



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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VIDE Announces 2025 District Teacher of the Year Winners: Honoring Exceptional Educators Who Inspire and Empower

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) is proud to announce the 2025 District Teacher of the Year winners, recognizing two extraordinary educators who go above and beyond in their dedication to shaping the lives of students. These individuals are exemplary in their commitment to fostering academic excellence, promoting student well-being, and creating a positive learning environment. The VIDE extends heartfelt congratulations to:

St. Croix District: Ms. Cherise C. Davis, 3rd Grade Teacher at Juanita Gardine PreK-8 School.
St. Thomas- St. John District: Mr. Cornell Hanley, Special Education Teacher at Yvonne E. Milliner Bowsky Elementary School.

The surprise announcement today left everyone beaming with pride, as these teachers were unaware of their selection until the moment of recognition. The VIDE leadership across both districts had the privilege of being a part of these grand presentations, making it even more special for the recipients. We are honored to share this moment and celebrate these exceptional educators who have truly earned their titles as District Teachers of the Year.

"Today, we are not just recognizing two outstanding educators, but we are celebrating the unwavering dedication and passion they bring to our classrooms and communities. Ms. Davis and Mr. Hanley exemplify the values that make our schools and communities stronger, and we are immensely proud of their achievements," said VIDE Commissioner Dionne Wells-Hedrington.

Cherise C. Davis - St. Croix District Teacher of the Year

Ms. Cherise C. Davis, a proud graduate of St. Croix Educational Complex, is an 11-year veteran of the teaching profession and a 3rd-grade teacher at Juanita Gardine PreK-8 School. A product of the Virgin Islands public school system, she discovered her love for teaching in high school and has since dedicated her career to fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and a love of learning in her students.

Beyond the classroom, Ms. Davis is a tireless advocate for her school and community. She actively contributes to school committees, leads a Girl Scout Troop, and helps organize major school events like Virgin Islands History Month and Red Ribbon Week. She is not just a teacher, but a mentor and a community leader who continually strives to make a difference.

"Ms. Davis represents the heart of what it means to be an educator. Her passion for her students and commitment to excellence shine through in everything she does," said Dr. Sharlene Belton-Gonzalez, St. Croix District Insular Superintendent.

Cornell Hanley - St. Thomas-St. John District Teacher of the Year

Mr. Cornell Hanley, a Special Education Teacher at Yvonne E. Milliner Bowsky Elementary School, has dedicated over two decades to improving the educational experience for students in the St. Thomas-St. John District. Mr. Henley serves as the district's only Adaptive Physical Education Teacher, working with students across various grade levels, particularly those with physical disabilities. His collaborative spirit and willingness to go the extra mile have made him an invaluable asset to the district.

Mr. Hanley is known for his outstanding leadership as a teacher and coach. He not only leads his students through rigorous physical education programs, but also organizes extracurricular activities, mentors aspiring educators, and supports the community through events like the Special Olympics. His coaching acumen led Bowsky's boys' basketball team to a championship victory, showcasing his commitment to student achievement both inside and outside the classroom.

"Mr. Hanley's dedication to his students and his willingness to support the broader school community exemplify the kind of educator we strive to honor. He is an inspiration to us all," said Dr. Stefan Jürgen, St. Thomas-St. John District Insular Superintendent.

A Heartfelt Thank You to All Teachers

The VIDE is deeply grateful to all teachers across the Virgin Islands for their continued hard work and dedication to our students. Every day, they go above and beyond to ensure that our children receive a quality education and are prepared for success. Ms. Davis and Mr. Hanley's recognition is a testament to the incredible impact teachers have on our lives and the future of our Territory. Thank you for continuing to raise the bar.

As we strive to build a stronger and brighter future for our students, we remain #PublicSchoolProud of the work being done every day by the passionate and dedicated educators of the Virgin Islands. Through its dedicated staff, the VIDE strives to empower students to reach their fullest potential in a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment.

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