

**THE VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION'S RESOLUTION
IN SUPPORT OF VOLUNTARY AND QUALITY EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Whereas, the Virgin Islands Board of Education finds that multiple studies have shown that quality pre-kindergarten programs help children develop the cognitive and social skills that are essential to building blocks for their future success; and

Whereas, the Virgin Islands Board of Education also finds that numerous research demonstrates that pre-kindergarten programs can generate savings for states and school districts through fewer special education placements, grade retentions and remedial services and produce substantial benefits for children, particularly high-needs children, working families and communities; and

Whereas, quality pre-kindergarten programs can help to close the achievement gap between low income children and their more affluent peers; and

Whereas, some critics have cited a fadeout of program effects over time, a number of states have documented short- and long- term gains from pre-kindergarten schooling; and

Whereas, many educators are discovering that reform efforts in K-12 educational systems are too little, too late because by the time some children reach kindergarten, they are already far behind their peers in skills and measures of school readiness; and

Whereas, these educational gaps are much more costly and difficult to close as children advance through elementary, middle and high school; and pre-kindergarten programs help to close achievement gaps between groups of students; and

Whereas, a majority of states have stood firm in their investments in pre-kindergarten programs despite worsening economic conditions with the funding level of \$5.2 billion for fiscal year 2009, recognizing that an investment in quality voluntary prekindergarten is an investment in the economic future of their states, and

Whereas, to ensure that no child is left behind and that all children reach academic proficiency, the Virgin Islands should expand its financial investments in pre-kindergarten services to better prepare young children for school success; and

Whereas, the National School Boards Association, with which the Virgin Islands Board of Education maintains membership, and its Center for Public Education strongly believe that publicly funded preschool programs can help raise student achievement by providing a solid foundation; and

Whereas, the Virgin Islands Board of Education believes that by giving children a quality early education, many can have a tremendous opportunity for future education success;

Now therefore,

Be It Resolved that the Virgin Islands Board of Education urges the Governor and the Legislature of the Virgin Islands to increase funding for the creation and / or expansion of voluntary, quality pre-school programs for children of the Virgin Islands; and

It is further resolved that the Virgin Islands Board of Education will promote the value of early childhood education throughout the Virgin Islands community through public/private collaboration; through engagement of stakeholders to increase awareness and to advocate for investments in preschool programs and training for early childhood providers.