

# GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION



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Shawna K. Richards

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Judy M. Gomez, Esq.  
Nandi Sekou, Esq.  
Jeanette Smith-Barry

Angel L. Bolques, Jr.  
**At Large Member**

Vacant  
**Executive Director**

Emmett Hansen II  
**Associate Executive Director**

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## Virgin Islands Board of Education Emergency Meeting Minutes – May 17, 2021

### I. Call to Order

The emergency meeting of the 20th Virgin Islands Board of Education was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Chair Kyza Callwood. The meeting was held via teleconference.

### II. Roll Call

The following were present: Kyza Callwood, Winona Hendricks, Emmanuella M. Perez-Cassius, Shawna K. Richards, Nandi Sekou, Jeanette Smith-Barry and Terrence Joseph. Members Angel Bolques, Jr. and Judy Gomez joined late.

Staff Members Present: Executive Director Stephanie Berry, AED Emmett Hansen.

Atty. Jennifer Jones was also present.

Stenographer: Ms. Desiree Smith

### III. Discussion on 2021 Public School Graduations

Chair Callwood reviewed the factors leading to the emergency meeting, which included a notarized notice of complaint that had been received by the board relative to public school graduations. He opened the discussion and asked members to be mindful of the authority of the VIBE and VIDE.

Atty. Jones discussed the authority of the Board, in response to a question about the State of Emergency affects VIBE operations. Members also discussed:

- the Board's authority to halt/postpone graduation ceremonies;
- VIDE's communication process with students;
- acknowledgement of St. Croix students; and
- the students' argument for the board's jurisdiction and their right to be heard expeditiously.

There was further discussion about the inclusion of St. Croix students, who are mentioned in the complaint, and the fact that the graduation is a territorial process. Member Gomez said that St. Croix can join the complaint, but the complaint before the Board is specific to students in the St. Thomas-St. John district.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Virgin Islands Board of Education is to provide leadership and oversight, set policy and advocate for continuous improvement of the Public Education System of the Virgin Islands of the United States.

#### VISION STATEMENT

Each child is provided with the best quality education which guarantees academic excellence, promotes our history and culture, and builds strong local and global communities.

MOTION: Member Gomez moved that the complaint before the Board submitted by the students in the St. Thomas-St. John district shall be heard at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18 in an emergency board hearing.

SECOND: Member Sekou

After discussion regarding VIBE graduation commitments, the time was changed to 1:00 p.m.

The motion was initially so ordered. A formal vote was taken and all members were in favor. The motion carried.

Members discussed the process of the hearing, the issuance of subpoenas and opportunity for witnesses.

#### IV. Public Comment

Questions and comments were received from Sen. Whitaker and Ms. Mary Moorhead regarding notification to the public. Daily News Reporter, AJ Rao asked the complaint and the impact on St. Croix graduation.

#### V. Adjournment

MOTION: Member Joseph moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Vice-Chair Hendricks

So ordered. The meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Submitted By:



Shawna K. Richards, PMP  
Secretary

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