

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@vict eb.com

Dr. Anastasie Jackson
Vice-Chair & Curriculum
anastasie.jackson@vict eb.com

Dr. Michael Francois
Immediate Past Chair
michael.francois@vict eb.com

Dr. Suzanne Magras
Secretary
suzanne.magras@vict eb.com

Ms. Jenny Hawkes
Treasurer
jenny.hawkes@vict eb.com

Senator. G. Whitaker
Scholarships
genevieve.whitaker@vict eb.com

Monique Faulkner Ed.D
Ex-Officio
monique.faulkner@vict eb.com

Mr. Anton W. Döös III
WCEC, FMP, CFSE, EDK
Executive Director
admin@vict eb.com

May 15th 2023

Honorable Senator Marise C. James, Esq.
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and Workforce Development
#3022 Estate Golden Rock
Christiansted, St. Croix,
United States Virgin Islands 00820

Re: Written Testimony of the Virgin Islands Board of Career and Technical Education
for May 24th 2023

Good morning Honorable Senator Marise C. James, members of the Committee on Education and Workforce Development and other members of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands, fellow testifiers, and members of the viewing and listening audience.

I am writing to you today with a sense of urgency and concern regarding the state of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the Virgin Islands. As you may be aware, over the past two decades, we have lost half of our CTE programs of study, and within the next five years, we are projected to lose most of our remaining programs. The situation is dire, and we must act now to prevent further erosion of CTE.

As our Attorney has pointed out, the Virgin Islands Board for Career and Technical Education has the legal authority to create, implement, and promote CTE programs, but it lacks the resources to do so effectively. This lack of resources has led to a situation where CTE programs are not adequately funded, CTE instructors are not paid at competitive rates, and key requests for resources and staffing have gone unanswered.

We cannot afford to let this situation continue. CTE programs are crucial to the future of our students and our community. They provide our students with the skills and certifications needed to succeed in today's job market and contribute to our economy. Without CTE programs, we risk further exacerbating the already high rates of unemployment and poverty in our community.

Therefore, I urge you to take immediate action to address the state of CTE in the Virgin Islands. We must ensure that CTE instructors are paid at competitive rates, and that key requests for resources and staffing are addressed. We must comply fully with applicable federal law, including the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, to ensure that we are making the most of the federal funds available for CTE.

The choice is clear: either we act now to revamp and restructure CTE in the Virgin Islands, or we risk further erosion of these vital programs. I implore you to take action and prioritize CTE as a key component of our education and workforce development strategy.

Email:

CTEB@vict eb.com

Website: <https://www.vict eb.org>



Learning that works for the Virgin Islands

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

Lip service has been given to make CTE a priority, but little else has been done.

- CTE Adult program instructors on St. Croix have not been paid since February of this year.
- Travel funds for CTE Students to participate in National Career and Technical Student Organization events are empty!
- Most of the CTE programs requests for books have not been answered.
- Active recruitment to fill CTE key positions has not taken place.
- Request to place key lead instructors in 'Programs of Study' have gone unanswered.
- Progress towards a technical college is hampered by the rotation of administrators who are working towards this goal.

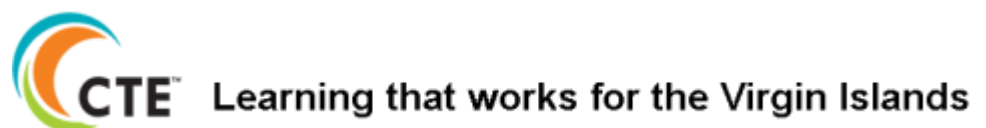
Madam Chair, as per your request for a status update on Career and Technical Education in the Virgin Islands, I regret to inform you that the situation is dire. The decision to continue prioritizing academic scholars over professional tradesmen's recommendations will only serve to lower the coffin six feet under. This is particularly concerning given the recent change in leadership at CTEC, whereas DOE appointed an academic principal rather than a CTE-trained director. Although the previous principal went the extra mile in obtaining an industry certification and learning the school's history, the accomplishments and the hopes & dreams of previously CTE certified administrators, the newly appointed administrator has no obligation to follow the same path. In fact, he is not CTE certified as an administrator, which in itself should disqualify that person.

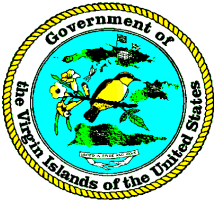
It is important to ensure that those in leadership positions within CTEC have the necessary expertise and training to provide effective guidance and direction to the programs. To use an analogy, it would be like having an art teacher fix the brakes on your vehicle - while they may have valuable skills in their field, they may not have the specialized knowledge needed to ensure your safety on the road. Therefore, it is important to prioritize the appointment of a CTE-trained director to lead any CTE Center effectively.

I would like to take a moment to explain how I see Career and Technical Education (CTE) structured within the Virgin Islands Department of Education (DOE) by using an aquarium as an analogy.

In our educational aquarium, a diverse range of fish represents different facets of education within a beautiful space. To optimize the conditions for our Career and Technical Education (CTE) fish, I propose partitioning the tank with a glass divider, creating a dedicated section approximately one-fifth of the way. By relocating all the CTE fish to this area we can offer them the necessary resources and space to thrive without competition from academic fish.

Externally, the aquarium will maintain its appearance as a unified and harmonious tank filled with vibrant sea life. Internally, however, the CTE fish will benefit from an environment specifically designed to support their growth and development. By investing separately and allocating resources to CTE programs, we can equip our students with the vital skills and knowledge needed for successful entry into the workforce, thus creating a brighter future for our community. Let us work together to establish an educational ecosystem that empowers all fish in the aquarium, ensuring each receives the attention and resources necessary for their prosperity.





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

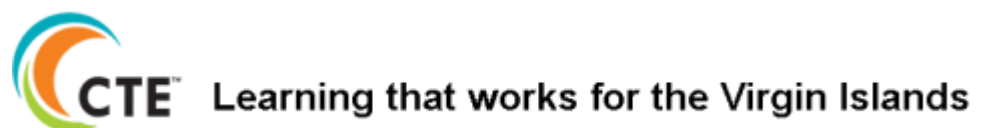
St. Thomas Office
8000 Nisky Center
Suite 210
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, VI 00802
(340) 714-7437

CTE must be a pillar within the department of education, reporting upwards not sideways.

Dr. Faulkner, the esteemed State Director for CTE and Adult Education, has embarked on a remarkable journey of program rebranding and securing increased federal funding. Not stopping there, she is tirelessly pursuing local funding as well. However, a harsh reality looms over these valiant efforts – without a decisive and complete separation from the Department of Education (DOE), all progress achieved thus far will be rendered futile. We are at a critical juncture where the establishment of a dedicated division, possessing unequivocal power, independent funding, and direct management reporting to the state director, who in turn reports directly only to the commissioner, is imperative. Failure to take immediate action would risk dilution and hindrance of our transformative initiatives. It is time to break free from the constraints that limit our potential and forge a new path toward an empowered and thriving future for CTE and Adult Education. The time for action is now! What we have no longer works!

Thank you for your time and attention. I believe that by working together, we can ensure the success of all of our students and make the Virgin Islands a better place for everyone.

Sincerely,
Jo Murphy, Chair



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

Twitter: [VICTEB1](#)

Facebook: [VICTEB](#)