

VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET | APPROPRIATIONS | FINANCE



TESTIMONY

Dr. Kyza A. Callwood, Chairman

July 24, 2025

VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION FY 2026 BUDGET HEARING TESTIMONY

Good morning Honorable Novelle E. Francis, Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance; esteemed members of the committee; distinguished members of the 36th Legislature; and valued members of the public who are tuned in today.

I am Dr. Kyza A. Callwood, Chairman of the 22nd Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBE). It is both an honor and a responsibility to appear before you today in strong support of our Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal, which totals \$2,137,697.

Joining me are key members of the Board and operational team who collectively oversee the Board's fiscal, regulatory, and strategic functions. I am accompanied by Secretary Arah C. Lockhart; Director of Business and Finance and Interim Executive Director Sandra Bess; Financial Aid Coordinator Sylvanie Rhymer; Educational Certification Officer Jolyn Edwards; and Accountant Verdelle Parsons. Representing our St. Croix delegation are Vice Chairperson Emmanuella Perez-Cassius, Member Winona Hendricks, Educational Certification Officer Dairdre Petersen-Heath, and Administrative Assistant Barbara Sluss.

OUR FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL COMMITMENT

Our presentation today is more than a request for funding, it is a reaffirmation of our fiduciary discipline, accountability, and dedication to advancing public education across the Virgin Islands. This budget reflects a strategic alignment of resources with the Board's statutory mandates, emerging educational needs, and operational goals.

Over the past fiscal year, the Board has focused on efficiency, compliance, and outcome-driven investments ensuring that every dollar entrusted to us serves a measurable educational purpose. We have tightened internal controls, improved reporting mechanisms, and refined cost-saving strategies, all while maintaining high levels of service delivery.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL COMPOSITION AND MANDATE

Established under **Act No. 2252** and operating as an **independent agency** of the Government of the Virgin Islands, VIBE is entrusted with critical education governance responsibilities pursuant to 17 VIC §§ 21–25, 41–42, 82, 90–91, 121, 127–129, 171–177, 184–191, and 193–194. These responsibilities include:

- Administering the Territorial Scholarship Fund, and Special Legislative Grants
- Certifying and credentialing education professionals across the Territory.
- Developing, revising, and enforcing education-related rules and regulations.
- Providing oversight and annual reporting on key performance areas including test scores, dropout rates, attendance, and administrative effectiveness.
- Serving as an impartial appellate body in education-related disputes.

The Board's nine members are elected from two legislative districts—four each from St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John, with one At-large member residing in St. John. Current members include:

- St. Croix District: Winona A. Hendricks, Terrence T. Joseph, Mary L. Moorehead, and Emmanuella Perez-Cassius
- St. Thomas/St. John District: Judy Gomez, Esq., Arah C. Lockhart, Nandi Sekou, Esq., and myself, Dr. Kyza A. Callwood
- At-large: Abigail Hendricks-Cagan

The Executive Committee which I chair alongside Vice-Chair Emmanuella Perez-Cassius and Secretary Arah C. Lockhart and the humble leadership of Ms. Sandra Bess provides policy guidance and operational oversight to ensure the Board executes its statutory duties effectively.

II. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

Our operational strength is rooted in a **committee-driven model**, which promotes specialization, accountability, and targeted oversight in the following areas:

1. **Professional Staff Certification and Higher Education** – chaired by Dr. Kyza A. Callwood
2. **Policies, Rules, and Regulations** – chaired by Nandi Sekou, Esq.
3. **Public-Private Liaison** – chaired by Arah C. Lockhart
4. **Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Environment** – chaired by Winona A. Hendricks
5. **Finance, Scholarships, and Collections** – chaired by Judy M. Gomez, Esq.
6. **Executive Committee** – chaired by Dr. Kyza A. Callwood

This structure has enabled us to implement cost-conscious decision-making, improve data-driven policy development, and ensure transparent scholarship disbursement and collection practices. We are also leveraging technology and inter-agency partnerships to maximize our operational reach while minimizing redundancy.

I. FISCAL YEAR 2024, 2025 ACTUAL EXPENDITURE AND PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET

CATEGORY	FY 2024 EXPENDITURE ACTUALS (AS OF 09/30/24)	FY 2025 EXPENDITURE BUDGET	FY 2025 EXPENDITURE ACTUALS (AS OF 07/11/25)	FY 2026 PROPOSED EXPENDITURE BUDGET
Personnel Services	\$713,123.52	\$1,011,917	\$865,954.33	\$1,011,103
Fringe Benefits	\$364,884.74	\$465,774	\$240,855.26	\$473,487
Supplies	\$64,777.12	\$87,500	\$32,444.37	\$57,800
Other Services & Charges	\$575,854.31	\$698,595	\$522,531.99	\$495,000
Utility Services	\$19,026.67	\$33,911	\$15,111.40	\$10,307
Capital Outlay	\$0.00	\$90,000	-0-	\$90,000
Total Funds Expended/ Appropriated	\$1,737,666.36	\$2,387,697	\$1,676,897.35	\$2,137,697

Table 1. Comparison of FY (Fiscal Year) 2024 actuals, FY 2025 expenditures budget and actuals as of July 11, 2025, and FY 2026 proposed expenditures budget

Table 1 above outlines the Virgin Islands Board of Education's financial posture over the current and prior fiscal years, providing a side-by-side comparison of actual expenditures for FY 2024, appropriated and expended funds as of July 11, 2025, for FY 2025, and the proposed expenditures for FY 2026.

The financial data reflected in Table 1 underscores VIBE's commitment to sound fiscal management, disciplined spending, and forward-looking investment in educational excellence.

- In FY 2024, actual expenditures totaled \$1.73 million, illustrating lean operations and cost-conscious decision-making across core areas including personnel, services, and instructional support.
- In FY 2025, the Legislature appropriated \$2.38 million, and as of July 11, 2025, VIBE has expended \$1.67 million, demonstrating a responsible expenditure trajectory with no budget overruns anticipated by the close of the fiscal year.
- The FY 2026 proposed budget of \$2.14 million reflects a reduction of \$250,000 and forces VIBE to revisit our programmatic priorities and maximize strategic resource allocation practices.

KEY BUDGET CATEGORIES: PERFORMANCE AND PROJECTION

- Personnel Services and Fringe Benefits, which make up the majority of our budget, reflect our investment in human capital, staffing essential roles including certification, compliance, finance, and administrative oversight. While expenditures increased from FY 2024 to FY 2025 to address staffing gaps and cost-of-living adjustments, we have proposed a flat personnel budget for FY 2026, reflecting anticipated stabilization.
- Supplies and Utility Services are expected to decrease in FY 2026 based on efficiency gains, and better procurement practices. Our utility budget was trimmed by over 69% in recognition of these gains.
- Other Services & Charges, which include contractual obligations, programmatic services, and technology support, saw reduced actual expenditures in FY 2025 and a deliberate downward adjustment in FY 2026 to match revised operational needs.
- Capital Outlay, though unused in FY 2024 and FY 2025, is retained at \$90,000 for FY 2026 to support long-needed capital improvements.

PERSONNEL SERVICES

The Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBE) currently has eighteen (18) budgeted positions, strategically allocated across our St. Croix and St. Thomas district offices to ensure the effective delivery of services territory-wide.

TERRITORIAL STAFFING DISTRIBUTION AND STRUCTURE

- The St. Croix District Office is presently staffed with:
 - Financial Aid Assistant
 - Administrative Assistant
 - Educational Certification Officer
- The St. Thomas District Office is staffed with:
 - Director of Business and Finance
 - Accountant

- Financial Aid Coordinator
- Financial Aid Assistant
- Educational Certification Officer
- Two Loan Collection Officers
- Maintenance Engineer
- Custodian

These classified positions are non-union and form the operational backbone of the Board's administrative and regulatory responsibilities. A current organizational chart is included as Appendix A for reference.

PERSONNEL SERVICES AND FY 2025 FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

As of July 11, 2025, VIBE has expended \$865,954.33 in Personnel Services and \$240,855.26 in Fringe Benefits, illustrating our continued investment in core staffing while remaining within our FY 2025 appropriation. Notably, all classified staff except two employees whose documentation is currently under review received salary increases in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 508-202 during the current fiscal year.

POSITION RECRUITMENT AND OPERATIONAL CONTINUITY

In line with our strategic goals and succession planning efforts, VIBE has reprioritized the recruitment of five of our six currently vacant full-time positions, with onboarding targeted for the fourth quarter of FY 2025. These roles include:

- Executive Director (St. Thomas)
- Associate Executive Director (St. Croix)
- Executive Assistant (St. Thomas)
- Researcher (Territory wide)
- Financial Aid Representative (*recently selected and pending onboarding*)(St. Croix)

The sixth position, Custodian (St. Croix), will be filled in a subsequent phase.

To ensure uninterrupted service delivery and institutional resilience, the Board has initiated a cross-training program, which enables staff to operate effectively across units. This investment in workforce agility ensures continuity of operations, mitigates risk, and enhances responsiveness to the needs of the public.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The Board is also proud to partner with the Department of Labor's Summer Youth Work Experience Program (SYWEP), an initiative designed to build future workforce capacity. For the summer of 2025, VIBE welcomed:

- Lateefah Smith and Yarimar Ortiz in the St. Croix District
- Kaliel Fleming in the St. Thomas District

These six-week internships provide meaningful exposure to the workplace by rotating interns through each unit of the Board. Interns acquire critical skills in customer service, data management, and public-sector professionalism, positioning them for successful transitions into full-time employment post-graduation.

FIRST BANK ACCOUNT

As of June 30, 2025, the Board's operating account with FirstBank Virgin Islands (account ending in 0390) maintains a balance of \$13,722.12. This reflects the Board's continued commitment to financial stewardship, conservative cash flow management, and effective reconciliation practices. The Board ensures that all account activity is monitored, audited, and reconciled monthly, in alignment with best fiscal practices and the Government of the Virgin Islands' financial policies.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

VENDOR	TYPE OF SERVICE	ANNUAL PAYMENT	FY 2024 PAYMENTS	FY 2025 PAYMENTS (07/11/2025)	CONTRACT DATES
Crucian Point LLC	Web Master	\$11,925.	\$12,386.20	\$23,870.50	November 2024 to November 2025
Omni Systems, Inc.	Manage and maintain existing computer system	\$43,200.	-		December 2024 to November 2027
Jennifer Jones	Legal Services	\$200,000.	\$85,000.		October 2025 to October 2027

Table 2. FY 2025 Professional Services as of July 11, 2025

The Virgin Islands Board of Education relies on qualified, contracted vendors to support essential functions that enhance operational efficiency, regulatory compliance, and digital accessibility. Table 2 above outlines the professional services agreements currently in effect, including vendors' scope of work, payment history, and contract duration.

These contracts represent strategic investments in specialized expertise not available in-house. Each vendor is carefully selected through compliant procurement channels and evaluated for cost-effectiveness, service quality, and alignment with VIBE's statutory obligations.

- Crucian Point LLC continues to provide webmaster and digital management services, ensuring the Board's online presence is functional and secure. A total of \$23,870.50 has been expended in FY 2025 to enhance website accessibility, update certification resources, and support online scholarship services.
- Omni Systems, Inc. was procured to manage and maintain the Board's aging information technology infrastructure. Their three-year agreement, effective December 2024 through November 2027, ensures the continuity of operations, cybersecurity compliance, and system performance. Initial payments under this contract are expected later in FY 2025 upon completion of Phase I upgrades.

- Jennifer Jones, Esq., contracted at \$200,000 annually, serves as general legal counsel, offering guidance on governance, human resources, statutory interpretation, and administrative hearings. To date, \$85,000 has been expended under the FY 2024 contract, supporting the Board's increased need for legal review of policies, certification matters, and legislative compliance.

These contracted services not only supplement our internal capacity but also ensure the Board fulfills its legal, technological, and communication mandates efficiently and effectively. Every professional services agreement is reviewed annually for performance, deliverables, and value to ensure that taxpayer resources are being utilized judiciously.

VIBE remains committed to maintaining vendor transparency, procurement integrity, and outcome-based contracts as part of our broader mission to support educational excellence in the Virgin Islands.

OUTSTANDING OBLIGATIONS

FISCAL YEAR	VENDOR NAME	DAYS OVERDUE				TOTAL
		CURRENT	30 – 60	60 – 90	90 & OVER	
2025	ANDREWS, DIANE				1,443.75	1,443.75
2025	CHICO'S DISTRIBUTING		454.80	227.40		682.20
2025	DIVISION OF PERSONNEL				65.00	65.00
2025	MLC HOLDING, LLC				700.00	700.00
2025	NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS				15,400.00	15,400.00
2025	PORTERS COURT REPORTING			1,371.00		1,371.00
2025	TURNBULL, BRIAN			6,000.00		6,000.00
2025	VI WATER & POWER AUTHORITY	1,395.99	1,038.79			2,434.78
2025	XEROX CORPORATION		1,147.25			1,147.25
2025	VIRGIN ISLANDS TELEPHONE		1,487.61			1,487.61
2025	CHARLES ELECTRIC SERVICES	9,916.67				9,916.67
	TOTAL	11,312.66	4,128.45	7,598.40	17,608.75	40,648.26

As of July 11, 2025, the Virgin Islands Board of Education has documented a total of \$40,648.26 in outstanding vendor obligations.

The Board continues to work in close coordination with the Department of Property and Procurement and the Department of Finance to ensure prompt processing, compliance with financial procedures, and minimized delays in vendor payments. All transactions are recorded and monitored using the Government of the Virgin Islands centralized financial system, ensuring accountability at every step.

This level of visibility into our financial obligations enables VIBE to:

- Maintain strong vendor relationships and avoid service interruptions.
- Ensure accurate cash flow forecasting.
- Uphold its commitment to timely and transparent payments for all contracted goods and services.

The outstanding obligations represent not only an operational reality but also a testament to the volume and complexity of services procured to support the Board's educational mission. These obligations are fully accounted for within our FY 2025 budget and are being actively managed in coordination with our fiscal partners.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, LEASE OBLIGATIONS, AND CAPITAL REPAIRS

The Virgin Islands Board of Education maintains administrative operations in both St. Croix and St. Thomas, utilizing a combination of leased and government-owned properties. The current and projected facility-related expenses are integral to maintaining safe, functional, and accessible work environments for both staff and the public we serve.

ST. CROIX DISTRICT: LEASE AGREEMENTS AND FACILITIES TRANSITION

The Board currently leases office space from Christiansted Restoration, LLC at 1115 Strand Street, Christiansted, St. Croix, at an annual cost of \$52,477.08, or \$4,373.00 per month. The Board continues to occupy the Strand Street location on a month-to-month rental basis, as agreed upon by the landlord. It has recently been subject to significant health and safety concerns, primarily stemming from roof damage and environmental exposure, roof repairs are currently underway. It should be noted that the building block is currently listed for sale, potentially affecting future occupancy.

In response, the Board has secured additional office space through a long-term lease with Zefo Enterprises, LLC, located in Estate Hogensberg, Frederiksted. This contract—managed through the Department of Property and Procurement—covers the period August 1, 2023, through July 1, 2030, at an annual cost of \$30,000, or \$2,500 per month. This contract has not yet been executed. This new location is currently under construction, with a move-in date pending completion of buildout and final inspections.

ST. THOMAS DISTRICT: GOVERNMENT-OWNED PROPERTY AND RESTORATION EFFORTS

On St. Thomas, the Board operates out of its government-owned property located at #60B, 61, and 62 Dronningens Gade. This complex consists of:

- A two-story masonry building containing administrative offices, storage areas, staff restrooms, and an emergency generator.
- A historic single-story structure, known as the Blake-Guirty House, which previously served as the Board's formal conference room.

Both buildings suffered structural damage during the 2017 hurricanes and have been undergoing phased repairs, including the roof, courtyard, and driveway. Restoration efforts continue in alignment with available funding and government capital improvement planning. The preservation of the historic structure also remains a cultural priority for the Board.

Through this dual-site model, the Board remains focused on ensuring safe, ADA-compliant, and professional working environments while maintaining continuity of services. These facility-related investments are necessary to uphold compliance with health standards, support staff productivity, and fulfill our obligation to the public.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Virgin Islands Board of Education remains committed to the preservation, restoration, and functional enhancement of its government-owned facilities, particularly those located in the historic Government Hill district of St. Thomas. Both buildings have suffered devastating damage during the 2017 Hurricanes Irma & Maria. Our efforts have focused on ensuring structural integrity, historical preservation, ADA accessibility, and the full restoration of public assets to their intended design, use, and capacity.

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, COURTYARD, AND GROUNDS – CAPITAL REPAIRS

Through an interagency effort involving the Department of Public Works and the Department of Property and Procurement, the Board secured and executed a contract in the amount of \$145,376.00 with Caribbean Contracting Services to carry out critical repairs to the main administration facility as well as, perimeter stone walls, and fencing.

All work under this initial contract has been successfully completed, restoring safety and functionality to the building and its surrounding structures.

To address additional infrastructure concerns, the Board again in coordination with the Department of Public Works processed a contract change order totaling \$53,994.00. This additional scope of work includes:

- Repairs to the soffit of the Administration Building
- Removal of two (2) hazardous trees
- Repaving and repair of the facility's main driveway and entrance area

These improvements ensure the long-term sustainability and usability of the property for staff and the general public.

BLAKE-GUIRTY HOUSE – HISTORIC RESTORATION

The Blake-Guirty House, a historic one-story structure on the Board’s St. Thomas property, was also significantly damaged during the 2017 hurricanes. Recognizing its cultural and administrative value, the Board partnered with the Department of Public Works to create a restoration scope of work. With the guidance of the Division of Historic Preservation within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), the Board successfully secured a \$200,000 grant from the National Park Service.

To prevent expiration of federal funds, the grant was transferred to the Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority’s Enterprise Zone Commission, which administered the project and awarded construction to MCE Contracting. As of April 22, 2025, completed improvements include:

- Waterproofing of the structure
- Replacement of flooring and windows
- A refreshed street façade, enhancing public visibility and community presence

The Board will continue collaborating with the Department of Public Works, Department of Property and Procurement, and a designated architect/construction manager to complete the restoration. Planned enhancements include the installation of a lift to support individuals with physical disabilities, aligning the property with ADA standards.

DISASTER RECOVERY CLAIMS – FEMA ASSISTANCE

To support long-term recovery efforts, the Board filed for Public Assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for hurricane-related damages incurred in 2017. In March 2021, FEMA obligated a total of \$115,833 under Category E (Public Buildings and Contents) specifically for the St. Thomas location.

The approved repairs designed to restore the building and surrounding grounds to pre-disaster design, function, and capacity began in September 2024 and were completed ahead of schedule in December 2024, prior to the projected end date of January 18, 2025.

Of the obligated FEMA funds, the Board received a total reimbursement of \$110,041.37, which directly supported the completion of storm-related repairs.

These capital and disaster recovery projects exemplify VIBE’s ability to secure federal funding, manage complex construction initiatives, and preserve historic infrastructure, all while maintaining fiscal accountability and compliance with local and federal regulations. Our approach ensures that Board-owned properties remain functional, safe, and accessible for generations to come.

Table 3. VIBE FEMA PA damage claims

PROJECT WORKSHEET	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT AWARDED	AMOUNT REFUNDED
PW 1238 (STT)	Permanent Work – Cat. E	\$115,833.00	\$110,041.37

VEHICLE FLEET MANAGEMENT

The Board maintains an operational fleet of four vehicles, evenly distributed to each district to support field operations, outreach, and administrative functions.

In Fiscal Year 2023, VIBE strategically acquired two new 2024 Ford Transit Vans, which were registered and delivered in May 2024 by the Department of Property and Procurement. These additions enhanced the Board's mobility and service capacity across both districts.

In February 2025, the Transit Van assigned to the St. Croix district was vandalized while parked in the Christiansted government parking lot. The Board promptly reported the incident to the Virgin Islands Police Department, completed the necessary police documentation, and has since initiated an insurance claim for damages.

District	Vehicle Make	Model	Year	License Plate	Funding	Lease/Own Trade-in	Condition	Gas Amount
STT/J	Chevrolet	Equinox	2022	VIBE-2	General	Own	Good	\$300.00
STT/J	Ford	Transit	2024	VIBE-4	General	Own	Excellent	\$500.00
STX	Ford	Transit	2024	VIBE-7	General	Own	Vandalized	
STX	Toyota	Highlander	2018	VIBE-5	General	Own	Good	\$350.00
TOTAL								\$1,100.00

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

TERRITORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND/SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE GRANTS

The Virgin Islands Board of Education administers the Territorial Scholarship Fund and Special Legislative Grants to provide critical financial support to Virgin Islands students pursuing higher education and workforce training opportunities.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

The FY 2025 financial aid application period ran from November 1, 2024, through April 4, 2025, during which time the Board undertook a comprehensive and strategic outreach campaign to maximize awareness and encourage student participation.

Efforts included:

- One-week advertisement in the Virgin Islands Daily News
- Publication of scholarship details on the VIBE website
- Radio announcements across local stations
- Targeted workshop presentations by Financial Aid representatives at public and private high schools throughout the St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix districts
- Engagements with Adult Continuing Education programs and the University of the Virgin Islands' University Bound Youth Program

- Participation in community and educational events such as the St. Croix Agriculture Fair, Career and Technical Education Fair, College Fairs, and the University of the Virgin Islands' Afternoon on the Green

These multi-channel initiatives demonstrate the Board's commitment to equitable access to financial aid and the promotion of educational advancement across the Territory.

FISCAL ALLOCATIONS AND FUNDING SOURCES

For FY 2025, the Board was allocated a total of \$1,579,566.00 to administer these critical programs, broken down as follows:

- \$1,192,416 earmarked for the Territorial Scholarship (Loan/Grant) program
- \$387,150 designated for Special Legislative Grants

Additionally, the Territorial Scholarship Fund is supplemented by payments from collections and Economic Development Commission (EDC) Beneficiary Contributions, thereby expanding the available resources for scholarship recipients.

Through the prudent management of these funds and proactive outreach, VIBE continues to support the educational aspirations of Virgin Islands students, ensuring the availability of financial aid as a key enabler of academic success and workforce readiness.

Table 4 below provides a detailed breakdown of these scholarships.

TABLE 4. FY2025 SCHOLARSHIP APPROPRIATION AND AWARDS

DESCRIPTION	2024 APPROPRIATION	2024 AWARDS	2025 APPROPRIATION	2025 AWARDS
Territorial Scholarships	792,416	792,000	792,416	792,000
General Scholarships	200,000	185,000	200,000	200,000
Nursing Scholarships	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Sub Total	1,192,416	1,177,000	1,192,416	1,192,000
Territorial Fund (Collection)	743,868	441,348	774,195	510,000
TOTAL	1,936,284	1,618,348	1,966,611	1,702,000
Special Legislative Grants				
Edward W. Blyden	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
Lew Muckle	12,000	9,000	12,000	12,000

DESCRIPTION	2024 APPROPRIATION	2024 AWARDS	2025 APPROPRIATION	2025 AWARDS
Exceptional Children	4,000	0	4,000	4,000
Ann Schrader	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
D. Hamilton Jackson	8,000	6,000	8,000	8,000
Richard Callwood	6,250	3,750	6,250	6,250
Claude O. Markoe	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Evadney Petersen	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
Amadeo Francis	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Walter I.M. Hodge	10,000	8,000	10,000	10,000
Hilda Bastian	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
Muriel Newton	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Trevor Nicholas "Nick" Friday	10,000	10,000	10,000	5,000
Gene Cerge	1,000	0.00	1,000	1,000
VI National Guard	2,000	0	2,000	0
Morris F. DeCastro	90,000	0.00	90,000	45,000
University of the Virgin Islands (Early Admission)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Wilburn Smith	4,000	2,000	4,000	4,000
Caroline Adams	28000	28,000	24,000	28,000
Kenneth Harrigan	28,000	21,000	28,000	21,000
Ruth Thomas	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
Terrence Todman	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000
Music Scholarship (STT)	8,000	6,000	8,000	8,000
Music Scholarship (STX)	8,000	4,000	8,000	8,000
Valedictorian & Salutatorian	42,500	90,000	42,500	-
Stenography	10,000	10,000	10,000	5,000

DESCRIPTION	2024 APPROPRIATION	2024 AWARDS	2025 APPROPRIATION	2025 AWARDS
Maritime	10,000	10,000	-	-
Special Legislative Grant Total	385,150	290,250	381,150	374,650
Grand Total	1,563,566	1,804,650	1,573,566	2,271,650

RESTORATION OF CAROLINE FELICIA ADAMS AVIATION SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING

The Virgin Islands Board of Education sincerely extends its gratitude to Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr., his dedicated legislative team and this august body for their pivotal role in advancing Bill No. 36-0064, which ensures the full restoration of Act 8690. This Act originally appropriated \$24,000 to support the Caroline Felicia Adams Aviation Scholarship.

Due to earlier funding shortfalls, the Board's ability to fully support qualified aviation students was significantly at risk. Senator Francis' leadership in securing the restoration of this critical appropriation preserved access to specialized financial aid and reinforced the Territory's investment in aviation careers.

FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS BY DISTRICT

The Board observed an increase in scholarship applications for the current award cycle. As reflected in Table 5 below, a total of 659 applications were received an increase of 32 compared to the 627 applications received in the 2024–2025 period.

Table 5. Financial Aid Applications by District for the 2025 Award

Type of Application	St. Thomas/St. John	St. Croix	2025 Total	2024 Total
Online Applications	313	256	569	617
Paper Applications	57	33	90	10
Total Applications	370	289	659	627

FY 2024 AND FY 2025 VIEDC CONTRIBUTIONS TO DATE

Pursuant to Title 17, Chapter 15, §171 of the Virgin Islands Code, beneficiaries of the Virgin Islands Economic Development Commission (VIEDC), excluding small businesses, are required to contribute annually to the Territorial Scholarship Fund as a condition for maintaining their tax-exempt status. These contributions play an essential role in bolstering the Board's ability to offer financial assistance to Virgin Islands students pursuing higher education, training, and certification.

Table 6: VIEDC Beneficiary contributions received in FY24 and as of July 11, 2025

Virgin Islands Economic Development Commission (VIEDC) Beneficiaries	Received FY 2024	Received As of July 11, 2025
183 MEDIA LLC	\$3,000	-
2400 SERVICES, LLC	-	-
AAC-AIR AMBULANCE CARIBBEAN INC. (AERO MD)	-	-
ALPINE GROUP USVI, LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
ALTISOURCE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION	-	-
AMALIE GLOBAL	\$3,000	\$3,000
AMERICAN VENTURE CAPITAL BANK, INC.	\$10,000	-
AUVEN THERAPEUTICS MANAGEMENT, LLP	\$3,000	-
BARRIER HOLDINGS, LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
BISOKE LLC	\$15,000	\$3,000
BLACK DIAMOND HOLDINGS LLLP	-	-
BURT GLOBAL HOLDINGS LLC (GBH)	-	\$3,000
BY-THE-SEA RESORT PROPERTIES, LLC	-	\$3,000
CANE BAY PARTNERS VI, LLLP	\$3,000	-
CAPTURE VI, LLC	\$20,000	-
CARAMBOLA GULF CLUB	-	-
CARAMBOLA ZIP LINE, LLC	-	-
CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATES, INC.	-	-
CARRIBBEAN CINEMAS OF ST. CROIX	\$3,000	\$3,000
CD PARADISE MANAGEMENT, LLLP	\$3,000	\$3,000
CELEBERITY FINANCIAL INC.	\$3,000	-
CENTRIPETAL VI LLP DBA CVI	\$3,000	\$3,000
COCONUT GROVE, LLC	-	-
CONLON & CO. USVI, LLP	-	-
CORAL WORLD VI, INC.	\$3,000	\$3,000
CREF3 USVI HOTEL OWNER INC.	\$3,000	\$6,910
DAVIS BAY, LLC	-	-
DIAM MANAGEMENT, INC.	\$10,000	-
DIGITAL LENDING INNOVATION INC.	-	\$10,000
DISCOVER FUND MANAGEMENT, LLLP	\$3,000	\$3,000
EIGHT TOWER GROUP	\$3,000	\$3,000
EMERALD BEACH CORP	\$3,000	\$3,000
EVOLVE USVI LLC	\$3,000	-
FIRST ANTILLES CAPITAL, LLP	-	-
FERRER LLC	\$3,000	-
FLAT CAY MANAGEMENT DBA LINDBERGH BAY HOTEL & VILLAS	\$3,000	\$3,000
GC INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT, LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
GGM GROUP LLC	-	-
GLOBAL ASSOCIATES MANAGEMENT, LLC	-	-
GLOBAL MEDCHOICES GROUP, LLC	-	-
GOLD COAST YATCHS, INC	-	-

GRAPETREE SHORES, INC.	\$3,000	\$3,000
GREENLEAF VI II, INC.	\$3,000	-
HARBORSIDE CORPORATION / BOLONGO BAY BEACH RESORT	\$6,000	\$3,000
HAVEN DEVELOPMENT, LLC	-	\$3,000
HEAVY MATERIALS, LLC	-	\$3,000
HIBISCUS BEACH, LLC D/B/A HIBISCUS BEACH HOTEL.	-	\$3,000
IGY-AYH ST. THOMAS HOLDINGS, LLC	-	-
INNER CIRCLE LOGISTICS, INC D/B/A ICGROUP AND ICLOGISTICS	-	\$3,000
INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL AND MANAGEMENT COMPANY, LLC	-	-
INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE BANK LLC D/B/A GENERATION INTERNATIONAL ASSET MGMT CO.	-	\$20,000
ISLANDS ROADS CORP	-	\$3,000
KAZI MANAGEMENT ST CROIX, LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
LAWRENCE MOSKOWITZ CLU, LTD.	-	-
LEATHERBACK BREWING COMPANY, LLC	-	\$6,000
LIBERTY MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT, LLC	-	-
LOTUS HOLDINGS LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
LOVANGO HOTEL HOLDINGS, LLP	-	\$9,000
MARGARITAVILLE VACATION CLUB BY WYNDHAM	\$10,000	\$10,000
MARITAN, LLC	\$10,000	\$10,000
MARRIOTT OWNERSHIP RESORT (ST THOMAS), INC	\$6,000	\$3,000
MVW & AFFIALATED COMPANIES	\$3,000	\$7,000
MJB CARIBBEAN VENTURES, INC.	-	-
NELTJEBERG BAY ENTERPRISE LLC	\$10,000	-
NORTHSIDE VENTURES, LLC	-	-
OCTAVIA CONSULTING GROUP LLC	\$10,000	\$10,000
OCWEN USVI SERVICES LLC	-	-
PARACH RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, LLC	-	-
PARAGON SURGICAL CENTER, LLC	-	-
PERFECTED CLAIMS LLC	\$20,000	-
PLESSEN HEALTHCARE, LLC	\$3,000	\$6,000
PROSPERITAS INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT LLLP	\$3,000	\$6,000
RAPIERMED	\$3,000	\$3,000
RC HOTELS (VIRGIN ISLANDS), INC	-	-
REAL IMPACT CORPORATION	\$6,000	\$3,000
RED BAY HOLDINGS, LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
RONCAN, INC D/B/A SANDCASTLE ON THE BEACH	\$3,000	\$3,000
SALT POND HOLDINGS, LLC	-	\$1,000
SECRET HARBOUR BEACH RESORT ASSOC.	\$3,000	\$6,000
SEVEN SEAS WATER CORP.	\$3,000	\$3,000
ST. CROIX RENAISSANCE GROUP, LLLP	\$3,000	\$3,000
STERISIL INTERNATIONAL LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000

SUNSHINE SHOPPING CENTER, INC.	-	\$6,000
SUNSET COVE SOLUTIONS VI, LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
SYSTILOGIC LLC	\$12,000	\$3,000
TAMARIND REEF RESORT & MARINA, INC	\$3,000	\$3,000
TEAM CONSULTANTS	\$3,000	\$3,000
THE BUCCANEER, INC.	\$3,000	-
THRIVING CHARITY ADVOCATES, LLC	-	\$3,000
THE SEA RESORT PROPERTIES LLC	\$3,000	-
TRAMWAY PROPERTIES INC.	\$3,000	\$3,000
TREE LIMIN EXTREME, LLC	\$3,000	\$3,000
TROPICO MANAGEMENT LP	\$3,000	\$6,000
TUTHILL CORPORATION	\$3,000	\$3,000
TWIN CITY ISLAND SPIRITS, INC. D/B/A SION FARM DISTILLERY	\$15,000	-
TYSAM TECH, INC.	-	-
UNTIED INVESTORS, LLC D/B/A CONCRETE MASTERS	-	\$3,000
UNIVERSAL CONCRETE, LLC	-	\$9,000
VIELECTRON, LLC	-	-
VIRGIN ISLANDS PAVING	\$3,000	\$3,000
VIRGIN BAY CAPITAL, LLC	-	-
VIRGIN ISLANDS COFFEE COMPANY, LLC D/B/A VIRGIN ISLANDS COFFEE ROASTERS	-	-
WESTIN ST. JOHN COMPANY, INC AND ITS WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARIES WVC ST JOHN AND WESTIN VACATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY	-	\$3,000
WHITE BAY GLOBAL INC.	\$7,000	\$3,000
WVJD, LLC	-	-
YACHT HAVEN GRANDE	\$3,000	\$3,000
VIEDC BENEFICIARY CONTRIBUTION TOTAL	\$299,000	\$263,910

As illustrated in Table 6, VIEDC Beneficiaries contributed a total of \$299,000 in Fiscal Year 2024 and \$263,910.00 as of July 11, 2025. These amounts reflect compliance by a significant number of certified beneficiaries, as well as the Board's diligent tracking and acknowledgment of received contributions.

In addition to the above, the Board has received \$65,000 in private donations and corporate contributions from non-VIEDC entities, further strengthening the scholarship fund's financial base.

The Board expresses its sincere appreciation to all VIEDC beneficiaries, private donors, and supporting entities whose generous contributions directly support the Territory's future workforce. These investments allow the Board to expand scholarship availability, increase award amounts, and enhance service delivery to students across both districts.

This sustained and collaborative funding model highlights the strength of public-private partnerships in advancing educational equity and achievement for the students of the Virgin Islands.

LOAN COLLECTIONS

The Virgin Islands Board of Education remains committed to responsible stewardship of the Territorial Scholarship Fund, which includes the administration and recovery of student loan repayments. These collections are reinvested into the fund to support future scholarship recipients and ensure the long-term sustainability of financial aid programs.

LOAN COLLECTIONS AND RECOVERY PERFORMANCE

As shown in Figure 1, loan repayment collections have remained consistent over the past three fiscal years. As of July 11, 2025, the Board has collected a total of \$303,994.65 in student loan repayments.

To further enhance collections, the Board implemented a targeted initiative beginning in FY 2024 to review and update delinquent accounts. This initiative included:

- Correspondence outreach to borrowers and co-signers
- Verification and updating of outdated contact information
- Reconciliation of aged accounts and file audits

In FY 2025, the Board also launched a loan repayment amnesty period from July 26, 2024, through December 31, 2024, which encouraged voluntary repayments by waiving penalties and interest. This initiative yielded \$29,745.98 in collections, providing an incentive-based mechanism for borrowers to resume repayment activity.

DELINQUENCY PROFILE AND NEXT STEPS

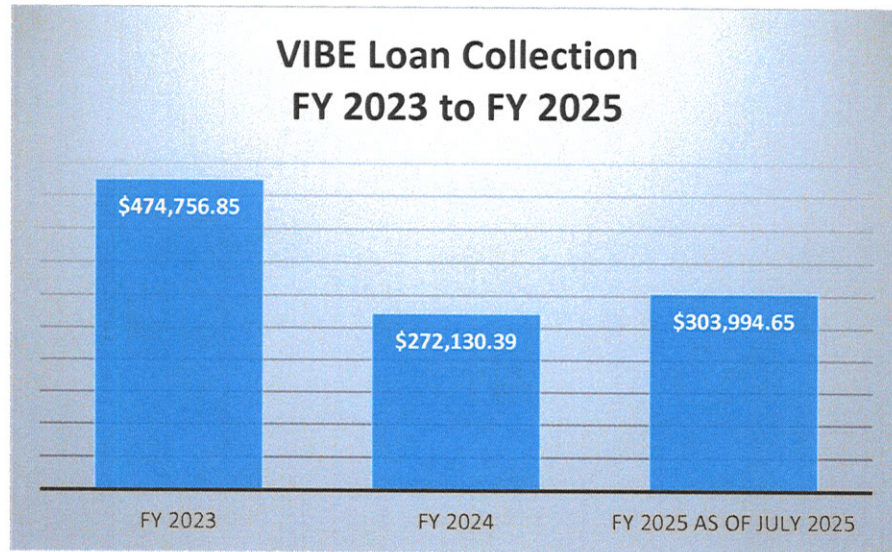
Currently, the total outstanding delinquent loan balance stands at [\\$1,180,513.41 \(Aging report\)](#). Many of these accounts are 20 years or older, and the Board has observed that a significant number of borrowers:

- Have relocated off-island
- Have changed contact information
- Have changed their address
- Are elderly or deceased, making recovery efforts increasingly complex

To address these challenges, staff are actively working to update loan files, cross-reference public records, and explore further recovery options, including potential partnerships with collection firms, credit bureaus or legal counsel.

The Board remains focused on balancing compassionate recovery efforts with fiscal accountability, ensuring that future students continue to benefit from this critical financial resource while honoring past financial obligations.

Figure 1. FY 2023-2025 (July 11, 2025) Loan Collections



The number of individual repayment records representing the total number of persons making payments remains an important performance indicator of the Board's ongoing loan recovery efforts:

Fiscal Year	Number of Repayment Records (Individuals)
FY 2023	573
FY 2024	603
FY 2025*	480

**As of July 14, 2025*

This data demonstrates a modest upward trend in FY 2024, likely attributed to enhanced communication strategies and the launch of the loan amnesty initiative. While the FY 2025 record count reflects activity as of mid-July, the Board anticipates continued increases in engagement as outreach and compliance measures remain ongoing.

The Board's efforts to encourage timely repayment and resolve aged delinquencies remain critical to the health of the Territorial Scholarship Fund. By tracking participation year-over-year, VIBE is able to identify trends, strengthen borrower support systems, and enhance the integrity of its financial aid operations.

CERTIFICATION

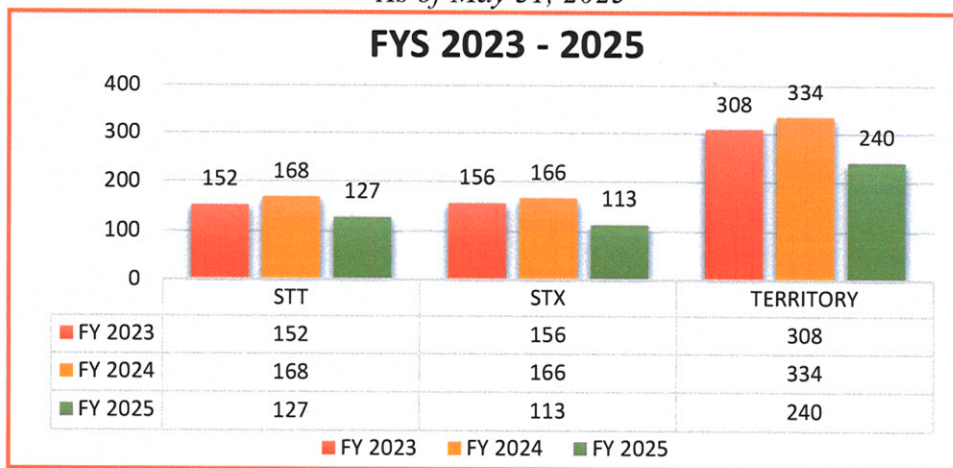
Pursuant to Title 17, Section 121 of the Virgin Islands Code, the Virgin Islands Board of Education is authorized to prescribe rules and regulations, and to establish certification criteria for professionals employed by the Virgin Islands Department of Education. This includes teachers, supervisors, principals, librarians, and other educational professionals.

CERTIFICATION ACTIVITY BY DISTRICT

The Board continues to fulfill its statutory mandate through rigorous application review, credential evaluation, and ongoing professional development support. From Fiscal Year 2023 through May 31, 2025, a total of 882 certifications were issued across both districts.

Fiscal Year	St. Thomas/St. John	St. Croix	Territory-Wide Total
FY 2023	152	156	308
FY 2024	168	166	334
FY 2025*	127	113	240
Total	447	435	882

**As of May 31, 2025*



These figures reflect the Board's commitment to maintaining high standards in the educator workforce while responding to emerging needs across the public education system.

EDUCATOR AMNESTY INITIATIVE

To address challenges related to expired certifications and to promote educator retention, the Board proposed and implemented a one-time amnesty program for FY 2025. This initiative includes:

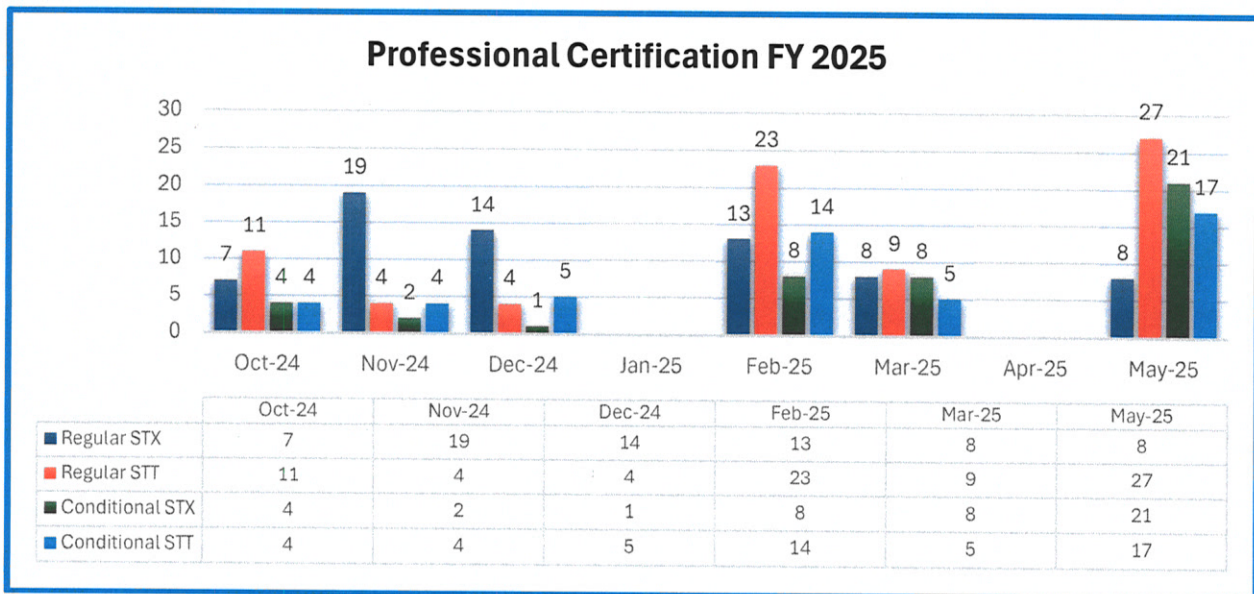
- **Extension for Conditional Certificate Holders:** Eligible professionals may reapply without penalty for an extension of up to three years to complete their full certification requirements.
- **Reduced Professional Development (PD) Requirement:** Educators seeking recertification can now fulfill requirements with 75 hours of approved professional development (a reduction from 125 hours), provided all documentation is submitted by July 31, 2025.
- **Flexible PD Options:** Approved options include workshops, university courses, and online webinars.
- **Digital Submission Portal:** All applications are submitted through a streamlined online platform, with support provided by Board certification officers.
- **Clear Guidance and Communication:** Applicants receive comprehensive instructions to ensure compliance with certification standards and Board policy.

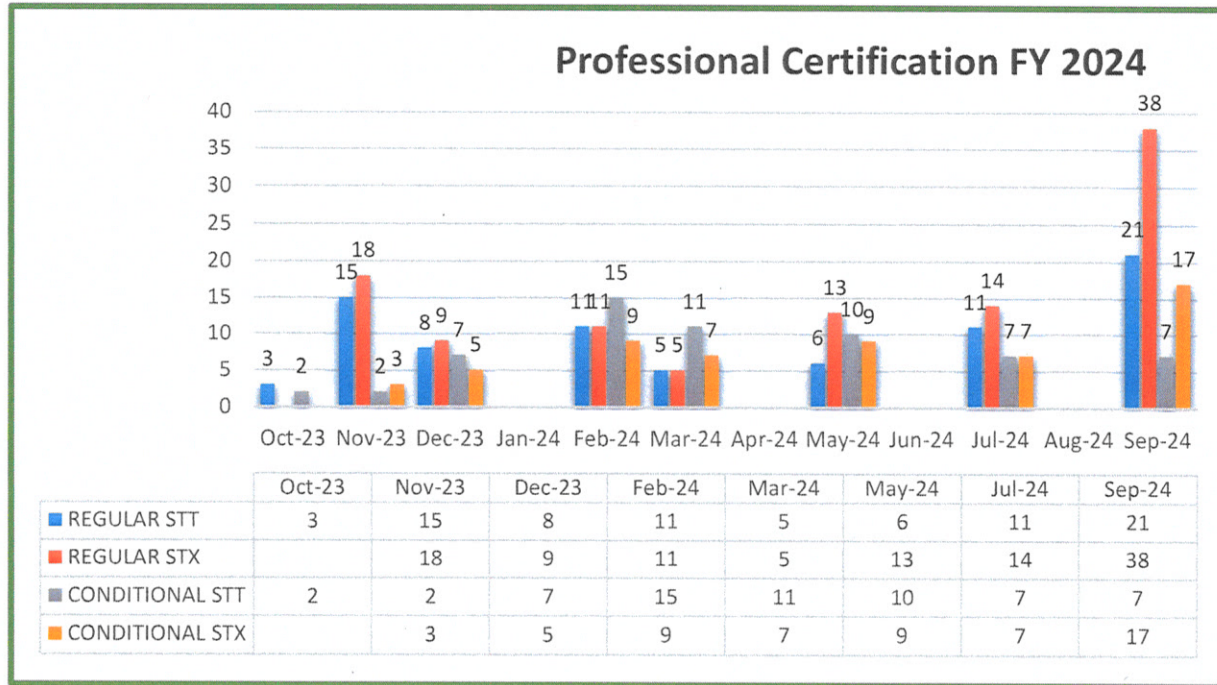
Fiscal Year 2025				
MEETING DATES	REGULAR STX	REGULAR STT	CONDITIONAL STX	CONDITIONAL STT
Oct-24	7	11	4	4
Nov-24	19	4	2	4
Dec-24	14	4	1	5
Feb-25	13	23	8	14
Mar-25	8	9	8	5
May-25	8	27	21	17

** Applicants may receive more than one certificate.*

FISCAL YEAR 2024				
MEETING DATES	REGULAR STTJ	REGULAR STX	CONDITIONAL STTJ	CONDITIONAL STX
Oct-23	3	-	2	-
Nov-23	15	18	2	3
Dec-23	8	9	7	5
Feb-24	11	11	15	9
Mar-24	5	5	11	7
May-24	6	13	10	9
Jul-24	11	14	7	7
Sep-24	21	38	7	17

** Applicants may receive more than one certificate.*





FY 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In alignment with the Board's strategic objectives and legislative mandates, the Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBE) has made meaningful progress in elevating the quality and accountability of public education across the Territory. These achievements are the result of continued partnerships with the Department of Education, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the USVI Parent Teacher Student Associations, the University of the Virgin Islands, the Regional Educational Laboratory for the Northeast and Islands (REL NEI), and various other educational stakeholders.

YEAR-TO-DATE HIGHLIGHTS

- **School Management Accountability Report (SMAR):** In accordance with 17 V.I.C. § 24, on June 13, 2025, the Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Committee transmitted the annual SMAR to the Governor, members of the 36th Legislature, the Commissioner of Education, and other key stakeholders. This comprehensive report includes findings and recommendations derived from school site visits and Department of Education data, ensuring transparency and informed decision-making.
- **Curriculum and Instruction Pilot Initiative:** In compliance with Act No. 8717, the Board executed a pilot program to evaluate public school curricula, instruction, and administrative practices. This initiative introduced an Academic Walk-Through Checklist for the 2024–2025 school year, which guided in-person school visits and classroom assessments in both districts. Board members evaluated core standards alignment, grade-level instruction, instructional materials, and intervention strategies that impact student success.
- **Professional Certification Engagements:** The Professional Staff Certification & Higher Education Committee conducted outreach and certification sessions during the Department

of Education's professional development training and the AFT Teach Conference, supporting educators with timely guidance and credentialing resources.

- Strengthening Internal Controls: In response to recommendations from the Office of the Inspector General, the Board's Internal Controls Committee (Ad-Hoc) completed a thorough review and update of the Internal Operations Policy Manual, finalized on December 23, 2024. This reflects the Board's continued commitment to transparency, compliance, and operational excellence.

These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and professionalism of the Board's staff and the 22nd governing body, whose dedication drives VIBE's mission forward. We remain committed to improving student outcomes, enhancing institutional accountability, and promoting educational excellence across the Virgin Islands.

In closing, I extend sincere appreciation to the Committee on Budget, Appropriations, and Finance, especially Chairman Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr., for your continued partnership and support. We welcome your questions and look forward to continued collaboration in strengthening the Virgin Islands' public education system.

APPENDIX A – CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

