

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Antilles School Tops D.O.E's MathCounts Competition In St. Thomas

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Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, Addelita Cancryn Jr. High, finish strong.

ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Department of Education hosted its St. Thomas-St. John District 2016 MATHCOUNTS Chapter Competition on Tuesday, February 23 at UVI's Administration and Conference Center, with participation from two of its public schools, including Addelita Cancryn Jr. High and Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School; and from private Antilles School and VI Peter Gruber International Academy, a press release D.O.E. issued late Tuesday has revealed.

Following the nearly six-hour competition, which included a Sprint Round, a Target Round, a Team Round, and a rapid-fire Countdown Round, four mathletes on the Antilles School team emerged as the 2016 district champions.

Of the registered schools, a little over 30 mathletes in sixth through eighth grades participated. The Peter Gruber team placed second, the BCB team took the third place win, and Addelita Cancryn placed fourth in the team round.

The annual competition was spearheaded by Avon Benjamin, district math coordinator, who expressed his satisfaction with the turnout and rigor of the activity.

"I was extremely impressed with these children. I constantly had to remind myself that they were students in sixth through eighth grades. The level of mathematics and thinking necessary to get these problems solved required great skill, but it was clear they had methods of approaching the problems. For those of us who love math, it lets us know that within this community there are some students who push themselves and can achieve a lot in STEM careers in the future."

Mr. Benjamin said he also observed that the competition served to motivate students who attended to support their peers or family members. He hopes this will lead to greater participation from schools in the coming years.

"I realize that some of the other children who did not participate seemed to be inspired. I wanted this to happen so that other children could see this as something they can do themselves," he said.

As the district's new math coordinator, Mr. Benjamin said one of his goals is to expand the math community. "Maybe it could start with this little spark. Now we can open the conversation between math professionals. In fact, something I have been asked to do and we should look into is finding or creating a local competition for our secondary schools," he said, pointing out that MATHCOUNTS involves students up to 8th grade.

The Top 10 students from the St. Thomas-St. John District (please see final results attached) will compete against the Top 10 in the St. Croix District on March 30 at the State MATHCOUNTS Competition on St. Croix. From that, four winners will be selected to represent the Territory at the 2016 Raytheon MATHCOUNTS National Championship, slated for May 7-10 in Washington, D.C.

Along with D.O.E., the event was sponsored by Rotary Club of St. Thomas II, which absorbed the costs associated with the Chapter competition, including trophies and plaques, rental of the facility, and meals.