

2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT  
TEACHER OF THE YEAR  
VIRTUAL RECOGNITION CEREMONY



Friday, November 6, 2020

1:00 P.M.

*2021 St. Croix District  
Teacher of the Year  
Candidates*



*Alicia Walters-Ramos*  
St. Croix Educational Complex  
High School



*Tysha St. Jules*  
Juanita Gardine K-8 School



*Wendy Wynter*  
Lew Muckle Elementary  
School

# *2021 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year Candidates*



*Veronica Sargeant*  
Pearl B. Larsen PreK-8 School



*Anne-Louise Wilkins*  
John H. Woodson  
Jr. High School





# *Program*

National Anthem & V.I. March.....Pre-recording will be played

Mistress of Ceremonies..... Carla A. Bastian, Ed.D.  
Deputy Superintendent

Invocation..... Rev. Jermaine Mulley  
Pastor, St. Luke AME Church



## **Remarks**

Carlos McGregor  
Insular Superintendent

Rosa Soto-Thomas  
AFT Local 1826, President

Arah Lockhart  
Virgin Islands Board of Education, Chairman



# *Program*

Remarks continued

Novelle E. Francis, Jr.  
President, 33rd Legislature

Racquel Berry-Benjamin  
Commissioner of Education

Albert Bryan Jr.  
Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands

## **District Teacher of the Year Selection Criteria**

Carla A. Bastian, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent

## **Best Wishes**

2020 District Teacher of the Year & 2020 State Teacher of the Year  
Zahra O'Reilly-Bates

Presentations to the  
2021 District Teacher of the Year Finalists

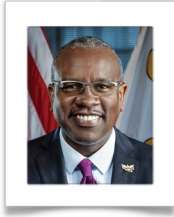
Announcement of the  
2021 District Teacher of the Year

Remarks from the  
2021 District Teacher of the Year

## **Acknowledgements**

E. Xiomara Herman, Deputy Superintendent





### **A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR ALBERT BRYAN JR.**

On behalf of the government and the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands, I offer congratulations to the finalists of this year's St. Croix District Teacher of the Year Award.

Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful weapon with which you can change the world. His words today remain as true as when he spoke them decades ago. It is a fact that today's educators mold tomorrow's leaders, pioneers, and innovators. As a community, we must recognize and support our educators as they are the structural beams that support the bridges to our future.

And while all of our teachers are worthy of recognition, today we recognize five distinguished educators for their commitment to the education of our students: Veronica Sargeant of Pearl B. Larsen K-8; Tysha St. Jules of Juanita Gardine K-8; Wendy Wynter of Lew Muckle Elementary, Anne Wilkins of John H. Woodson Jr. High and Alicia Walters-Ramos of St. Croix Educational Complex.

As finalists in consideration for this year's St. Croix District Teacher of the Year, I believe the five distinguished teachers recognized today, through their work, embody Mandela's words and demonstrate every day why this profession is among the most valuable and essential for the growth and forward progression of any community.

On behalf of a grateful St. Croix and greater Virgin Islands community, I say "Thank you" for the extraordinary work you do every day in the classroom serving as role models and inspiring our next generation not only to aim high academically but to give back to their community as well.

We appreciate your tenacity in rising above the many challenges we face by meeting students where they are and pushing them to go even further.

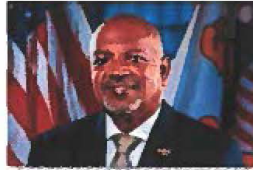
Congratulations, and God Bless.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Albert Bryan Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Albert Bryan Jr.  
Governor



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS



## **MESSAGE FROM THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

It is my distinct pleasure to join the Department of Education in congratulating the 2021 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year candidates: **Veronica Sargeant**, Pearl B. Larsen K-8; **Tysha St. Jules**, Juanita Gardine K-8; **Wendy Wynter**, Lew Muckle Elementary; **Anne Wilkins**, John H. Woodson Jr. High; and **Alicia Walters- Ramos**, St. Croix Educational Complex.

I am honored to celebrate you as distinguished educators in the Virgin Islands. The 2020-2021 school year has presented much uncertainty and numerous challenges due to COVID-19. It has required our teachers to adopt new instructional approaches and strategies. The transition to virtual learning is not an easy undertaking for the faculty, staff, or support teams of our schools. I applaud the efforts of all members of the Department of Education who are actively involved in facilitating this important learning transition for our students.

I especially commend the outstanding commitment of this year's Teacher of the Year finalists. Each one of you has demonstrated passion, diligence, and a stellar work ethic that places you at the forefront of our educational system. It is with sincere gratitude that I say thank you for continuing to put our students first during these unprecedented times. I salute your efforts in taking on the charge of your respective schools, classes, and students. You have all excelled at the application of innovative educational strategies that foster student success.

To Veronica Sargeant, Tysha St. Jules, Wendy Wynter, Anne Wilkins, and Alicia Walters-Ramos, I say thank you for the significant role that you play in the academic journey of our students. Continue to be blessed in all aspects of your daily lives.

Congratulations!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tregenza A. Roach". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.  
Lieutenant Governor





## Legislature of the Virgin Islands

NO. 1110 STRAND STREET  
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**Novelle E. Francis, Jr.**  
Senate President

November 6, 2020

It is my pleasure to recognize five dedicated women who are nominated for the 2021 Teacher of Year in the St. Croix District. I applaud the noteworthy accomplishments of finalists, *Veronica Sargeant* (Pearl B. Larsen K-8), *Tysa St. Jules* (Juanita Gardine K-8), *Wendy Wynter* (Lew Muckle Elementary), *Anne Wilkins* (John H. Woodson Jr. High) and *Alicia Walters-Ramos* (St. Croix Educational Complex) as they strive to provide a quality education for our students.

The Teacher of the Year nominees understand the tremendous influence they have on the future of the students in their care. Students who are inspired by their teachers can accomplish amazing things, and that motivation almost always stays with them. Inspiration is one of the most important ingredients a teacher can provide to their students. A teacher that inspires is a role model, an influence that goes far beyond academic achievement. Perhaps an unknown author said it best, *"The best education is not given to students; it is drawn out of them. It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."* Every day these five nominees encourage discovery, inspiration and learning.

This school year, to say the least, has been an extremely challenging one. We could have never envisioned that the COVID-19 pandemic would have robbed our teachers and students of "in-person" classroom time. I know this road has been difficult, but you can be proud of how hard you have persevered despite the challenges and obstacles that COVID-19 presented. Your accomplishment as a 2021 Teacher of the Year finalist is no less significant.

On behalf of the members of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to these five outstanding finalists as they continue to educate and motivate our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Novelle E. Francis, Jr.", written over a light blue background.

Novelle E. Francis, Jr.  
Senate President  
33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature of the Virgin Islands



STACEY PLASKETT  
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House of Representatives  
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HORTICULTURE AND RESEARCH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMODITY EXCHANGES,  
ENERGY, AND CREDIT  
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND  
MARITIME TRANSPORTATION  
SENIOR WHIP

**A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN STACEY E. PLASKETT**

On behalf of the Members of the 116th Congress, my staff, and my family, I would like to extend greetings and congratulations to the five distinguished teachers who are finalists for the 2021 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year. I offer my gratitude and appreciation to the St. Croix District Office of the Insular Superintendent for recognizing the unsung heroes in our community for their untiring efforts to lay the foundation for success.

Like many, I am who I am today, in part, because of dedicated teachers like *Ms. Veronica Sargeant*, *Ms. Tysha St. Jules*, *Ms. Wendy Wynter*, *Ms. Anne Wilkins*, and *Mrs. Alicia Walters-Ramos*. It is a privilege to recognize these individuals and all of our teachers who understand the day-to-day demands of their occupation. Our community owes a debt of gratitude to the five distinguished honorees, all teachers and the hardworking professionals in the Department of Education for their indelible contributions to building the foundation of our children's futures, developing an environment of creative and quality instruction, and inspiring upcoming generations of outstanding Virgin Islanders.

Congratulations, and I wish you continued success on your path of excellence and service to our community and the future of our Virgin Islands.

Sincerely,

Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

kac

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THE VIRGIN ISLANDS  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Racquel Berry-Benjamin  
*Commissioner*

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November 6, 2020

**A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

On behalf of the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the five finalists for the 2021 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year award. The annual recognition of our top teachers is a very special time for us at the Department of Education because it affords us the opportunity to showcase the best of the profession we love.

The District Teacher is a leader who stands out among her peers and who embodies passion, compassion, skill and dedication—qualities that are the cornerstone to the success of her students. You have each demonstrated these values in your work, both inside and outside of the classroom, and are well-deserving of the accolades being bestowed upon you today in the presence of your family, colleagues, and community.

Now, more than ever before, teachers play a critical role in the lives of their students. With a raging global pandemic that have caused schools around the globe to take teaching and learning online, you, and all of the committed teachers at the VIDE, continue to go above and beyond to ensure our students are learning and thriving.

Veronica Sargeant of Pearl B. Larsen K-8; Tysha St. Jules of Juanita Gardine K-8; Wendy Wynter of Lew Muckle Elementary; Anne Wilkins of John H. Woodson Jr. High and Alicia Walters-Ramos of St. Croix Educational Complex High School, thank you for caring about our students and the incredible work you do every day on your respective campuses. While one of you will be named the 2021 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year, you are all winners in our eyes.

Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Racquel Berry-Benjamin  
Commissioner

**#Together, we will transform public education in the Virgin Islands**





*The Honorable*  
**Donna Frett-Gregory**  
*Senator*

## Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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**CHAIRPERSON**  
Committee on Education  
and Workforce Development

**MEMBER**  
Committee on Finance

Committee on Health, Hospitals &  
Human Services

Committee on Housing, Transportation  
and Telecommunications

Committee on Homeland Security,  
Justice, Public Safety and Veterans'  
Affairs

### Message from Senator Donna Frett-Gregory

This year's Teacher of the Year nominees reflect outstanding Virgin Islands educators who not only exemplify excellence in the classroom but are also resilient leaders. You ended school year 2019/2020 and began school year 2020/2021 amidst so many challenges and uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Your commitment to our children is unwavering as evident in your nomination for the 2020 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year.

While only one of you will be named St. Croix District Teacher of the Year 2020, I offer my appreciation and congratulations to all finalists as you are apart of a distinct group of educators. **Ms. Veronica Sargeant, Tysha St. Jules, Wendy Wynter, Anne Wilkins, and Alicia Walters-Ramos;** each of you exemplify excellence.

I also wish to offer congratulations to all teachers in the St. Croix District for their hard work and dedication to our students. All of you are outstanding educators and give so much of yourselves to ensure that our children receive a solid educational foundation.

Congratulations to the St. Croix District leadership for recognizing the importance of celebrating our educators. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to the development of our children.

Congratulations to all!

Donna Frett-Gregory  
Senator, 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature  
Education Committee Chair



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Office of the Insular Superintendent*  
*St. Croix District*

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**Carlos McGregor**  
Insular Superintendent

**Carla A. Bastian, Ed.D**  
Deputy Superintendent

**Ericilda Ottley-Herman**  
Deputy Superintendent



## Message from the Insular Superintendent

It is my distinct honor and pleasure as the St. Croix District Insular Superintendent to extend congratulations to the five finalists for the 2021 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year. Each of you deserves this recognition for the exhilarating and awe-inspiring level of commitment you bring to your classroom every day. Teaching is the most notable profession that requires a special calling that only some, like you, can successfully undertake with passionate rigor and with the best interest of students at the forefront of your efforts.

Our five finalists not only bring a high level of commitment to the classroom, but they also participate in extra-curricular activities such as coaching sports, coordinating school competitions, participating in school committees, and so much more. They also strive to grow professionally by attending numerous workshops and training. Our five finalists also share their passion and knowledge with their colleagues by collaborating and sharing their expertise with others in their school buildings and beyond. Their collaborative spirit and passion for learning and growing are avenues they use to help our students become well-rounded individuals.

I recognize the hard work that all of our teachers do and encourage a supportive environment where teachers are recognized for their tireless, and at times, arduous endeavors. While teaching and learning have changed remarkably from prior years, due to the challenges of providing Education in a COVID-19 pandemic environment, teachers have continued to persevere and provide our students with top-rated Education. We want to thank our five finalists and all teachers for working even during such a time as this to exemplify and actively work towards student growth and achievement.

The Dalai Lama stated that "Education is much more than a matter of imparting the knowledge and skills by which narrow goals are achieved. It is also about opening the child's eyes to the needs and rights of others." On behalf of Deputy Superintendents Carla A. Bastian, Ed. D and Ericilda X. Ottley-Herman, I thank you for your commitment to the field of Education and dedication to improving student success.

Congratulations,

Carlos McGregor  
Insular Superintendent

# ST. CROIX FEDERATION OF TEACHERS



St. Croix Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1826  
P.O. Box 1530 Kingshill, St. Croix  
United States Virgin Islands, 00851-1530  
Tel: (340) 778-4414  
Email: [stxteach01826@yahoo.co](mailto:stxteach01826@yahoo.co).



## MESSAGE FROM THE AFT-STX LOCAL 1826 PRESIDENT

### **2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR - CONGRATULATIONS HONOREES!!!**

On behalf the Executive Board, Representative Council and the entire membership of the St. Croix Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1826, it is a profound honor to acknowledge the dedication and commitment that each of you bring and continue to showcase as teachers during this unprecedented pandemic. Sentiments are also being conveyed to all other District competitors who are not amongst the top five finalists. Congratulations to each of you! I am certain that each of you are well deserving of the recognition which was received at your respective sites.

Being an educator during Covid-19 comes with additional roles and responsibilities that cannot truly be captured unless someone walks in your shoes. Many people were especially critical of educators from the onset of the pandemic and it has not subsided. Irrespective of the many challenges that were tossed at you, and in addition to impromptu visitations, each of you persevered and continued to instruct our students virtually alongside their parents and other family members. Some of you even taught and assisted your own child or children simultaneously. Indeed, you are juggling a lot!

You have mastered multitasking and gained a new skillset with ease. Your mental health was tested like never before. The avalanche of emails, professional development sessions, policy changes, devices or not, fears of school reopening without proper health /safety protocols in place, WAPA outages, connectivity issues, introduction of new platforms and impromptu teams and zoom meetings is proof that you can weather any storm and emerge standing tall and courageous.

The union salutes the District Teacher of the Year 2021! This achievement is most humbling and rewarding. Teaching is most graciously a labor of LOVE! For the most part, the world has now recognized the value of a T-E-A-C-H-E-R!!! It took Covid -19 to bring this to light. Now the VIDE needs to pay you what you are worth! Congratulations and best wishes on your journey as an educator and beyond!

In Unity,

Rosa Soto-Thomas  
President, AFT Local 1826

First Vice President – Jesus Espinosa. Second Vice President – Verna Lionel  
Treasurer – Rhea Dowling. Recording Secretary – Kim Phillip

*Affiliated with: AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR - CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS*



**GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS  
VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION**



**BOARD OFFICERS**

Arah C. Lockhart  
**Chairman**

Kyza A. Callwood, MPA  
**Vice-Chairman**

Winona A. Hendricks  
**Secretary**

**St. Croix Members**  
Winona A. Hendricks  
Terrence I. Joseph  
Mary L. Moorhead  
Martial Webster, Esq.

**St. Thomas/St. John Members**  
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Arah C. Lockhart  
Jeanette Smith-Barry

James Provost  
**At Large Member**

Milton Potter  
**Executive Director**

Emmett Hansen II  
**Associate Executive Director**

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**WEBSITE**

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**2020 TEACHER OF THE YEAR CONGRATULATORY  
LETTER FROM THE V.I. BOARD OF EDUCATION**

On behalf of the members and staff of the 19<sup>th</sup> Virgin Islands Board of Education, please accept our congratulations on your nomination as a 2020 Teacher of the Year finalist.

In any year, it is a singular honor to be nominated as being the superlative in one's field by representatives of your respective institutions. During this challenging period, there is no doubt that you have been tested up to and beyond your limits. However, you continued to persevere. And for this, we salute you!

Best wishes and blessings for continued success.

***Arah C. Lockhart***

Arah C. Lockhart, Chairperson  
19<sup>th</sup> Virgin Islands Board of Education  
October 30, 2020

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Virgin Islands Board of Education is committed to its vision and will promote the transformation of the structure of existing public education through:  
1. governance over the public education system; 2. improved student, parent, teacher relationship; 3. comprehensive community engagement; 4. standards that promote high academic achievement; 5. creation of an environment that is conducive to effective communication; 6. enhanced quality of professional development for all; 7. provision of adequate resources to achieve our vision, goals and objectives.

**VISION STATEMENT**

To ensure that each child is provided with the best quality education which promotes our history and culture, guarantees academic achievement and builds strong communities.

*A Message from the 2020 St. Croix District & Virgin Islands State Teacher of the Year  
Zahra O'Reilly-Bates*

*It gives me great pleasure to extend CONGRATULATIONS to the 2021 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year finalists Veronica Sargeant, Tysha St. Jules, Alicia Walters-Ramos, Anne Wilkins, and Wendy Wynter. You are all truly deserving of the accolades bestowed upon you for your tireless contributions, unselfish dedication, and love of the children of the U.S. Virgin Islands.*

*Being a teacher takes great responsibility, compassion, commitment, patience, empathy, resourcefulness, creativity, and resilience. It means having high expectations and respect for all children. It's about fostering relationships, embracing, and cultivating children's curiosity. It's knowing that all children can learn and want to learn. It's about empowering children by honoring their voices, giving choices, and meeting them where they are.*

*As teachers we are influencers! We inspire, mold, and shape the lives entrusted to us. We lay the foundation for all other professions. With the shifting of the tides that this pandemic has brought about, more than ever before, we are highly sought out, appreciated, and being respected as society is recognizing just how critical we are in educating our children and preparing them for life.*

*You became a teacher because you truly care and want to make a difference in the lives of children, as is evident by your years of service. So, I leave you with the words of Marian Wright Edelman, "we can leave our children with a better, safer, and fairer world if we care enough." Remain committed in your quest to enrich and enhance the lives of the children of this territory as you educate to liberate and ensure a productive future. Remember, "the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." - Alvin Toffler*

*Once again, CONGRATULATIONS!*

*Sincerely,*

*Zahra O'Reilly-Bates*





# ALICIA WALTERS-RAMOS

2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE  
ST. CROIX EDUCATIONAL COMPLEX HIGH SCHOOL



Alicia Ramos was born on St. Thomas, USVI. She is the proud product of the Virgin Islands public school system where she graduated from Dober Elementary School, Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School. She obtained her undergraduate degree from Point Park University in Pittsburgh, Pa., where she majored in Journalism and Communications. Her career as a teacher started at the opening of the St. Croix Educational Complex High School (SCECHS) in 1995. Mrs. Ramos considers her wonderful family to be her greatest pride. Her husband of 28 years, Roberto Ramos, and teenage daughter, Maykayla Ramos, keeps her grounded.

Throughout her career as an English educator, Mrs. Ramos takes pride in nurturing some of the brightest Virgin Islands minds. Mrs. Ramos has taught English 9th-12th, AP Language and Composition, and journalism. Presently, she teaches Advanced Placement Literature and Composition, and English 12 Honors.

Mrs. Ramos also served as a former English Department chairperson for six years. During that time, she championed a number of initiatives that affected all departments throughout SCECHS. She copyrighted her writing rubric and shared it with every department. The essay format for exams was also perfected by Mrs. Ramos and has been used by all SCECHS teachers. She enjoyed coordinating activities such as the Language Arts Showcase Production, Poetry Out Loud Competition, and the Laws of Life Essay Competition. Additionally, she has worked with the Language Arts Coordinator and teachers in the district to develop a Rigorous Curriculum Design that focused on prioritizing Common Core Standards.

Moreover, within the classroom environment, Mrs. Ramos works directly with her students, developing their close-reading strategies through annotating and analyzing numerous forms of genre for their literary and rhetorical devices, arming students with the ability to develop a deeper understanding of the English language. Ultimately, Mrs. Ramos prepares her students to take the College Board exam and build confidence that presents itself in future college-level English courses.

Beyond imparting knowledge to her students, Mrs. Ramos is known for mentoring new teachers. She often shares strategies and her many years of experience with them.

Since 2015, Mrs. Ramos has entered her students into the Vento Shakespearean Festival held on St. Thomas and has returned home to St. Croix with the title four out of five years they have entered the competition. Mrs. Ramos not only brings Shakespeare's words to life for the students, but she instills in them the life lessons of working hard and supporting each other to achieve a common goal. Not only does her students learn the words of the play, but they assist in designing and creating their own costumes and props. Mrs. Ramos utilizes her childhood skills of sewing to handcraft many of the costumes and props. She is affectionately known to many on campus as "Mrs. McGuyver."

Behind the scenes at SCECHS, Mrs. Ramos embodies the Barracuda spirit in the classroom and on campus. Throughout the year, she works with seniors on set designs for all of their senior activities, from Introductory Night, to Class Night, to Prom, and to Graduation, setting each activity aglow. One of her biggest feats to date was sketching and creating, with the assistance of her husband, a life-size replica of the Transatlantic Monument that stands in front of SCECHS. This monument enhanced the stage during the graduation ceremonies.

Mrs. Ramos is also a tennis enthusiast. She travels extensively throughout the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and the United States to give her dynamic daughter, Maykayla, the opportunity to peruse her dream of becoming a tennis star.

"A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning,"

- Brad Henry







# TYSHA ST. JULES

2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE  
JUANITA GARDINE K-8 SCHOOL



Tysha St. Jules was born in the United States Virgin Islands, St. Croix, in 1975. She is the eighth of nine children born to her parents. She is the mother of three children: Tishawna, Jaleel and Kamisha Yearwood—and the grandmother of four: Jeremiah George, Simeon Poleon, K’Nia and Amora Yearwood.

Ms. St. Jules attended Ricardo Richards and Alexander Henderson elementary schools, was promoted to the Arthur A. Richards Jr. High School, then, in 1993, graduated from the St. Croix Central High School. While enrolled at the University of the Virgin Islands in 1997, she decided to join the Ameri-corps volunteers. Americrops members were assigned to various non-profit organizations throughout the United States Virgin Islands. Ms. St. Jules was assigned to the St. Croix Environmental Association (SEA). She worked with private and public school educators to engage students with learning about environmental stewardship, conservation, and protection.

During her time at SEA, Ms. St. Jules was mentored by Mr. Olasee Davis and Mr. Rudy O’Reilly as she conducted nature hikes throughout St. Croix. Her Americorps experiences also fostered collaboration with public agencies and privately owned businesses to present two consecutive years of Earth Day celebrations at the St. Georges Botanical Garden. As a result, she received an Environmental Protection Agency Award for Environmental Awareness. The Americorps experience turned into a full-time Environmental Education Coordinator position that included grant writing.

As time progressed, Ms. St. Jules earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from the University of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix, in May 2002. She transferred her love for teaching into the public elementary school system. She was assigned an elementary teacher position at the Evelyn M. William Elementary School (EMWS). The culture at EMWS contributed to her present teaching success. The culture included educators who were always willing to collaborate and lend their experiential knowledge. They were willing to learn from and share with a novice teacher.

On her first day of teaching, Ms. St. Jules was formally introduced to Ms. Patricia Browne. Ms. Browne shared her teaching expertise and co-taught with Ms. St. Jules for half of the first marking period, but remained a mentor to the new teacher as the school year progressed. During Ms. St. Jules second formal evaluation, she learned that Ms. Browne volunteered without being asked to

become a teacher-mentor. Ms. St. Jules stated, "With that support and mentorship from a veteran teacher, it made the first year of teaching an invitation to another school year." This experience is reciprocated as Ms. St. Jules volunteers her time and expertise to mentor first-year teachers within her building.

At EMWS, Ms. St. Jules was introduced to special education when a colleague of hers was stressed about her child's disability and not knowing what can be done to best help him. As the child's teacher, Ms. St. Jules wanted to make his learning experience the best. While learning about teaching strategies to support the child's exceptional needs, Ms. St. Jules decided that special education was a field that she wanted to further explore. The closing of EMWS in 2016 was the saddest, life-changing event that occurred during her teaching career.

In 2004, while working as the activity coordinator in the Beacon School of the Virgin Islands afterschool program at Claude O. Markoe Elementary School, Ms. St. Jules enrolled members in the community of all ages to participate in the plethora of academic, cultural and physical activities offered by the Beacon School. Her duties also included recruiting gifted members of the community to host these activities. Her commitment included writing and acquiring mini grants to maintain the program until its doors closed in 2013.

At the closing of EMWS in 2016, Ms. St. Jules transferred to Claude O. Markoe Elementary School (COMS), which proved to be uplifting because COMS was one of the schools that embraced the "My Environment Nature Program" that Ms. St. Jules previously managed with SEA. In addition, her previous work at COMS in the Beacon School program afforded Ms. St. Jules to effortlessly adjust to the school culture and readily interact with everyone. While there, she worked in the 4th and 6th grade levels, and continued to expand her teaching effectiveness and cultivated her love for environmental education into core subjects to engage her students. In 2016, her colleagues at COMS bestowed her the honor of being named Teacher of the Year.

While teaching at EMWS and coordinating curricula and extra-curricular activities at Beacon School of the Virgin Islands, Ms. St. Jules earned a Master of Education degree in Special Education from Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona in April 2010.

While considering other experiences in public education, Ms. St. Jules decided to transfer into the Special Education Department in 2018. She is assigned to the Juanita Gardine K-8 School (JGK-8). It must be something about the air we breathe because the culture at the JGK-8 is phenomenal. In this learning environment, Ms. St. Jules was embraced with open arms and have been afforded countless opportunities to collaborate with all of her colleagues. As the Lead Teacher, she collaborated with grade-level para-educators and planned learning activities, which engaged students enrolled in a Therapeutic Kindergarten. The learning activities are connected to each student's cognitive and social/emotional development, as determined by their identified disability and addressed through their individualized education plan (IEP). At JGK-8, she was asked to chair the School Garden Program, in which the school body worked alongside her to design, plan and present a fantastic First Place Agriculture and Food Fair Exhibit in 2020. In addition, Ms. St. Jules assisted the JGK-8 Quadrille Dance performers alongside Ms. Patricia Browne. In 2020, the faculty and staff elected Ms. St. Jules as the school's Teacher of the Year.

Presently, Ms. St. Jules is a candidate for Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership from Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona. Ms. St. Jules is not sure where she will be in years to come, but she does know it will be somewhere that involves actively engaging children to meet their academic, social and emotional needs.







WENDY WYNTER

2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE  
LEW MUCKLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“Always dream and shoot higher than you know you can do. Don’t bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself.” —William Faulkner

With this quote in mind, I am a very well-rounded individual and have been rewarded opportunities that remain dear to me. My parents, Noel Wynter, Sr. and Jerraine Miller instilled in my siblings and I the values of excelling and attaining our goals. Being the oldest, I have always been very protective and a role model for my siblings. This has molded me into the role model that I am today. During my adolescent years, I was a member of Lord God of Sabbath Youth Group, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Youth Experiencing Success (YES), Job Opportunities for Virgin Islands Graduates (JOVIG), The Upward Bound Program, and the St. Croix Central High School Concert Choir. Participation in these various organizations afforded me the opportunity to travel, garner friendships, make wise career choices, attain lifelong skills, and forge positive relationships with the youths of our community.

My strengths are patience and determination. I recognized my strengths immediately after graduating from high school. Six months before I completed high school, my mother, who at the time was a Sergeant First Class in the National Guard, received her orders to relocate to Fort Belvoir, Virginia. That fall, my family left for Virginia without me because I preferred to attend the University of the Virgin Islands. However, my parents made me learn and understand the responsibilities of being independent. I remember being a cashier at Plaza Extra. When I received my maroon smock, I was on top of the world, and when I received my first paycheck, I was over the moon. I was determined to succeed. I enrolled in the University of the Virgin Islands Elementary Education Program and also worked with the work-study program in the financial aid department. I enjoyed school, being independent, and appreciated everyone that played a role in me achieving my goal.

I graduated from the University of the Virgin Islands in May 2004, where I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in Social Science. Immediately after, I gained summer employment with the Department of Education’s Special Education Summer program. This experience was my first realization that I was in the right profession, eager to assist in making a positive impact on the lives of young people. In the fall of 2004, I became a full-time Elementary Education teacher with the Virgin Islands Department of Education at Lew Muckle Elementary School, and I am



Islands Department of Education at Lew Muckle Elementary School, and I am still teaching there.

As an Elementary Teacher, I believe that students should be educated using a holistic approach. An approach where students are engaged in the elements of the hidden curriculum and culturally responsive teaching practices. This is the sole purpose of why I work tirelessly to spearhead activities: both on and off campus. I have organized and assisted in the planning of field trips on and off-island, school-wide assemblies, parent-teacher association meetings, athletic events, field days, and cultural events, to name a few. I have chaired and been a member of numerous school committees such as the Positive Behavior Intervention Support team, Health and Wellness Committee, National Elementary Honor Society, Festival Committee, Social Committee, School Improvement Team, and Queen Show Committee. For the past ten years, I have proudly coordinated events for the Lew Muckle Elementary School Steel Orchestra and multiple athletic experiences for the Lady Lions softball team. The Lew Muckle Elementary School Steel Orchestra has been invited to perform at numerous community events, such as groundbreaking ceremonies, Jump Up, United States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism commercials, welcoming incoming passengers at the Henry Rohlsen Airport, Agricultural Fair, Chilli Cook-Off, brunch at Ocean View Café, Christiansted Annual Boat Parade, Almeric L. Christian District Court and more. As the manager of the Lady Lions Softball Team, I have organized participation in on and off-island tournaments, and enrolled the team in Little League to be able to get more exposure and development in the sport. Our team proudly carries the 2019 -2020 Department of Education's Interscholastic undefeated title at the moment. Leading committees and athletic teams at Lew Muckle School have allowed me to impact students academically, socially, and emotionally. I encourage family participation and engagement by facilitating activities that mold the groups as ONE.

As I conclude, my greatest accomplishment is being the mother of seven-year-old Omar B. Mutidi Jr. My son, Omar, attends the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School and is very involved in extra-curricular activities. He plays soccer and tee-ball, dances moko jumbie, plays steelpan, swims, runs track and field, and enjoys being a thrill seeker. I also make sure he attends church regularly. Many question how I manage his schedule and mine; this is where his village



plays an integral part. Omar Jr. and I appreciate his dad, grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, close family and friends, and his church family for their support. I know the value of having a supportive village; therefore, I am devoted to the community especially, the youths.





# VERONICA SARGEANT

2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE  
PEARL B. LARSEN PREK-8 SCHOOL



Born to Haidee and Raphael Encarnacion, Veronica Sargeant is a second-generation Crucian and proud product of Puerto Rican grandparents. Growing in a loving Christian home was the foundation that has molded Mrs. Sargeant into the woman she is today. As a young child, she realized that being the second eldest in the family was no small role to play among her eight brothers and sisters. She adapted to enjoying the company of her younger siblings, which forged the ability to care and mold others to become the best that they could be.

Her education started in Lew Muckle Elementary School and proceeded to continue at the Evelyn M. Williams Elementary School. She graduated from the Arthur A. Richards Jr. High School, where she found herself thinking she might want to be a secretary one day; however, she refocused on her first dream—teaching.

She became a high school graduate in 1990, an unforgettable year after enduring Hurricane Hugo. When school opened following the storm, she attended school in the morning due to split sessions. Veronica was offered the opportunity to tutor at the Charles H. Emmanuel Elementary School from midday. It was strange at first, but she enjoyed it and got a taste of what teaching might be like.

Despite the trauma of having to start over after Hurricane Hugo and the constant stress of what the situation had caused, she left St. Croix to attend the Mohegan Community College in July of 1990. After a year, she returned to St. Croix and took time off to welcome her first daughter and start a family. Her desire to be an educator was not forgotten, so she began studying at the University of the Virgin Islands. There, she acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education in May of 1999. In September of that same year, she was hired at the Charles H. Emmanuel School as a Bilingual teacher.

Mrs. Veronica Sargeant also had the opportunity to experience education in Norwich, Connecticut, where she serviced four schools as an ESL tutor. This was the second time she would find herself in a position where she did not feel capable of fulfilling the requirements. However, this experience would open her heart to an interest in teaching learners of other languages. The need she saw in those students touched her heart in a way she could not explain.

Upon her return to St. Croix, she was able to transfer to the Pearl B. Larsen



Elementary School. To her surprise, she was placed as an ESL teacher to service students in the intermediate grades. This was the final sign she would receive that allowed her to realize her role in education—teaching English to learners of other languages. She began studying online with NOVA Southeastern University of Fort Lauderdale. The long, sleepless nights and balancing three daughters, home, and work were worth it. In March 2012, Veronica earned a Master's degree in TESOL.

Along this journey in education, many students have had the opportunity to experience the firm, but caring advice, and most importantly, instruction, of Mrs. Sargeant. She has continued to immerse herself in learning new ways to reach all of her learners by attending workshops, giving of her time in after-school programs, and forging long-lasting relationships with parents and students. In her heart, she knows that student achievement is not acquired only through teaching, but it comes by getting to know the needs that are ailing the youth.

Mrs. Sargeant accepts that in the field of teaching, learning is never done; therefore, she will always analyze herself to find ways that she can become more efficient to benefit her students, as well as any student who requires tutoring and afterschool services. She knows that Education is here to stay, for it is the backbone of molding future leaders of the world.





# ANNE-LOUISE WILKINS

2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE  
JOHN H. WOODSON JR. HIGH SCHOOL



Anne-Louise Wilkins is the fourth of five children who, as a child, would gaze at the night sky and dream of becoming an astronaut and traveling to the moon. Currently the chairperson of the Science Department at the John H. Woodson Junior High School, she attended Hollins University just outside Roanoke, Virginia, where she obtained bachelor's degrees in French and Science, and then embarked on graduate studies in Chemistry at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

While at Hollins, Anne-Louise received her first National Science Foundation (NSF) fellowship award and worked as a summer lab assistant in organic chemistry at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia. Subsequent NSF awards have taken her to Indiana University, Boston University and the University of Maryland.

After having submitted proposals, she has been selected to make presentations at the International STEM Education Association's (ISEA) annual conference on two separate occasions, and most recently, was invited to be a presenter at the National Science Teacher Association (NSTA) annual conference in St. Louis, Missouri in April 2019. However, the career achievement that provides her the most joy, pride and true satisfaction is to have been nominated by several former students and chosen for inclusion in "Who's Who Among America's Teachers."





# Congratulations to All School-based 2021 Teachers of the Year

**Ms. Magdalyn Jules**

Arthur A. Richards K-8 School

**Ms. Sherline Louis**

Claude O. Markoe Elementary School

**Ms. Rosanna LaFond**

Eulalie R. Rivera K-8 School

**Ms. Andrea Brathwaite**

St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center

**Ms. Lezie Phillip**

Alfredo Andrews Elementary School

**Ms. Xiomara Garcia**

Ricardo Richards Elementary School

**Ms. Jennifa Mohammed-Parrilla**

St. Croix Central High School

# *Acknowledgements*

Virgin Islands Department of Education, Office of the Commissioner

Office of the Insular Superintendent-St. Croix District

St. Croix District Schools

American Federation of Teachers Local 1826

Jan Mitchell of Mitchell Larsen Studio

Beatrice Ramos of Wild Orchids

Crucian Gold

Department of Education, Office of Public Relations

## **St. Croix District Teacher of the Year Judging Panel**

**Zahra O'Reilly-Bates**

2020 St. Croix District Teacher of the Year

2020 VIDE State Teacher of the Year

**Jeselle Cruse-Peter**

Elementary Programs Coordinator

**José Pérez**

ESL Coordinator

**Paulina Croskey**

Language Arts Coordinator

**Sheryl Serano-Griffith**

Special Education Director

2021 ST. CROIX DISTRICT  
TEACHER OF THE YEAR  
VIRTUAL RECOGNITION CEREMONY



Thank you for joining us