

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI Students Head to MATHCOUNTS National Competition in Florida After Winning First Local Contest Since Pandemic

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(L to R): Tristan Samuel, Meher Makhijani, Sanjiv Bachan, and Naitik Jhanwar, accompanied by coach Sara Dykstra. By. THE V.I. DEPT. OF EDUCATION.

The V.I. Dept. of Education announced Tuesday that a team of middle school Mathletes® from All Saints Cathedral School, Antilles School, and Good Hope Country Day took top honors at the State MATHCOUNTS® Competition, held Friday, March 24 in St. Thomas.

The top four individuals—Naitik Jhanwar, eighth grader at All Saints; Sanjiv Bachan and Meher Makhijani, seventh and eighth grader, respectively, at Antilles; and Tristan Samuel, eighth grader at Good Hope Country Day—will represent the Virgin Islands at the 2023 Raytheon Technologies MATHCOUNTS National Competition in Orlando, Fla., May 13-16, D.O.E. said. Sara Dykstra, Good Hope Country Day coach, will travel with the team to the national competition.

“With this being the first state MATHCOUNTS competition held since the pandemic, it was great to have students back in the room together,” said Avon Benjamin, state MATHCOUNTS coordinator. “I really enjoyed seeing the camaraderie between students from across the two districts, and it was exciting to see students excited about doing math, and to know that at this young age, their interest in mathematics is there.”

MATHCOUNTS is geared toward students in grades 6th-8th. With that, Benjamin pointed out his admiration for the performance of the two youngest students participating in the state competition—sixth graders Dorian Euzebe and Makayla Griffith of Ricardo Richards Elementary School.

“I was very impressed with the students from Ricardo Richards, they held their own,” he said. “The fact that they made it to represent their district in the Top 10 is something they should be very proud of.”

Jennifer Cannon, All Saints coach, said the best part of the competition was, “Seeing the students build their skills and expand their analytical abilities. They worked hard and saw the pay-off.” Dykstra added, “It was fun to watch the mathletes compete and interact with each other, talk math, and watch them react to the results.”

More than 100,000 students across the U.S. participate each year in the MATHCOUNTS Competition Series, a national math competition that aims to build confidence and problem-solving skills for students who participate. Programs like MATHCOUNTS are critical to preparing students to succeed in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) careers of the future.

According to D.O.E., the state competition is sponsored by Rotary Club of St. Thomas II. Leadership at the local levels of the MATHCOUNTS Competition Series is provided by the math coordinators from each district, Juanita Boneque and Benjamin, St. Croix and St. Thomas-St. John District coordinators, respectively.

The National Sponsors of MATHCOUNTS Foundation are Raytheon Technologies, U.S. Department of Defense STEM, Northrop Grumman Foundation, the National Society of Professional Engineers, 3Mgives, Texas Instruments Incorporated and Art of Problem Solving. MATHCOUNTS was founded by the National Society of Professional Engineers, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and CNA Insurance.