

**GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
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**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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On behalf of the 18th Virgin Islands Board of Education, Chairwoman Winona A. Hendricks extends the board's commemoration of Black History Month.

“Although Black history is important every day, and especially so in the Virgin Islands given our rich heritage, history and our contributions both in the Caribbean and the continental United States of America, it is important that we stop to honor those who have gone before to pave the way” she said. “Our focus on Black history serves to give our children the chance to learn more about the probability of their dreams and aspirations coming true and how others forged their path”.

Black History Month grew out of Negro History Week, which was established by Historian Carter G. Woodson and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1926. Although Black History Month was first practiced by the Black Student Union at Kent State in 1969 and the first celebration took place at Kent State in 1970. However, President Gerald Ford formally established the holiday in 1976, saying that the contributions of Black Americans had too often gone unrecognized, unappreciated and unnoticed in America. The United Kingdom established Black History Month formally in 1987 and Canada followed suit in 1995.

“Our history is a vibrant one and continues to be added to daily,” Hendricks said. “Just this week the Virgin Islands history was made when we were visited by a Supreme Court Justice., the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor whose family is from our neighboring Puerto Rico. Our five-time NBA champion Timothy Duncan just retired as one of the most respected players to ever step on a basketball court. We have history being made today that we are not yet aware of; therefore, it is important that we take the time to honor all of our heroes both great and small,” she concluded.

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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.