

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION



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Virgin Islands Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes – July 28, 2022

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the 20th Virgin Islands Board of Education was called to order. by Chair Kyza Callwood.

II. Roll Call

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

Staff Members Present: Executive Director Stephanie Berry and BFD Sandra Bess

Stenographer: Desiree Hill

III. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Member Hendricks moved to approve the agenda as presented. .
SECOND: Chair Callwood

So ordered.

IV. Review and Approval of the Department of Education’s VI Standards of Achievement

Member Hendricks said the Board has already accepted the VIDE’s curriculum framework and has had numerous presentations from VIDE administrators on the proposed standards.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hendricks moved that the VIDE Standards of Achievement in English Language Arts, Math, Science, Computer Science, Health and Physical Education, World Languages, Music Education, Arts Education and Social Studies in draft to be approved to hold the VIDE accountable for higher education and academic goals from 2022 through 2024.

SECOND: Chair Callwood

Objection: Member Smith-Barry said the Board should not be approving a draft since Social Studies is in progress. She recognizes the work that the Department has done on the standards, but says the Social Studies section is not complete and there should not

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be a wholesale approval.

Voting was as follows:

Yea (4) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, J. Gomez and T Joseph

Not Voting (2) – N. Sekou and J. Smith-Barry

Excused (2) – S. Richards and E. Perez-Cassius

Absent (1) – A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion carried.

Member Smith-Barry attempted to make a motion that the Board direct the VIDE to acquire and make available to schools and include in the VISA additional resources by local and Caribbean authors and historians. Chair Callwood ruled that the motion was out of order and would be covered in a later section of the agenda.

V. Review and Approval of the Department of Education’s Curriculum for four subject areas – ELA, Mathematics, Science and Computer Science

Vice-Chair Hendricks said the Department has completed four curriculum areas, which show the community the content areas and how the students will be learning.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hendricks moved that the Board approve ELA, Math, Science and Computer Science curriculum which would hold the VIDE responsible for content and information for students, teachers and community from 2022 through 2024.

SECOND: Chair Callwood

Objection: Member Joseph asked for clarification on Mbr. Smith-Barry’s request.

Voting was as follows:

Yea (6) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, J. Gomez, N. Sekou, J. Smith-Barry and T. Joseph

Excused (2) – S. Richards and E. Perez-Cassius

Absent (1) – A. Bolques, Jr.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved that the Board direct the VIDE to acquire and make available to schools and include in the VISA additional resources by local and Caribbean authors and historians and provide with greater specificity the VI History that must be taught under each anchor standard in VISA.

SECOND: Vice-Chair Hendricks and Member Joseph

Objection: Chair Callwood

Voting was as follows:

Yea (6) – W. Hendricks, J. Gomez, N. Sekou, J. Smith-Barry, T. Joseph and K. Callwood

Excused (2) – S. Richards and E. Perez-Cassius

Absent (1) – A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion carried.

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VI. Review and approval of proposed recommendations to address certification concerns that will impact SY 2022-2023

Member Smith-Barry said the issues are encompassed in the document that was vetted and voted out of committee.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved that the certification policy clearly state that any teacher selected as teacher of the year must have current board certification.

SECOND: Member Joseph

Voting was as follows:

Yea (3) – W. Hendricks, J. Smith-Barry and T. Joseph

Nay (2) – K. Callwood, and J. Gomez

Not Voting (1) – N. Sekou

Excused (2) – S. Richards and E. Perez-Cassius

Absent (1) – A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion failed.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved to approve the certification policy.

SECOND: Member Joseph

Objection: Chair Callwood said the policy should include in the general section, for teachers who are currently in the system that certification will be revoked if they do not take VI History within first year of employment, as required by the statute.

Member Smith-Barry said it is already being upheld in the policy. She said in the past, the Board certified teachers who did not meet the requirement, but they were held to the standard upon certification. Vice-Chair Hendricks reiterated that the language is already noted on page 5 of the policy.

Member Gomez objected, saying that no one has told the public how these new fees will be implemented. She asked if there is a registry of certification. ED Berry said there are costs associated with the new database, which will be more robust than the one that currently exists. Member Gomez questioned whether the fees should wait until the system is in place. ED Berry said the Board can identify funds to support the system. She said all fees cannot be removed and every certification body charges fees. Vice-Chair Hendricks recommended that the fees be implemented progressively, and that the committee send notice to the teachers with the progressive implementation of fees. Member Smith-Barry said the fees are not exorbitant fees.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hendricks moved to amend the certification policy to include that the new and renewal fees of \$30 be implemented in September 2022 and the new endorsement fee of \$20 and the fee for late application for certification be implemented in January 2023.

SECOND: Member Joseph

Objection: Member Smith-Barry

Voting on the amendment was as follows:

Yea (5) –K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, S. Richards, T. Joseph, N. Sekou

Nay (2) – J. Gomez and J. Smith-Barry

Excused (1) –E. Perez-Cassius

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Absent (1) – A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion carried.

Chair Callwood said the policy should be clear about the certification of teachers who have not completed VI History.

ED Berry said the concern can be handled through operations standpoint and can confirm with the VIDE whose persons who have not completed VI History. She asked for the school year to complete the task and said if there is not compliance, she will come back to the Board.

Voting on the motion, as amended, was as follows:

Yea (6) – K. Callwood, W. Hendricks, T. Joseph, N. Sekou, J. Smith-Barry and S. Richards

Nay (1) – J. Gomez

Excused (1) – E. Perez-Cassius

Absent (1) – A. Bolques, Jr.

VII. Review and approval of proposed recommendations to address concerns regarding the Department of Education’s VIVA

Member Smith-Barry said the Board has not received information requested from the VIDE on VIVA.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved that the Board subpoena the requested documents: Individual student data by school and grade level showing student attendance, student achievement including standardized test scores as well as the teachers record book showing grades earned by students enrolled in classes, and certification status of all teachers who taught or will be expected to teach virtually through Proximity Learning.

SECOND: Member Sekou

Objection: Member Gomez said the Board is micromanaging. She said the Board should find out the Department’s process.

ED Berry said the information was previously requested from the VIDE. Member Sekou said the Board should do a subpoena duces tecum to ensure that the Department produce the actual documents.

MOTION: Chair Callwood moved to amend the motion to include principal and counselor reports for both districts, information regarding students who regain access to their homeschools upon completion of a semester in the VIVA program or before the end of the year, a copy of VIDE’s VIVA personnel’s tool used to perform virtual observations, copies and results of student and parent opinion surveys, evaluations of all VIVA teachers and submission of data that confirms compliance with existing curriculum and standards utilized by the schools that students attended prior to VIVA or submission of the actual curriculum and standards utilized by the VIVA Vendor, how the explanation of how students enrolled will meet the physical education requirement, and submission of the complete plan for elementary inclusion since the department has indicated that VIVA will be expanded to K-12 and the subpoena duces tecum.

SECOND: N. Sekou

Vice-Chair Hendricks said she supported the subpoena, but felt it was too specific. She said the request should be more specific.

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Member Richards said members should remember that VIVA has exceeded the scope of its operations, and is operating like a charter school. She said these issues needed to be addressed, or the Board could be asked to resolve issues that impact graduation. Member Joseph suggested that the VIBE take the Department to court.

Voting on the amendment was as follows:

Yea (4) – K. Callwood, S. Richards, T. Joseph, and N. Sekou

Not Voting (3) – W. Hendricks, J. Gomez and J. Smith-Barry

Absent (2) – E. Perez-Cassius and A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion carried.

Voting on the motion, as amended, was as follows:

Yea (6) – K. Callwood, S. Richards, T. Joseph, N. Sekou, J. Smith-Barry and W. Hendricks

Not Voting (1) – J. Gomez

Absent (2) – E. Perez-Cassius and A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion carried.

MOTION: Member Smith-Barry moved for the Board to communicate with the Department its decision to rescind support for VIVA until the Department has satisfied the Board's concerns and requests for data and that the Department ceases to continue VIVA until this is done.

SECOND: Member Joseph

Objection: Chair Callwood and Member Gomez. Member Gomez asked what would happen in an emergency. ED Berry clarified the intent of the motion regarding suspension of the program.

Voting was as follows:

Yea (4) – S. Richards, T. Joseph, N. Sekou and J. Smith-Barry

Nay (1) – Hendricks

Not Voting (2) – K. Callwood and J. Gomez

Absent (2) – E. Perez-Cassius and A. Bolques, Jr.

The motion carried.

Member Sekou discussed adjusting the travel policy. She said the Legislature's per diem was \$100 for senators and \$75 for staff and she wanted the Board to look at this comparison in terms of adjusting the policy.

MOTION: Chair Callwood moved that the Internal Control Committee review.

SECOND: Vice-Chair Hendricks

So ordered.

VIII. Public Comment

Ms. Moorhead said the Board violated Act 8400, which specifies that distance learning cannot be taught if a qualified teacher is available. She said there cannot be an entire academy and be in compliance with the Board policy/law.

Member Gomez asked if the concern can be shared with Legal Counsel.

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Ms. Osborne asked if the VIVA Academy would cease until the documents were received, Chair Callwood said the Board had rescinded its support, but would check with its Legal Counsel to determine its authority.

Member Richards said she hoped the Board would consider the implications to the operations and integrity of the Board with Member Bolques' appointment to the Senate and address the matter.

Member Gomez asked if Member Richards concerns should also be forwarded to Legal Counsel. Chair Callwood said that ED Berry had made the request to Legal Counsel and would forward to the Board.

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: Chair Callwood moved to adjourn

SECOND: Member Joseph

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

Submitted By:



Shawna K. Richards, PMP
Secretary

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