

The Virgin Islands
Department of Education Presents
2022-2023 ST. THOMAS-ST. JOHN DISTRICT
TEACHER OF THE YEAR CANDIDATE



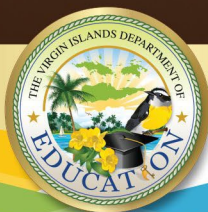
MELVIN M. LEDESMA

Mathematics

Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School

— **For full bio, visit www.vide.vi** —

— *"Transforming Today's Learners Into Tomorrow's Leaders"* —



Melvin M. Ledesma

Biography

My grandmother used to tell me when I was contemplating dropping out of school due to financial hardship, which I later realized that this was similar to Nordegren's view, that "Education is one thing no one can take away from you." Despite the hurdles of life, I pursued my studies and earned my Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics in 2012 with honorary distinction Cum Laude and my Master of Arts in Mathematics in 2017. My grandmother's inspiration pushed me to keep going and as a result, I have completed my academic requirements for my PhD in Science Education major in Mathematics early this year.

Wanting to pay forward what I had learned, I began my teaching career as a college instructor in 2012, teaching statistics, trigonometry, college and advanced algebra, and business mathematics in the same university where I earned my academic degrees, Ateneo de Zamboanga University, a prestigious university in the southern Philippines. Later, with the desire to teach younger minds, I chose to teach in a junior high school, where I fully realized that I am destined to be a teacher. I saw myself in my students, who were eager to complete their education but were struggling due to financial constraints. I initiated house visits to encourage parents to support their children's learning because I believe that education is the key to success. Furthermore, to boost students' confidence in math outside of the classroom, I actively mentored students for math competitions. In addition, I was exposed to a variety of teaching-related competitions, such as the Innovative Instructional Material Making contest and Demo-Teaching competitions, where I won first place and was later dubbed as Mr. Educator 2013 of Zamboanga City, Philippines. Consequently, I have been invited by other schools to provide teacher trainings, workshops and be a demonstration teacher.

As a result of my established academic and leadership skills, I was appointed by our school principal to be the first-ever coordinator of the newly built senior high school in 2016. There, I supervised 27 pioneering teachers and more than 600 students. I organized programs and activities that catered teachers' and students' interests and needs such as day and night camps, math pageants for a cause, in- and off-campus training-workshops to name a few. Needless to say, I was nominated and

later was awarded as the city's first Most Outstanding Teacher for Senior High School in 2017. A year later, I was conferred as the Most Inspiring Teacher of the Republic of the Philippines, along with the most influential educators and school administrators of the country.

With the aim of expanding my teaching career globally, in 2018, I landed in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands where I began one of the most exciting chapters of my career as a secondary school teacher at the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School. Following to the completion of the BESOL course, I was assigned to teach math to English Language Learner students. My passion for teaching fueled my drive for excellence, which enabled me to finish every school year with a distinguished rating. I was chosen by our school to do teaching demonstration in one of our Professional Development sessions while I was on my second year. In 2020, I was appointed as the chairperson of the mathematics department. In addition to hosting monthly meetings to

address academic issues and concerns, I strengthened our department's engagement in extracurricular activities by organizing programs that involved both teachers and students. Noteworthy initiatives include the school's Pi Day celebrations for 2 consecutive school years, the Problem of the Week which lasted for almost 6 months, and now the Maths Monthly Challenge. Not to mention, some of those activities were done virtually during the pandemic. I have also been engaging the school in math competitions and clubs. Under my leadership, the school's club attained the Gold Level status in the National Math Club by Math Counts for school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Moreover, our students performed exemplarily in the Math Counts competition series. In both years, the students ranked 5th, 9th and 7th in the territory-wide competition. I believe that all the above-mentioned factors contributed to my selection as the school's Teacher of the Year 2022-2023.

I've also been an integral part of some of the district's initiatives. I was an active member of the curriculum development team where we focused on the revision of the middle school mathematics curricula. I also contributed to the #GoOpenUSVI Microsite before it was launched to the public. Additionally, I was a member of the book selection committee of the district for mathematics along with some other VIDE teachers and UVI professors. Also, I was chosen to be the expert teacher for STTJ district during the conduct of the STEM and Design Thinking Camp last year. Lastly, I was among the mentors for the Teacher Leader Academy's two-year mentoring program for newly hired teachers which aimed to assist teachers in the performance of their professional duties as they embrace the challenges of teaching and to reflect on their practices as part of their professional development.

As a member of the greater USVI community, I have been active in assisting church initiatives such as the sharing of Filipino cultures through the Sto. Niño festival and some other traditions and being one of the church's regular lectors. Although the activity was cancelled in 2020, I volunteered to be one of the dancers of the Dancing with the VI Stars contest. Moreover, I have also joined in some of the "walk or run for a cause" activities which were initiated by some public and private organizations. Presently, I am the Executive Vice President of the United Federation of Fil-Am Educators (UNIFFIED) USVI-Chapter, which aimed to lead and assist the Filipino-American educators in the Virgin Islands. One of the activities that the organization have been doing is the conduct of training-workshops to the teachers virtually in coordination with the e-connect Facebook group platform. With this, I was conferred the 2021 Rising to the Challenge of Excellence in Education award by the UNIFFIED national.

On account of my contribution to the community and my recognition as the Most Inspiring Teacher of the Philippines, I was conferred the Honoris Causa Profesor Ad Honorem Vitasta Ambassador Distinction award last August 5, 2022 by the Universite Henry Dunant in Ivory Coast, a subsidiary of Unite Solidarite de Internationale de Geneva in Switzerland.

Upon reflection of my ten years of teaching, I understood that education is not only preparation for life; it is life itself. As a result, I am extremely grateful to my grandmother for devoting her life to raising me and sending me to school, as it is in school that I honed most of my skills and developed into the person I am today. This nomination for STTJ District Teacher of the Year 2022-2023 is dedicated to her.