

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Two VI Teachers Receive Presidential Award For Math And Science

Education / **Published On July 07, 2015 09:13 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **July 07, 2015**



St. Thomas-St. John District Science Department Chairpersons Nneka Howard-Sibilly of Charlotte Amalie High School and Shamika Williams-Henley of Ivanna Eudora Kean High School are among 108 recipients named by President Barack Obama as this year's recipients of the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST), the Department of Education, along with Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett announced in separate press releases on Tuesday.

Honorees, comprised of 7th - 12th grade teachers, will receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation. Later this summer, they are invited to Washington, D.C., for an awards ceremony, as well as educational and celebratory events, and visits with

members of the Obama Administration.

"Awarding the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching to Nneka Howard-Sibilly of CAHS and Shamika Williams-Henley of IEKHS assures them of the outstanding STEM instruction they have been imparting to students and attests to their exemplary performance throughout the years," DOE Commissioner Sharon Ann McCollum said of the awardees. "We are extremely proud of them and look forward to the high level of science instruction they will continue to deposit into our students to prepare them for the future."

"We are extremely proud of Mrs. Howard-Sibilly and Mrs. Williams-Henley. Their hard work has not gone unnoticed, not by the White House, and indeed not by the students of the Charlotte Amalie and Eudora Kean High Schools," Delegate Plaskett remarked. "Mrs. Howard-Sibilly and Mrs. Williams-Henley are examples of educators in our territory who are working to shape the success of our students in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math disciplines. We are glad to see that our educators are being recognized among the nation's leading educators in STEM."

The awardees represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

"The Presidential Award is symbolic of a career that has been humbling and emotional, but most of all, rewarding. It is a reassurance in my faith and a testimony of my devotion and accomplishments. Most of all, the Presidential Award is the voice to my passion as a Science/STEM teacher, a mentor to my students, and a role model for the future generation of teachers. I am truly honored for this opportunity and experience," said Williams-Henley.

Of being named a recipient of this year's PAEMST, Howard-Sibilly said, "To be a recipient of the Presidential Award is an awe-inspiring and humbling experience. Receiving this award serves as validation that my continued quest to ensure that my students are exposed to inquiry-based learning and have the opportunity to respond critically is recognized as noteworthy by other science professionals. It also serves as motivation to improve my craft as a science educator in an effort to ensure that my students are prepared to compete globally."

President Obama has made STEM a priority of his Administration with initiatives such as his "Educate to Innovate" campaign, which has garnered more than \$1 billion in financial and in-kind support for STEM programs, according to information released from the White House.

"These teachers are shaping America's success through their passion for math and science," the President said of the awardees. "Their leadership and commitment empower our children to think critically and creatively about science, technology, engineering, and math. The work these teachers are doing in our classrooms today will help ensure that America stays on the cutting edge tomorrow."

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is awarded annually to outstanding K-12 science and mathematics teachers from across the country. The winners are selected by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and

educators following an initial selection process done at the state level. Each year, the award alternates between teachers teaching Kindergarten through 6th grade and those teaching 7th through 12th grades.

Feature Image from L2R: Nneka Howard-Sibilly (CAHS), Shakima Williams-Henley (Kean).

© Viconsortium 2026