

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730

Official Government Website:

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VISTS and ESHS to Compete for Debate Championship Title

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The Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies (VISTS) and the Elmore Stoutt High School (ESHS) have advanced to the final round of the Inter-Secondary Schools Debate following their victories in the semi-finals held on February 26.

In the first semi-final debate, VISTS emerged victorious against St. George's Secondary School (SGSS), securing their place in the final. The teams debated the moot: "Year-Round Tourism: Is it Achievable and Sustainable?" VISTS argued in favour of the moot, while SGSS opposed.

The Virgin Islands School of Technical Studies opened the debate, presenting data that demonstrated a consistent influx of tourists throughout the year. They emphasized that the threat of hurricanes has not significantly deterred visitors and highlighted that, aside from the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the Territory has generally remained a desirable destination. They argued that while year-round tourism is already a reality, strategic development could further increase the volume of visitors during the off-season.

On the opposing side, St. George's contended that a continuous influx of tourists could overburden the Territory's already strained infrastructure. They argued that downtime is necessary for maintenance and pointed out the lack of year-round activities and adequate hotel accommodations as key challenges.

In the second semi-final debate, ESHS secured their win against Bregado Flax Educational Centre (BFEC). The teams debated the moot: "Mental Health Services Should Be Mandated in All Educational Institutions in the Virgin Islands." BFEC proposed the moot, while ESHS opposed.

The BFEC team advocated for mandatory mental health services, stating that such support is crucial for students to process emotions, cope with challenges, and develop healthy coping mechanisms. Opposing the moot, ESHS argued that mandating mental health services could place an additional financial burden on an already strained education budget. Further they stated that existing guidance counselors collaborate with external services, making additional mandates unnecessary. The team also expressed concerns about potential infringements on students' and families' privacy.

Following the debates, adjudicators provided constructive feedback to students on refining their arguments and improving their delivery.

VISTS and ESHS will face off in the final debate on **March 12** to compete for the title of **Inter-Secondary Schools Debate Champion**.

Gallery

