



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Public Relations

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VIDE OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON TEACHER UNION RALLIES PLANNED FOR DECEMBER 18

ST. THOMAS, USVI – The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) stands in solidarity with the hardworking members of AFT Locals 1825 and 1826.

Our teachers are an essential part of the Department's operations; our students' social, emotional and academic development; and the future success of the Virgin Islands. The Department's position is always to support its teachers and schools by providing them with the tools they need to be successful, but, regrettably, with the sometimes-limited resources that we have.

We are keenly aware of the challenges teachers face in their classrooms and at their schools, many of which are older structures with significant, long-standing maintenance issues, compounded by the lack of classroom resources, in some instances. While we try to juggle meeting all of these needs with the local and federal dollars made available to us, these funds are never quite enough to adequately meet every need. We are often forced to make sacrifices in critical areas in order to keep our operations afloat. With that in mind, it is important to note that the Department of Education is not a revenue-generating entity; our allotted annual budget by the V.I. Legislature determines what we can and cannot do.

One thing we can all agree on, however, is that we want what's best for our students and schools. We want our students and teachers to learn and work in safe, clean and well-funded environments that are conducive to learning. That's why the Department of Education has been working feverishly with its federal partners for more than two years to ensure that new and modern schools are built throughout the Territory. This stringent process is not without its own unique set of challenges, but we continue to forge ahead with the bright future of our students in mind.

The Department of Education remains committed to continue working hand-in-hand with the members of Locals 1825 and 1826 as we make strides together to transform public education in the Virgin Islands. We are in this fight together.

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