
Tutu Church of God	\$5,430.75	\$5,430.75
Wesleyan Academy		

An example of a project is the Gardening Club at Joseph Sibilly Elementary School, which took place during the 2023-2024 school year. The Gardening Club was designed for students to enhance their social-emotional learning through the joys of gardening. Participating in the "Growing Together" Gardening Club offered numerous benefits for students in grades K-5, focusing on enhancing their social, emotional, and academic development.

By engaging with the natural world, students experienced therapeutic benefits that contributed to reduced stress levels and improved mood and self-esteem. The collaborative nature of gardening activities fostered essential social skills, including teamwork, communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. Additionally, the club promoted environmental stewardship, instilling in students a deep appreciation for nature and the importance of sustainable living practices.

The integration of academic concepts through practical gardening experiences reinforced learning in science, math, and literacy, making education a tangible and enjoyable process. Overall, the "Growing Together" Gardening Club was designed to cultivate not only gardens



but also a generation of emotionally resilient, environmentally conscious, and socially skilled individuals.



VIDE had an internal deadline of May 30, 2024, to obligate the funds. However, the deadline was not met. District personnel and principals will continue to work with their teams to obtain the goods and services needed for the 2024-2025 school year. Several school teams are traveling this summer to attend conferences covering topics such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and dropout prevention. Other schools are procuring goods to create Zen rooms. The Zen rooms in schools will provide a quiet and calming space for students to manage stress and improve their mental well-being, which can enhance their focus and academic performance. Additionally, these rooms will support emotional regulation and create a more supportive and inclusive school environment. The goal is to have all funds obligated by the end of 2024.

## Classroom Configuration

Classroom configurations are crucial for meeting students' academic needs as they influence engagement, interaction, and learning outcomes. Flexible seating and group work areas enhance participation and collaboration, while well-organized spaces with proper lighting and acoustics optimize the learning environment. Configurations that support differentiated instruction and accessibility cater to diverse learning preferences and needs. Interactive spaces and technology integration promote active learning, while clear sightlines and defined boundaries aid behavior management. Student-centered layouts and choices foster independence and responsibility, and arrangements that encourage face-to-face interactions build a positive classroom culture. Overall, effective classroom design enhances engagement, supports varied learning styles, and creates a conducive and inclusive learning environment. The District Superintendents, Division of Human Resources, and the Director of Planning, Research and Evaluation reviewed our enrollment data and did a crosswalk with personnel so that any excess could be reassigned to schools that needed teachers for the 2024-2025 SY. This process was encouraged to ensure we were maximizing our human resources.

In addition, our secondary schools also conducted that analysis, and we will be diving deeper into block scheduling and whether it is working or not, and then look at alternatives. Currently, the maximum number of students in kindergarten is 25, first grade to sixth grade is 30, and

seventh grade to twelfth grade is 27 according to the current AFT contract. Principals of the elementary schools were asked to examine teacher placements using data to determine if teachers are at the right levels based on the skills sets. To have students reading on grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade requires that we must ensure that our best teachers are at the primary level. This will guarantee success for our students as they continue their academic journey.

## Technology Resources

**Table 17: Available Laptops per School**

School	Available Laptops
Alfredo Andrews	743
Claude O. Markoe	439
Eulalie Rivera	1,401
John H. Woodson	300
Juanita Gardine	144
Pearl B. Larsen	306
Ricardo Richards	500
CTECH	33
St. Croix Central High	510
St. Croix Educational Complex	693
Ulla Muller	273
Jane E. Tuitt	245
Yvonne Milliner Bowsky	620
Joseph Sibilly	238
Joseph Gomez	260
Herbert Lockhart	1081
Julius E. Sprauve	571
Charlotte Amalie High	516
Ivanna Eudora Kean	398
Bertha C. Boschulte	690

## Accomplishments

The VIDE has had several noteworthy accomplishments in the 2023-2024 SY. We successfully completed our strategic plan for the department that has been used to drive our school improvement processes. We have aligned our key performance indicators to our strategic goals. We are transitioning back to site-based management, which allows our school administrators to create actionable steps to improve student achievement, school culture and community/stakeholder engagements. Site-based management empowers schools to tailor educational strategies to their unique student populations, fostering a more

responsive and effective learning environment. Schools have received initial funding through ARP and the Stronger Connections Grant to jump start some of those initiatives as outlined in their school improvement plans. We have tailored our Consolidated Grant Application to include budget allocations to schools for their future plans. Through a collaborative partnership with National Academic Educational Partners, we worked with each school on updating their school improvement plans for full implementation in 2024-2025 SY. In addition, through that same collaboration, we were able to provide all of our leadership at the state, district, and school level with leadership training on the following modules:

### **Visionary Leadership**

We began our year with sessions focused on visionary leadership, guiding our leaders to create and articulate a compelling vision for their schools. These sessions equipped our participants with the skills to inspire and lead their teams towards a shared goal.

### **Leading Transformational Change**

Our leaders delved into the complexities of transformational change, learning to navigate and implement change effectively. The emphasis was on fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability.

### **Strategic Planning and Implementation**

Strategic planning was a cornerstone of our academy, with intensive workshops that helped leaders develop robust, actionable plans. These plans are now driving success and achieving measurable outcomes across the districts.

### **Communication and Collaboration**

We dedicated two (2) comprehensive sessions to enhancing communication and collaboration. Leaders learned to build strong, cohesive teams and foster an environment of trust and open dialogue.

### **Data-Informed Decision Making**

Our leaders were trained to harness the power of data to inform their decisions, ensuring that their strategies are evidence-based and impactful. This approach has led to more effective interventions and improved student outcomes.

### **Ethical Leadership and Integrity**

Emphasizing the importance of ethical leadership, we provided our leaders with the tools to navigate ethical dilemmas with integrity and transparency, building a foundation of trust within their communities.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Resilient Leadership**

Recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence, we focused on building resilient leaders who can manage stress, foster positive relationships, and maintain their well-being while leading others.

## Stakeholder Engagement and Community Building

Leaders learned to engage stakeholders effectively and build strong community partnerships, essential for creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

## Continuous Professional Development and Growth Mindset

Our final sessions encouraged a growth mindset and continuous professional development, ensuring that our leaders remain lifelong learners committed to their personal and professional growth.

Investing in our leadership to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills to drive transformation at their respective schools is crucial for our future success. Schools have actively engaged in data discussions, where teachers and administrators collaboratively examine and analyze the data. This initiative has encouraged the entire VIDE family to take ownership of the data, enabling us to make informed decisions on the next steps to address the identified issues. This process has been enlightening and reveals the story of our schools and their overall performance. At VIDE, our data shows us exactly where we are, and we own that. Working together to maximize the resources that we have will allow us to create pathways to close those gaps that we recognize through actionable steps that can bring about those changes. Our schools have implemented partnerships to provide mentorship and wrap around services for our students. Schools have implemented dropout prevention plans and multi-tiered systems of support to ensure that we are not losing our students to the streets but providing them with support to help them get on the right track. They have established school wide positive behavior intervention incentives to change the inappropriate behaviors that we see.

**Overview of the School Improvement Plan for SY23-24**

**PBIS Roll-out**  
• Lunch time activities

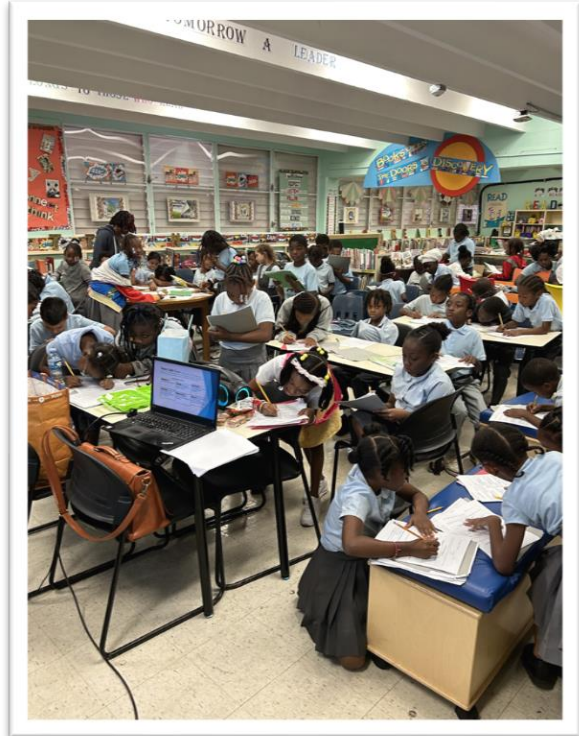
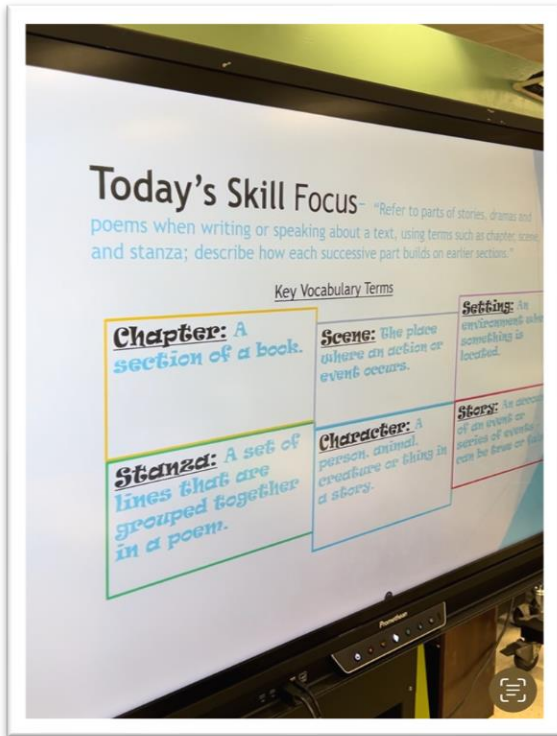
**PBIS**  
#WeGotThis

**PIC • COLLEGE**

The collage consists of a grid of 12 photographs showing various school activities. The top right corner features a circular logo with an eagle and the text 'VIDE' and 'VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT EDUCATION'. The bottom right corner of the collage has the text 'PIC • COLLEGE'. The overall theme is school improvement and community building.

Intervention blocks were incorporated in the schedules to allow intervention services through teacher-led activities, intervention platforms like iReady to narrow the gaps we see. Using these resources, teachers can create individualized plans for students that are tailored to their individual needs.

## Samples for Ulla Muller ES Intervention Block



Professional development is a continuous process of development for all professionals. We have invested in a professional learning suite through PowerSchool that provides our professionals with opportunities for professional development in any topic relevant to their specific roles. This digital platform can be easily accessed and allows our professionals to earn the hours that can be applied to their certification. The goal is to ensure that we adequately support our professionals in their development. At VIDE we have excellent teachers who have mastered the skills that many struggle with such as differentiating instruction, student engagement, and classroom management to name a few. In the 2024-2025 SY we will work to create a local database where our teachers can see colleagues in action and use strategies observed to assist them in their classrooms. The VIDE puts students first and always seeks to find ways to bridge any gaps that can occur between school and home. We will roll out the Naviance platform in this upcoming school year. The Naviance platform through PowerSchool helps students by providing personalized college and career planning tools, enabling them to set goals and track their progress effectively. It also enhances communication between students, parents, and educators, ensuring everyone stays informed and engaged in the student's educational journey.

At VIDE, we desire to have more parental involvement as parents are our valued partners. However, parental involvement is still not where it should be. Several administrators, during

their presentations, mentioned the low attendance of parents at the PTAs and even at school sponsored events. Our schools understand the importance of this relationship and have organized activities to increase the stakeholders' engagement in the school community and will continue their efforts to engage them. Such activities include parent nights, taste of cultures, cuisines, concerts, competitions. Schools have also made communication easier through various modes such as WhatsApp chats, Class Dojo, PowerSchool blasts, newsletters and calendars. Keeping all stakeholders informed is critical to fostering a culture that shows how all parents are valuable partners in the education of their children. Communication is a two-way process.

# Goal #5: Improved Communication



Parents receive **monthly** parent communication calendars.

Virgin Islands Department of Education

VOL. 28 | April 2024

# BARRANATION NEWS

ST. CROIX EDUCATIONAL COMPLEX

Updates for the families of the St. Croix Educational Complex High School



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

*"It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop."  
—Confucius*

Dear Parents / Guardians,

As we embark on the final marking period of this academic year, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your continual support and engagement with our school. Your dedication has been a cornerstone in fostering a nurturing and productive learning environment for our students. With the fourth marking period now underway, we ask for your increased involvement and support to ensure a strong and successful end to the academic year. Please mark your calendar for our April 12, 2024, progress report check-in day.

Additionally, please support our sophomores and juniors as they take the Smarter Balanced Assessment the week of April 8th. Please encourage your child to get a good night's rest and to try their very best on the assessment. Let's continue to show our Barra pride and finish the school year by putting our best effort forward.

**SPRING HAS SPRUNG!**

*Rodney E. Moorehead*  
Rodney E. Moorehead Principal



## SAVE THE DATE

## Calendar

- April 1: Easter Monday (Holiday)
- April 2-5: Assistant Principal Week
- April 4: School Librarian Day
- April 8-12: Smarter Balanced Assessment (10th & 11th Graders)
- April 12: Progress Report
- April 15-19: Senior Week
- April 20: Class Night
- April 23: ASVAB Testing
- April 29-May 3rd Spring Break (No School)

**DON'T FORGET**

To Join the SCEC N.O.S.E.Y Parents Crew!!! Together our students future shines bright!!! Email our PTA to get involved.  
ptabarras@gmail.com



**April 14**

- Earth Month
- World Autism Awareness Month
- National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- National Counseling Awareness Month
- National Garden Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The St. Croix Educational Complex High School is committed to providing educational experiences that are Student centered, Technologically competitive, Academically rigorous and Relevant, so that they can become Successful members of the local and global communities, SCECHS STARS

For the upcoming school year, the department will focus on revitalizing our annual parent conference and opening our doors to parents to receive professional training and support in areas of interest to them. When parents are actively involved, empowered and knowledgeable, this creates a recipe for success.

We are public school proud as our students continue to excel in various activities whether in musical competitions, sport tournaments, Math Counts, and Moot Court, just to name a few. Our Public Relations Division has been doing a phenomenal job at getting the information out and highlighting the great activities that occur in our schools (Let's take a look at two of them). We believe in showcasing our students to our community because great things are happening in our schools. We launched the Commissioner's Corner, a podcast aired on WTJX platform and YouTube pages as well as VIDE's platforms and on 93.1 FM on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m., which allows us to keep our community informed. We are about to release our End of the Year At-A-Glance which highlights the things that we have accomplished here at VIDE for the 2023-2024 SY. We keep our social media platforms updated. We continue to encourage partnerships with the department because education involves all of us. Improving our systems and operation is a priority for us at the VIDE. We have digitized our registration process, we are about to launch our new website, we are



adopting a cashless system where fees and other school related activities can be paid electronically, we have invested in the getting our information out to the community through the power blast system to name a few. Our goal is to improve the level of service that we provide to our community.

## Challenges

Our schools are currently facing several critical challenges that need to be addressed to ensure a productive learning environment. Included in today's testimony are the common challenges across the territory as were identified through the principal presentations. Student attendance and tardiness are key concerns, prompting the implementation of school-based attendance initiatives. For student attendance and tardiness, we will enhance our school-based attendance initiative with incentives and parental engagement strategies. Secondary schools will increase contacts to parents and students using their truancy officers and attendance counselors upon identifying evidence of chronic absenteeism. The VIDE will actively interphase with supporting agencies to address parents of those chronically absent students. The Department has also noted that staff attendance is a great concern. For the 2023-2024 SY, the department witnessed a significant number of school-based personnel out on sick leave for at least a minimum of three (3) months. In cases where the leave is job performance-related, management addressed those cases through informal and formal meetings and letters.

Maintaining adherence to instructional time is crucial, and this is being monitored through informal and formal conversations. At VIDE we recognize that "what gets monitored gets done." To ensure adherence to instructional time, we will conduct regular check-ins and provide teachers with time management resources. Expectations are set at the building level and must be adhered to. Something as simple as being at your door to greet your students can ensure that teachers are on time and cut down on unwanted behaviors.

We are experiencing staff shortages which will impact our instructional operations. Due to the teacher shortages, we continue to rely heavily on our international teachers through the J1 VISA Cultural Exchange program. However, it is important to note that we are competing with other school districts who also rely heavily on international teachers to fill their gaps. Classroom management for international teachers has been a great concern over several years and will be strengthened through targeted training sessions with the administrators and the district professional development coordinators.

Internet connectivity issues came up in every single school. Assessments are being done as we look at our infrastructure issues to devise a plan of attack. Enhancing our internet infrastructure and partnering with outside professionals is where this department is at with this long-standing issue.

Lastly, maintaining fidelity to the expectations for the Intervention Block was collectively expressed by all schools. We will strengthen the Intervention Block by ensuring consistent grade-level meetings and providing teachers with the necessary resources and training. Addressing these issues collectively is essential for the smooth functioning of our school.

## Goals for 2024-2025 SY

All schools have successfully completed their school improvement plans for full implementation during the 2024-2025 SY. School teams have set the expectations for their schools for student achievement, school culture and stakeholder engagement. Overarching areas of focus include intensive training on the science of reading across the territory with an intentional focus on Prek-3<sup>rd</sup>. The goal of the territory is to have students reading on-grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Focusing on explicit math instruction where teachers are trained on math vocabulary and reinforcement of foundational skills. Tier 1 instruction is also critical to us being able to close the achievement gap. Providing professional development on instructional strategies to include differentiation and student engagement. Schools have set measurable targets of improvement in proficiency rates across the territory.

Samples of the school improvement goals include the following: **All teachers use a variety of instructional modes (whole-class, teacher-directed groups, student-directed groups, independent work, computer-based, homework); All teachers develop weekly lesson plans that incorporate the Virgin Islands cultural standards and align to standards, units of instruction, and assessments; or The school Leadership Team provides ongoing mechanisms for families and the community to be meaningfully engaged in decisions that impact school improvement and school environment.** Once school teams have identified goals as it applies to their school needs, then actions steps are developed and funding is aligned for full implementation. The expectation ~~remain~~remains that measurable goals be set that drives the transformation of our schools into high performing institutions.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we thank you for this opportunity to provide a comprehensive review of the state of public education in the Territory. My team and I are ready to answer any questions regarding my testimony and provide additional information or clarification as needed.

## Addendum A: Summer Maintenance List Per School

### Julius E. Sprauve School

Recoating of modular roofs
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace/Repair flush valves & faucets in bathrooms
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Cleaning All a/c units
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Install missing window operators
Deck Painting
Generator Installation
Cafeteria Repair

### Charlotte Amalie High School

Electrical Upgrades
Deck Painting
Bathroom Repairs Auditorium
Painting Music Room, Auditorium,
Roof coating Auditorium, Music room, Gymnasium
Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Install missing window operators
Replace/Repair flush valves & faucets in bathrooms
Recoating of modular roofs
Painting of (3) modular classes rooms inside

### Jane E. Tuitt

Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Replace/Repair flush valves & faucets in bathrooms
Install missing window operators
Bathroom repairs
Electrical upgrades
Annex repairs

### Lockhart K-8<sup>th</sup>

Painting of Ext. School Grade 4-8
Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Turn one room in office into two rooms
Nurse office- Cut open for new door in wall
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Deck Painting

**Joseph Sibilly**

Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Tie-up falling fence
Fix roof for music teacher
Remover two old a/c units from building B.
Repair bench under shed
Sewage tank

**Yvonne Milliner Bowsky**

Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Recoating of modular roofs
Install missing window operators
Replace/Repair flush valves & faucets in bathrooms
Deck painting
Repairs at wastewater treatment plant

**Bertha C. Boschulte**

Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Replace/Repair flush valves & faucets in bathrooms
Install missing window operators
Repair Cafeteria Roof leak over Supervisor's Office
Generator Purchase/Delivery and Installation

**Ulla F. Muller**

Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Replace/Repair flush valves & faucets in bathrooms
Install missing window operators
Painting bathrooms & specified classroom
Repair to Kindergarten bathroom toilet
Replace girl's bathroom door
School painting

**Ivanna Eudora Kean High**

Cleaning All a/c units
Replacing all outlet covers
Replace missing/mildewed ceiling tiles
Replaced ceiling light bulbs in rooms
Replace/Repair flush valves & faucets in bathrooms
Install missing window operators
Painting of Selected Classroom
School painting
Bathroom upgrades
Electrical upgrades
Deck painting

**Edith Williams Alternative Academy**

Fencing
Roof repair
Painting Exterior
Cleaning All a/c units
Bathroom repairs

**Alfredo Andrews**

Working on Ceiling tile replacement
Replace floor tile throughout the school
Change all door locks
Install ac units 12 ton for Cafeteria

### **Lew Muckle**

Repair wooden railing for building
Removed metal pole from the basketball court
Replace floor tile for J building 4 Classrooms

### **Claude O. Markoe**

Change Damaged Classroom doors
Replace Damaged window operators
Clean A/C Unit for all Classrooms
Replace bad or missing ceiling tiles
Change door lock for all classrooms
New Playground

### **Juanita Gardine**

Replace Ceiling fan in auditorium
Relocate A/C Unit from front for the classroom to the back of the classroom Office (3), Room (207- 1), Room (206- 1), Room (303-1), Library (3)
Sand & Paint Metal Handrailing in 200 wing
Electrical Upgrade

### **Eulalie Rivera**

Repair leaking walkways
Install working light in classrooms
Install ceiling fan in all classrooms
Guttering repair for all (6) buildings
Repair leaking roof of modular
Ceiling tile replacement
New Windows-ALL Classrooms
Removal, and Installation of new windows; Enclosure of existing decorative Blocks(concrete)
Installation of 52 Window Units in classrooms
Kitchen Upgrade
Removal and Installation of New Floor Tiles-Cafeteria
Generator Assessment-Entire Campus
Electrical Upgrade to Campus for New Units

**Ricardo Richards**

Clean all Ac Units
Replace A/C Units that is not working
Reinforce metal handrailing for the second floor
Playground Installation
Improvements to Dry Storage Area in Kitchen

**St. Croix Educational Complex**

Ceiling Fan Replacement
Ceiling Tile Replacement
A/C Cleaning for all units
GYM AC-2- 20 Ton
Remove old and Install Auditorium new AC - (2) 25 TON
Auditorium Roof Repairs
Painting Exterior of Campus
Generator Assesment Package-Entire Campus

**St. Croix Central High School**

Repair leaking walkways
A/C Cleaning for all units
Install 5 ton unit for rooms without AC's – 302, 802, 803, 804, 809, 901,902,903, 907, 908, 909
Ceiling fan for classrooms in wing -200,300,400
Painting Exterior of Campus
CHS Bathroom Repairs
Repair leaking walkways
A/C Cleaning for all units

**C- TECH**

Clean all A/C Units
Retile auto body classroom 112,113,114
Working door lock for all classrooms
New Water Heater-Cosmetology

**Alternative Ed**

A/C Cleaning for all units
Change all door locks
Fix A/C Unit for school Registration Building /Electrical Assessment

## Addendum B: Chronic Absenteeism by Schools/Grade Levels

Chronic Absenteeism			
St. Thomas-St. John District	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024*
<b>Jane E. Tuitt Elementary School</b>	54.1	42.4	26.9
Grade KG	66.7	27.7	37.5
Grade 1	48.3	42.5	32.3
Grade 2	51.3	48.0	18.8
Grade 3	51.4	55.6	20.7
Grade 4	48.9	40.7	25.0
<b>Joseph Gomez Elementary School</b>	39.8	3.4	1.3
Grade PK			0.0
Grade KG	55.0	0.0	2.7
Grade 1	50.6	4.4	0.0
Grade 2	29.6	2.4	0.0
Grade 3	26.9	14.1	4.4
Grade 4	46.3	0.0	0.0
Grade 5	31.6	0.0	0.0
Grade 6			
<b>Joseph Sibilly Elementary School</b>	21.4	26.2	15.6
Grade PK	15.0	23.8	10.0
Grade KG	26.1	12.5	13.3
Grade 1	39.3	33.3	8.1
Grade 2	21.4	36.7	20.8
Grade 3	14.7	15.2	26.5
Grade 4	18.9	25.7	12.9
Grade 5	21.4	37.1	17.6
Grade 6	17.5	22.9	
<b>Lockhart Elementary School</b>	38.3	28.4	16.9
Grade KG	46.3	53.1	26.9
Grade 1	63.2	0.0	23.5
Grade 2	55.0	16.4	25.3
Grade 3	39.2	54.4	26.4
Grade 4	55.4	1.2	0.0
Grade 5	49.5	18.9	0.0
Grade 6	28.3	24.5	5.9
Grade 7	33.3	37.7	18.9
Grade 8	18.6	32.6	29.0
<b>Ulla F. Muller Elementary School</b>	37.3	32.0	23.3
Grade PK			
Grade KG	53.7	52.7	0.0
Grade 1	31.6	29.3	23.2
Grade 2	57.9	47.4	25.5
Grade 3	25.6	41.1	32.2



Grade 4	35.0	32.9	10.1
Grade 5	36.7	24.7	31.7
Grade 6	29.3	6.8	25.6
<b>Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky Elementary School</b>	49.0	54.8	35.9
Grade PK	33.3	36.0	61.1
Grade KG	63.2	64.1	47.1
Grade 1	48.7	48.6	36.9
Grade 2	57.4	59.4	36.7
Grade 3	43.7	61.8	32.8
Grade 4	48.4	49.3	28.8
Grade 5	36.1	50.7	27.5
<b>Julius E. Sprauve School</b>	23.3	17.9	13.2
Grade PK	10.0	0.0	25.0
Grade KG	63.2	47.4	43.5
Grade 1	18.2	43.8	0.0
Grade 2	5.6	16.7	18.8
Grade 3	45.0	11.1	0.0
Grade 4	58.3	46.2	0.0
Grade 5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grade 6	8.0	...	0.0
Grade 7	18.2	3.6	17.9
Grade 8	12.5	0.0	27.6
<b>Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School</b>	29.5	26.0	21.3
Grade 6	35.5	23.8	27.2
Grade 7	28.0	27.2	22.4
Grade 8	25.8	26.8	13.2
<b>Charlotte Amalie High School</b>	28.4	34.9	22.0
Grade 9	31.3	29.5	17.6
Grade 10	26.8	41.1	23.9
Grade 11	28.2	40.0	21.9
Grade 12	26.7	30.3	25.7
<b>Ivanna Eudora Kean High School</b>	17.5	26.0	16.0
Grade 9	16.6	27.4	13.0
Grade 10	21.8	28.4	15.7
Grade 11	16.0	25.3	20.9
Grade 12	14.7	22.0	15.3

<b>St. Croix District</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024*</b>
<b>Alfredo Andrews Elementary School</b>	57.2	64.3	60.6
Grade PK	60.0	60.0	53.3
Grade KG	71.4	71.2	75.8
Grade 1	48.3	64.2	70.7
Grade 2	62.9	59.3	58.1
Grade 3	50.0	63.8	50.0
Grade 4	65.5	77.0	62.7
Grade 5	48.4	61.2	51.2
Grade 6	52.6	50.8	56.8
<b>Claude O. Markoe Elementary School</b>	48.6	52.0	49.3
Grade PK	33.3	55.6	26.7
Grade KG	51.7	51.5	50.8
Grade 1	37.1	62.3	56.3
Grade 2	42.3	62.1	41.9
Grade 3	50.0	47.8	56.1
Grade 4	53.8	44.4	48.4
Grade 5	65.4	45.9	37.5
Grade 6	47.5	49.0	52.5
<b>Eulalie Rivera</b>	30.6	52.4	38.6
Grade PK		40.0	46.2
Grade KG	29.0	64.0	52.1
Grade 1	25.4	45.2	51.5
Grade 2	17.7	53.9	54.4
Grade 3	30.3	43.4	37.1
Grade 4	4.5	55.2	27.0
Grade 5	18.6	54.8	40.0
Grade 6	60.0	54.7	33.9
Grade 7	43.5	53.2	40.5
Grade 8	41.1	47.5	16.0
<b>Juanita Gardine</b>	58.0	65.5	52.6
Grade PK	...	87.5	88.9
Grade KG	75.0	79.5	67.7
Grade 1	68.6	78.4	55.2
Grade 2	75.8	69.0	44.1
Grade 3	57.1	63.0	51.2
Grade 4	66.7	47.2	36.7
Grade 5	59.0	68.4	57.1
Grade 6	61.8	67.7	34.5
Grade 7	34.5	59.0	64.9
Grade 8	38.1	53.3	48.5
<b>Lew Muckle Elementary School</b>	42.4	37.2	38.8
Grade PK	14.3	57.1	53.8
Grade KG	41.5	22.5	45.1
Grade 1	67.3	46.0	26.2

Grade 2	43.6	45.6	42.6
Grade 3	53.2	29.5	47.5
Grade 4	36.0	36.2	39.6
Grade 5	34.8	26.9	33.3
Grade 6	26.2	41.9	29.6
<b>Pearl B. Larsen</b>	17.7	35.3	34.7
Grade PK	100.0	33.3	40.0
Grade KG	26.5	67.3	42.6
Grade 1	40.4	56.4	51.0
Grade 2	29.5	37.0	23.9
Grade 3	5.4	52.1	41.4
Grade 4	22.0	29.8	37.2
Grade 5	5.4	41.7	32.8
Grade 6	3.7	24.4	25.0
Grade 7	0.0	21.6	34.1
Grade 8	0.0	0.0	18.8
<b>Ricardo Richards Elementary School</b>	41.8	48.9	31.3
Grade PK	25.0	25.0	6.7
Grade KG	46.7	61.9	41.5
Grade 1	31.6	48.2	40.8
Grade 2	56.1	39.6	42.3
Grade 3	32.4	50.9	35.7
Grade 4	49.3	59.5	29.8
Grade 5	51.4	46.5	9.9
Grade 6	29.5	41.7	36.1
<b>John H. Woodson Junior High School</b>	31.1	28.8	38.2
Grade 7	36.0	29.9	35.6
Grade 8	25.1	27.7	40.7
<b>St. Croix Central High School</b>	24.4	31.1	36.5
Grade 9	33.5	36.4	45.3
Grade 10	23.3	37.7	33.7
Grade 11	21.4	22.6	32.6
Grade 12	14.1	23.1	32.8
<b>St. Croix Educational Complex High School</b>	16.4	19.0	21.7
Grade 9	23.3	22.3	20.5
Grade 10	17.5	17.7	13.6
Grade 11	11.7	16.3	32.3
Grade 12	10.3	17.6	22.4

## Addendum C: Number of Students Enrolled in a College/Career-Tech School the Fall Immediately After High School

<b>Class of</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total in Graduation Class	676	781	725	684	698
Total Enrolled	296	296	233	217	265
Total in Public	240	241	172	185	238
Total in Private	56	55	61	32	27
Total in 4-Year	289	288	228	209	258
Total in 2-Year	7	8	5	8	7
Total In-State	211	207	127	139	209
Total Out-of-State	85	89	106	78	56

## Addendum D: Number of Students Enrolled in a College at Any Time During the First Year After High School

<b>Class of</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total in Graduation Class	676	781	725	684	698
Total Enrolled	337	325	260	243	278
Total in Public	268	264	192	206	251
Total in Private	69	61	68	37	27
Total in 4-Year	327	312	252	231	270
Total in 2-Year	10	13	8	12	8
Total In-State	236	223	137	154	219
Total Out-of-State	101	102	123	89	59