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Pre-K Through Grade 12 Agriculture Curriculum Presented as Territory Moves to Integrate Farming Into Core Subjects

The new Sunshine Curriculum is designed to integrate agriculture into core subjects such as English, science and mathematics, allowing schools to teach food systems, seed saving and climate-resilient farming even without specialized instructors.

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A new agriculture curriculum framework for pre-K through Grade 12 students has been presented to the Board for Career and Technical Education, marking a step toward integrating agricultural education more broadly across Virgin Islands classrooms.

Ms. Meadows, the Department of Education’s director of sustainability and agricultural education, presented the newly established framework during Wednesday’s meeting of the CTE Board.

“With the standards we’ve developed together, we built something lasting – the ability to bring integrated agriculture into the classroom right here in the Virgin Islands,” said Ms. Meadows.

She explained that the standards were designed so agricultural education can be incorporated into classrooms even in schools that do not have a specialized agriculture instructor. Under the framework, foundational agricultural concepts can be taught through core academic subjects, including English, science and mathematics.

With the “Sunshine Curriculum” now developed, CTE Board Chair Anthony Mardenborough Jr. said the next critical milestone will be implementation.

He said early agricultural education is important to the territory’s broader goals of self-reliance.

“It’s important that if we’re talking about food security...growing our own food, that agriculture continues to be taught to our children.”

Ms. Meadows said the new curriculum aligns with the mandates of the Territorial Agricultural Plan. She described the framework as more than an educational tool.

“Together, we’re not just planting crops, we’re cultivating a legacy that highlights VI pride and continues to endure,” she declared.

The STEAM-based curriculum “teaches seed saving, climate resilient farming, and food systems, so we’re not just teaching agriculture, we’re nurturing cultivation, innovation at every single age group and in every discipline,” Ms. Meadows said.

CTE Executive Director Genevieve Whitaker also expressed support for the Sunshine Curriculum and said she hopes officials will soon begin actively recruiting agriculture instructors. She said the goal is to ensure that formal education and training in agricultural practices can be embedded in the minds of the territory’s young students.