

Board of Education Leaders Emerge in Both Districts as 59 Votes Separate Elections Board Qualifiers

Terrence Joseph and Winona Hendricks led the St. Croix Board of Education race, while Judy Gomez and Arah Lockhart topped St. Thomas-St. John; Kevin Rodriguez and Barbara Petersen held the two Board of Elections spots, with Petersen 59 votes ahead there.

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Terrence T. Joseph and Winona A. Hendricks secured the top two positions in the St. Croix Board of Education primary Saturday, while Judy M. Gomez and Arah C. Lockhart led the corresponding contest in the St. Thomas-St. John District.

In the St. Thomas-St. John Board of Elections race, Kevin A. Rodriguez finished first and Barbara A. Petersen held the second qualifying position, only 59 votes ahead of Atanya S. Springette in

unofficial results released Saturday night.

The three contests were among the down-ballot races decided during a Democratic primary that drew 9,991 ballots and produced territorywide turnout of 47.75 percent. The results remain unofficial.

On St. Croix, Mr. Joseph led the four-candidate Board of Education field with 1,767 votes. Ms. Hendricks followed with 1,657, placing the two candidates 110 votes apart.

Christopher Jacobs Jr. finished third with 1,223 votes, while Mojanía “Mo” Denis received 1,183. Another 30 selections were cast for write-in candidates.

Ms. Hendricks held a 434-vote advantage over Mr. Jacobs for the second qualifying position. A total of 5,860 candidate selections were recorded in the St. Croix contest.

Because voters were permitted to select as many as two candidates, the total votes recorded in the contest represent candidate selections rather than the number of individual voters who participated.

The St. Thomas-St. John Board of Education race was led by Ms. Gomez, who received 2,303 votes — the highest total among all candidates competing for education board positions in either district.

Ms. Lockhart placed second with 1,671 votes, giving her a 282-vote advantage over D’Vonte J. Xavier, who finished third with 1,389.

Michelle M. Cawthron received 557 votes, while another 47 selections were recorded for write-in candidates. The district reported 5,967 total candidate selections in the Board of Education contest.

The results placed Ms. Gomez 632 votes ahead of Ms. Lockhart, producing a more decisive first-place finish than in the St. Croix education contest. The second-place cutoff was also clearer in St. Thomas-St. John, where Ms. Lockhart remained nearly 300 votes ahead of Mr. Xavier.

The closest of the three board races came in the St. Thomas-St. John Board of Elections contest, where three named candidates competed for two qualifying positions.

Mr. Rodriguez finished first with 1,759 votes, only nine more than Ms. Petersen, who received 1,750.

Ms. Springette followed closely with 1,691 votes, leaving her 59 behind Ms. Petersen for the second position. Another 90 selections were cast for write-in candidates, bringing the contest’s total to 5,290.

Only 68 votes separated Mr. Rodriguez in first place from Ms. Springette in third, making the contest substantially tighter than either of the education board races.

The narrow margin places greater attention on the Elections System’s canvassing and certification process. Although Mr. Rodriguez and Ms. Petersen occupied the two qualifying positions in the election-night report, the unofficial count left relatively little separation between Ms. Petersen and Ms. Springette.

The territorial summary provided Board of Elections results only for the St. Thomas-St. John District. It did not list a corresponding St. Croix Board of Elections contest.

The Board of Education races produced clearer unofficial outcomes. Mr. Joseph and Ms. Hendricks emerged from the St. Croix contest, while Ms. Gomez and Ms. Lockhart led in St. Thomas-St. John.

Those candidates, along with the two Board of Elections qualifiers, will move forward subject to the completion of the canvassing and certification process.