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It's a Virtual Affair For USVI Public School Graduates in 2020; Students to be Part of Commencement Event Led by Barack and Michelle Obama

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Michelle and Barack Obama will headline YouTube's online commencement event on May 16

Department of Education Commissioner Racquel Berry-Benjamin on Thursday said that after much consideration on how to move forward with honoring the 2020 public school graduating seniors, the department and the Bryan administration settled on the virtual option as the safest bet, and revealed the dates when the online events will take place.

Additionally, the students will be part of a global ceremony for 2020 graduates, whose commencement speakers will include former President Barack Obama, former First Lady

Michelle Obama and others, set to take place on May 16. The event's chief sponsor is Google, and it will be brought live on the tech giant's YouTube platform.

Graduation dates

- St. Croix Central High School: Tuesday, May 26, 2020
- St. Croix Educational Complex: Tuesday, May 27, 2020
- Ivanna Eudora Kean High School: Wednesday, May 28, 2020
- Charlotte Amalie High School: Friday, May 29, 2020

Ms. Berry-Benjamin sought to encourage students who may feel disappointed because of the traditional ceremony's cancellation.

"The Department of Education Recognizes that there's nothing that compares to the experience of walking across the stage, being congratulated by local leaders, and receiving your hard-earned diploma in the presence of your teachers, family, friends and community," she said. "But while your graduation may look different, it won't be any less special. Seniors, you are members of a unique class graduating in a year unlike any other. You will be a part of a virtual, global graduating class, which we invite you to attend on May 16, when former President Barack Obama and others salute you."

Academic Enhancement Recovery Period

According to Mrs. Berry-Benjamin, secondary and elementary school students whose average was below 70 percent on or before March 17, may use the academic enhancement period, which is between May 4 through June 4, to earn a passing grade. Students are advised to contact their guidance counsel to create a plan for credit recovery.