GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730
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British Virgin Islands Tops OECS in Grade 2 Reading and Mathematics Assessments

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The Virgin Islands has emerged as the highest-performing education system among eight participating Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Member States after Grade 2 students ranked first in both Reading and Mathematics in the 2026 OECS PEARL Regional Assessment.

The preliminary findings of the 2026 OECS Programme for Educational Advancement and Relevant Learning (PEARL) Regional Assessment revealed that Grade 2 students from all public primary schools and five private primary schools achieved the highest overall performance in both the OECS Early Reading Assessment (OERA) and the OECS Early Mathematics Assessment (OEMA).

The OERA and OEMA are annual regional assessments administered to Grade 2 students across participating OECS Member States to evaluate foundational reading and mathematics skills. The assessments are designed to measure students' literacy and numeracy development at an early stage while providing reliable data to strengthen teaching practices, inform curriculum development, and guide evidence-based decision-making across education systems. This year's assessment cycle engaged more than 7,400 Grade 2 students from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Virgin Islands.

The Virgin Islands achieved an overall Reading score of 86 per cent, surpassing the OECS regional average of 73 per cent by 13 percentage points. Students also recorded the highest scores across all three reading genres, achieving 88 per cent in Visual Text, 89 per cent in Fiction, and 67 per cent in Non-Fiction. While Non-Fiction proved to be the most challenging genre throughout the region, Virgin Islands students still exceeded the regional average by 11 percentage points.

In Mathematics, the Territory also ranked first with an overall average score of 70 per cent, outperforming the OECS regional average of 65 per cent. Students achieved the region's highest scores in Geometrical Thinking (86 per cent) and Operations with Numbers (80 per cent), while tying with Saint Lucia for the highest score in Measurement (78 per cent). The Territory also recorded 71 per cent in Number Sense and 60 per cent in Data Handling and Probability. Patterns and Relationships was identified as the primary area for continued strengthening, with

the Virgin Islands recording 55 per cent, compared with the OECS average of 52 per cent.

The Territory also recorded the highest proficiency rates among participating Member States, with 97 per cent of students achieving minimum proficiency in Reading compared with the OECS average of 78 per cent, and 95 per cent achieving minimum proficiency in Mathematics compared with the regional average of 86 per cent.

Chief Education Officer Mrs. Orlandette Crabbe described the achievement as a proud milestone for the Territory and commended the collective efforts of the education community.

Mrs. Crabbe said, "These results are a reflection of the unwavering commitment and professionalism of the many individuals who work tirelessly each day on behalf of our students. I wish to extend special commendation to our Education Officers, whose leadership in curriculum development, assessment, instructional support, and professional learning continues to strengthen teaching and learning across the Territory. I also applaud our principals, who set high expectations, cultivate positive school cultures, and provide steadfast instructional leadership within their schools. Most importantly, I recognize our instructional coaches, specialists and teachers, whose dedication, creativity, and daily investment in their students have laid the strong foundations that these results now reflect. Their work often extends far beyond the classroom, and this achievement is a testament to their collective belief that every child in the Virgin Islands can learn, excel, and succeed."

Mrs. Crabbe also extended special recognition to Examinations Officer Ms. Tyrah Hodge and her team for their exemplary leadership in coordinating the Territory's participation in the OECS PEARL Regional Assessment.

She noted that the successful administration of a regional assessment of this magnitude required meticulous planning, rigorous quality assurance, and extensive collaboration with schools and regional partners. Mrs. Crabbe said Ms. Hodge and her team's professionalism and commitment to maintaining the highest standards in assessment administration and data integrity contributed significantly to the Territory's outstanding performance and continued reputation for educational

excellence throughout the OECS.

While celebrating this significant achievement, Mrs. Crabbe noted that the assessment findings will also help inform future instructional priorities, particularly in strengthening students' understanding of Patterns and Relationships in Mathematics and enhancing comprehension of Non-Fiction texts, both of which emerged as regional areas for continued focus.

These results reflect the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports' continued commitment to transforming teaching and learning while advancing its vision of providing every student with a world-class education. They also reinforce this year's theme, "Full STEAM Ahead: Future-Focused, Student-Led," which emphasizes the Ministry's focus on equipping students with the foundational skills needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

For Additional Information Contact:

Ms. Angelique Lettsome
Information Officer I
Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports
Telephone: 1-284-468-9448
Email: anlettsome@gov.vg

Additional Documents or Media

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