

PRESS RELEASE

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VI and Cayman Islands Strengthen Ties Through Strategic Education

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Senior officials from the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports of the Virgin Islands participated in an educational exchange and policy visit to the Cayman Islands from April 1 to 4.

The Virgin Islands delegation was led by minister the Honourable Sharie de Castro, and included senior ministry officials with expertise in school leadership, early childhood care and education, special education, technical and vocational education, and curriculum development.

The meetings saw officials engaging in high-level discussions, site visits, and professional exchanges with the Cayman Islands Ministry of Education and Department of Education Services to strengthen regional collaboration and advance education systems in both territories.

Minister de Castro said the engagement represented a significant step forward in the Virgin Islands' vision to transform education through regional collaboration, innovation, and shared expertise.

Honourable de Castro said, "We participated in strategic meetings with senior officials from the Cayman Islands Ministry of Education, Department of Education Services, and Curriculum and Learning teams and conducted school visits to observe best practices in early childhood education, inclusive education, and technical and vocational training and engaged in policy discussions on curriculum design, teacher licensing, infrastructure management, and recruitment strategies."

The minister added that the team also explored opportunities for collaboration with the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) and examined apprenticeship and workforce readiness initiatives at the Public Works Construction Trades Training Centre.

Honourable de Castro expressed gratitude to the Cayman Islands Ministry of Education, specifically, the Honourable Premier and Minister for Education, Julianna Connolly O'Connor, Chief Officer Ms. Lyneth Monteith and Director of Education Services, Mr. Mark Ray, for their outstanding hospitality and dedication to regional partnership.

The Virgin Islands delegation visited institutions including the Lighthouse School, John Gray High School, East End Primary, Red Bay Primary, and Clifton Hunter High School, where they observed innovative learning environments, school maintenance systems, and inclusive practices in action.

Discussions identified key areas for future collaboration, including mutual exchanges in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and Special Education. The visit also paved the way for exploring technical assistance partnerships and cross-territory training opportunities.

As part of the next steps, the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports will continue internal consultations aimed at adapting best practices observed during the visit and follow up on formalising areas of collaboration.

Photo 1 (Left to right): Dr. Richard Wildman Deputy Director Teaching and Learning, Cayman Islands, Mr. Elroy Bryan Deputy Chief Officer, Ministry of Education, Cayman Islands, Mrs. Afiya Smith Education Officer for Exceptional Education, Mr. Theodore John School Improvement Officer, Mr. Claude Kettle, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, Honourable Sharie de Castro, Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, Her Excellency Mrs. Jane Owen, Governor of the Cayman Islands, Ms. Lyneth Monteith Chief Officer, Ministry of Education, Cayman

Islands, Mrs. Orlandette Crabbe, Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, Mrs. Heida Selwood, Deputy Chief Education Officer, Ministry of

Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, Ms Kimberly George, Education Officer Early Childhood, Mrs. Carima Wilson Solomon, Education Officer TVET, Mark Ray, Director of Education Services, Cayman Islands, Tammy Hopkins, Deputy Director Operation Education Services, Cayman Islands

Photo 2 and 3: Photos of the Virgin Islands Delegates interacting with the Cayman Islands Delegation

(Photo credit: Provided)

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