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## **Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Commissioner Dionne Wells-Hedrington to Host Ceremonial Signing and Launch of Teacher Apprenticeship Program**

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor, is proud to announce the ceremonial signing and official launch of the Teacher Apprenticeship Program. This momentous occasion will take place on January 14, 2025, at Government House, St. Thomas, USVI, and will be led by Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and VIDE Commissioner Dionne Wells-Hedrington, Ed.D.

This groundbreaking initiative is designed to develop and retain highly qualified educators for the Territory's K-12 educational system. By addressing critical workforce needs, the Teacher Apprenticeship Program aims to provide paraprofessionals with the tools, resources, and support needed to transition into certified educators prepared to inspire and lead in classrooms across the Territory. This marks a significant milestone in the Virgin Islands' commitment to fostering a robust and well-qualified teaching workforce.

Through this initiative, apprentices will benefit from a comprehensive range of support services, including mentorship, academic and career counseling, skills gap training, childcare services, tutoring, individualized work plans, and preparatory practice for PRAXIS 2 exams.

Structured for success, the program incorporates monthly progress reports, mid-semester and annual apprentice feedback surveys, and semester performance reviews to ensure participants stay on track and achieve their goals. Expected outcomes include 100% placement in K-12 teaching positions, teacher certifications, and the development of subject area chairpersons, strengthening the Virgin Islands' educational infrastructure for years to come.

The application process involves submitting an application, transcripts, and an essay, followed by a panel review. Applications are due by March 28, 2025, with interviews and selections beginning in April 2025. The first cohort is set to launch in May 2025.

Cohort 1 will include paraprofessionals who will complete 6,000 hours of on-the-job training, 121 college credit hours, evening and summer classes, and collaborative learning opportunities facilitated by VIDE and professors from the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) School of Education. This unique blend of practical and academic training will prepare participants to excel as educators and leaders in our Territory's schools.

The Teacher Apprenticeship Program is made possible through the collaborative efforts of key partners, including the Office of the Governor, Virgin Islands Department of Education, Virgin Islands Department of Labor, Virgin Islands Board of Education, University of the Virgin Islands School of Education, Workforce Development Board, American Job Center, and Equus Workforce Solutions.

The Virgin Islands Department of Education extends heartfelt gratitude to all the agencies, partners, and individuals who have worked tirelessly to make this program a reality. Together, we are building a brighter future for our Territory by investing in the professional development of our educators.

For paraprofessionals seeking to advance their careers and make a meaningful difference in the lives of students, this is an unparalleled opportunity. Take the first step toward becoming a certified educator by applying to the Teacher Apprenticeship Program. Applications are due by March 28, 2025.

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