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CAHS and IEKHS Queens Present Student Platforms to V.I. Board of Education

Ta'Maya Davis introduced VOICES to combat abuse in schools through a confidential app, while Helova Mathurin promoted ROOTS to expand student-led organic farming across the territory.

Education / **Published On March 24, 2025 08:37 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 24, 2025**

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Helova Mathurin is Ms. Ivanna Eudora Keane High School 2025, and Ta'Maya Davis, Ms. Charlotte Amalie High School 2025.

On Friday, two school pageant winners got the opportunity to present their platforms to members of the Virgin Islands Board of Education.

Ta'Maya Davis – VOICES

Ta'Maya Davis, Ms. Charlotte Amalie High School 2025, spoke to board members about VOICES: Validating Our Inner Courage to End Silence. Davis noted that her school had been home to a sexual predator who worked at the school for 15 years, and in that timeframe abused several male students. It was not until over a decade later that one of his victims had the courage to disclose his abuse to his parents, which sparked an investigation and the eventual [prosecution and conviction of the abuser](#). Davis said the situation raised a question: “How many other students have encountered similar situations and have suffered in silence?”

VOICES, therefore, was conceptualized to “raise awareness about sexual abuse while providing students with a tool to report any form of abuse.” That tool, Davis explained, was an app – Safe Voice. She demonstrated a prototype of the app to board members, explaining that when fully fleshed out, it would allow students to file confidential complaints which would then be seen and investigated by school principals, officials of the Departments of Education and Human Services, and law enforcement. “Key features ensure that each report undergoes a thorough investigation to prevent false accusations and protect the rights of all parties involved,” Davis noted.

Acknowledging that there was much work to be done on the app to mitigate concerns about privacy and other issues, the 15-year old nevertheless expressed confidence that Safe Voice would ultimately be beneficial to the student populations in schools across the territory.

Helova Mathurin – ROOTS

Helova Mathurin is Ms. Ivanna Eudora Keane High School 2025, and her platform focuses on fostering sustainable agricultural practices among the territory's youth. The platform is called ROOTS: Responsible, Organic Opportunities through Teamwork and Sustainability, and the idea was sparked through Ms. Mathurin's participation in her school's gardening club. “We had the opportunity to interview a bunch of local farmers, and visited their farms to see what's locally grown,” she said of a recent visit to St. Croix for this year's AgFest.

That experience prompted the aspiring environmental scientist to develop the platform, which aims to promote organic farming and production opportunities to students. “It would involve teamwork, leadership skills, mentorship programs with farmers and guest speakers,” she explained. The overarching objective is not just to grow food, Ms. Mathurin said. “No, it teaches leadership, awareness, and lasting, positive change within our community and schools,” the 12th-grader clarified. Currently, students are growing tomatoes, lemongrass, green onions, eggplant, cucumbers, squash, and peppers. Some of that produce supplies the school cafeteria. Through ROOTS, Ms. Mathurin hopes to expand the footprint of her school's gardening club to other schools, as well as the wider community.

VIBE members were extremely complimentary of the presentations they had received, noting that both platforms focused on key issues facing students in the Virgin Islands today. They praised the two young women on their passion and commitment to making positive change in their communities, and pledged their support in helping them realize their platform goals.