

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas-St. John District E.S.L. Teachers Earn Master's Degree Through Project React

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ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Department of Education (D.O.E.) recently held a graduation ceremony for 15 of its teachers who completed the Reinforcing ESL Education Approaches and Content Knowledge of Teachers (Project REACT) coursework, earning them a Master of Education degree with a concentration in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.).

For the past five years, program participants were enrolled in classes through Gurabo, Puerto Rico-based Universidad del Turabo, an Ana G. Mendez Foundation university. Professors from Turabo conducted the classes at the Department of Education's Curriculum Center Conference Room, Thursday through Saturday.

“The students had projects and assignments to complete, along with individual and group presentations,” according to Migdalia Cruz Arthurton Ed. D., St. Thomas-St. John Coordinator of Bilingual/E.S.L. Education Program and a REACT professor. “Nothing was different from any course offered at any university. It is something that also illustrates clearly what the Virgin Islands Department of Education is doing and has accomplished with our teachers.”

Elated that the teachers have completed their goal of earning a Master’s degree, Dr. Arthurton revealed that, “It was a long and hard road for them. We struggled through it and the teachers held on,” she said. “As the facilitator, I was the wheel moving them along, and when they were down, I was there to pick them up – and they did it.”

Project REACT was made possible through the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant managed by the Department of Education’s Human Resources Division. The St. Thomas-St. John District was the first cohort and St. Croix District’s began last year.

The graduation ceremony was held on January 27 at the University of the Virgin Islands Academic Conference Center on St. Thomas. Teachers receiving Master of Education degrees with an emphasis in English as a Second Language are: Felicia M. Alexander, Catherine F. Callwood, Correen J. Celestine-Edwards, Cristina J. Crooke, Milagros Dávila, Lynda D. Edmead-Glasford, Damiana B. González-Williams, Fayette N. Granger-Elcock, Rasheba Grant, Sherry M. Hodge, Deborah Howard, Sophia T. Neille, Omayra Ortiz-Richardson, Ilive R. Peltier and José Villilo Ramírez.

Feature Image: BE/ESL teachers in the St. Thomas-St. John district proudly display their Master of Education degrees with emphasis in English as a Second Language, after graduation ceremonies held January 27, 2016 at the St. Thomas U.V.I. campus. At the left is instructor, Dr. Maria A. Irizarry from Universidad del Turabo, and right, Dr. Migdalia Arthurton, instructor and facilitator for the REACT program.

Image Credit: D.O.E.