

Image not found or type unknown

Astral Battiste Named Territorial Teacher of the Year During Annual Ceremony

Education / **Published On June 06, 2023 05:13 AM /**

Janeke Simon **June 06, 2023**

Image not found or type unknown



Territorial Teacher of the Year Astral Battiste By. V.I. DEPT. OF EDUCATION

Astral Battiste, a committed kindergarten teacher from the St. Croix district, was recognized as the Territorial Teacher of the Year in the annual selection ceremony held on Saturday. She stood as a finalist alongside Melvin Ledesma of the St. Thomas/St. John district, with both educators celebrated for their dedication and contributions to teaching.

Battiste, who serves at the Pearl B. Larsen PreK-8 School, was highly praised by her principal, Loretta Moorhead, for her unyielding commitment to her students. "Miss Battiste, I've worked with you for the last three and a half years and it's been an amazing experience watching the dedication that you offer to our children every single day," Moorhead proclaimed, expressing

pride and admiration for her colleague.

Finalist Melvin Ledesma was not without his share of commendation. Described as a “ray of sunshine” by his principal at the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, Terrence Corbett highlighted Ledesma’s inspirational influence on his peers, who often sought him out for encouraging words.

The St. Thomas/St. John District Superintendent, Dr. Stefan Jürgen, recognized Ledesma's heartfelt commitment to his students and his valuable contribution to the US Virgin Islands, while St. Croix counterpart, Ericilda Ottley-Herman, paid homage to Battiste, "When I think of Astral Battiste, I think of someone who, when God planted those seeds and those talents, she used every inch and inkling to educate the children in the St. Croix district," she expressed.

In an atmosphere charged with respect and admiration for the two outstanding individuals, Education Commissioner Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington shared her relief over not being part of the challenging decision-making process.

Ultimately, the prestigious honor was bestowed upon Astral Battiste, marking her as this year's representative of the U.S. Virgin Islands at the national level.

Accepting the honor, Battiste reflected on the significance of her role as an educator. "When I think about all the careers in the world, all roads lead back to being an educator," she said, "I teach with the mindset that I am the pillar to take these students to their highest potential." Her profound devotion to her students was tangible as she expressed her gratitude for the recognition.

The selection event, while primarily celebrating Battiste’s achievement, resonated with an expression of immense pride and appreciation for all educators' dedication and passion in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ceremony served as a testament to the impactful work of teachers in shaping future generations, reflecting the high esteem in which they are held across the territory.