



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Office of Public Relations

1834 Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie * St. Thomas * U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-6746
Telephone: 340.774.0100 Ext. 8136 (STT/STJ) 340.773.1095 Ext. 7064 (STX)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 12, 2024

0103-24

For More Information Contact:

Shayla S. Solomon

Director, Public Relations & Communications

shayla.solomon@vide.vi

www.vide.vi ~ www.facebook.com/usvi.vide

**Virgin Islands Department of Education Announces
2023-2024 District Teachers of the Year**

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) is pleased to announce the District Teachers of the Year for the 2023-2024 academic year. Ms. Chevelle Simeon, an Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition teacher at Charlotte Amalie High School (CAHS), has been honored as the recipient for the St. Thomas-St. John District. Additionally, Ms. Chaselle McConnell, a Foreign Language teacher and Department Chair in the Foreign Language Department at the St. Croix Educational Complex High School (SCECHS), has been named for the St. Croix District.

Ms. Simeon and Ms. McConnell emerged as the distinguished choices from a pool of six finalists, three from the St. Thomas-St. John District and three from the St. Croix District. Recognized for their unwavering dedication as exemplary educators within the VIDE, each finalist underwent a comprehensive evaluation process, which included a portfolio submission, classroom observation, and a face-to-face interview.

The remaining finalists in the St. Thomas-St. John District comprised of Dara Battiste and Candeya Turnbull-Browne, while the St. Croix District included Annie Errilienne and Chantelle Greene Quinones.

“On behalf of the VIDE Family, I extend heartfelt congratulations to the outstanding educators who have been recognized as the District Teachers of the Year. I am proud of these dedicated teachers who have demonstrated exceptional commitment, passion, and innovation in their classrooms, inspiring students and colleagues alike. Their contributions to the field of education not only impact the lives of the students they teach but also serve as a shining example for the entire educational community,” said Commissioner Wells-Hedrington.

Both Simeon and McConnell will advance to the next stage in the selection process for the State Teacher of the Year. The announcement of the Territorial representative is scheduled to occur at the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year.

“We are grateful for the unwavering dedication of these educators, and we applaud their leadership in recognizing and celebrating excellence in teaching. Their commitment to fostering a culture of knowledge as we transform today’s learners into tomorrow’s leaders is truly commendable,” said Commissioner Wells-Hedrington.

Chevelle Simeon- St. Thomas-St. John District Teacher of the Year

Ms. Simeon's educational journey encompassed both private and public institutions. Her formative years at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School laid a strong foundation for her enduring love of learning. Later, at Charlotte Amalie High School, she furthered her academic prowess and cultivated leadership, creativity, and a deep sense of community engagement. Her 15-year career in education has mirrored her own learning experiences, spanning both private and public schools, from elementary to secondary levels.

With a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Creative Writing from Florida State University and a Masters of Arts Degree in Education with a concentration in Administration from the University of the Virgin Islands, Ms. Simeon's academic achievements shine brightly. As a professional educator, Ms. Simeon firmly believes in the uniqueness of every student, deserving of a safe, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment that ensures intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development.

In her classroom, Ms. Simeon encourages her students to explore, question, and construct knowledge through hands-on experiences. Providing students with a sense of ownership over their learning empowers them to work harder and master the skills required to reach their individual goals. Beyond her classroom, Ms. Simeon's commitment extends to the broader school community. She has served as the Word of the Day coordinator, Poetry Out Loud in-school coordinator, and a member of the Elocution contest committee.

Chaselle McConnell- St. Croix District Teacher of the Year

Being an educator is an honor and privilege for Ms. McConnell, who considers this career one of her most outstanding achievements. She attributes her inspiration to her mother, Ms. Zulma Torres, who has dedicated 37 years to serving as an educator in the Virgin Islands.

In 2006, Chaselle McConnell earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with a concentration in Spanish from the University of the Virgin Islands. She then pursued a Master's Degree in English as a Second Language from the University of Ana G. Mendez, completing the program alongside her mother.

Currently, Ms. McConnell is in the final phase of her doctoral studies at the Inter-American University of Ponce, where she is working towards a doctorate in Philosophy in Second Language Research. This endeavor allows her to continue contributing to her student success and academic community, a field she is passionate about and a cornerstone of her teaching philosophy.

As an educator, Ms. McConnell is passionate about inspiring and motivating her foreign language scholars to develop a love for learning other languages and understanding diverse cultures. Her commitment to fostering her school culture is evident through her active participation in committees such as the Accreditation Committee, School Improvement Team, Sunshine Committee, Senior and Junior class Advisor, and her role as the SCECHS Junior Achievement Program site advisor.

###