



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **COMPLEX INDUCTS 56 STUDENTS TO THE DISTRICT'S FIRST-EVER SCIENCE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY**

ST. CROIX, USVI—The St. Croix Educational Complex High School (SCECHS) inducted 56 students to the District's first-ever Science National Honor Society on Wednesday, March 6, 2019, in the school's auditorium.

SCECHS Principal Genitta Richards welcomed inductees, parents, faculty, and staff to the inaugural ceremony.

"A pleasant and warm Barracuda welcome to each of you! Here today we have 56 students being inducted into the Science National Honor Society," she opened. "How fitting is it that in this month where we celebrate VI History, Women's History and Music in Our Schools Month, we now celebrate each of you on this achievement." She continued, "You are indeed making history for being the first young men and women inducted into the Science National Honor Society here at the St. Croix Educational Complex High School. For years to come, your names will be written in our school's history as the pioneers of this honor society."

St. Croix District Science Coordinator Rosa White reflected on the significance of the inductees' achievements, both locally and nationally.

"You represent 6% of your school population, 1% of the STX district and .00001% of the national high school population." She reminded the students to "remain focused and stay dedicated to the task at hand."

Marisha Perkins, St. Croix Central High School biology teacher and alumna of the St. Croix Educational Complex High School, delivered her keynote speech on the critical need for students of color majoring in the math and science disciplines.

“Quality science education is paramount to understand our global community and the advancement of society, but more importantly, diversity in the STEM fields is crucial,” she said.

Perkins received a Bachelor’s degree from the University of the Virgin Islands in Applied Physics and Chemistry, and a Masters in Chemistry from Duke University, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude.

“During graduate school, the amount of Black and Hispanic students in my science program was less than 5% of the entire department. As a society, we need to improve on these numbers.”

Perkins ended her speech offering advice to the student scholars. “Always have confidence in yourself and your own abilities, and always acknowledge the importance between balancing what makes you successful versus what others say make you successful. For me, success and fulfillment came from developing myself in science education,” Perkins admitted.

Inductees recited the oath of office and accepted their certificates of membership. They then signed the induction book and received their membership pin from the science instructors.

Senator Alicia Barnes, whose daughter was an inductee, attended the event, as well as a representative from Senator Novelle Francis’s office.

The Science National Honor Society was established in 2000. Its purpose is to encourage participation in and recognize scientific and intellectual thought; to advance students’ knowledge of classical and modern science; to communicate with the scientific community; to aid the civic community with its comprehension of science; to encourage students to participate in community service and, encourage dedication to the pursuit of scientific knowledge that benefits all mankind.

The newly inducted students and charter members of the St. Croix Educational Complex Science National Honor Society are:

Liza Perdomo Alvarez  
Dianna Arthurton  
Shazim Brandy  
Shamara Butcher  
Dwayna Byrde  
Shealeen Cazaubon  
Amaya Christian

DaReone Christopher  
Shaniah Clifford  
Kimara Cooper  
Kyarra deChabert  
Amari DeSouza  
Sulaiman Donaie  
Khaien Donawa

Michael Dow, Jr.  
Yazira Encarnacion  
Melissa Ferreras  
Joshua Francis  
I-O'Diesha Frederick  
Deshanna Fregiste  
Nashaira Gonzalez  
Tamia Grant  
Jamoy Hardy  
Wanisha Harris  
Junisha Henry  
Sanay Hewitt  
Xavier Hinkson  
Jenna Honore  
Allana Jackson  
Reann Joseph  
Conrad Laurent  
Shaharah Laville  
Joshua Maillard, Jr.  
Makaliah Mason  
Phar-I Merchant

Elijah Motta  
Nayeli O'Shaughnessy  
Brianna Perdue  
Kathy Platt  
Taaliyah PreVost  
Serenah Prospere  
Nabria Ritter  
Glerysbeth Rivera  
Ajani Saldana  
Christopher Samuel, Jr.  
Deyaneira Sigobin  
Adonai Smith  
K'Shante Springer  
Taliq Stephens  
Nia Sylvester  
Keishla Torres  
Destinee Turnbull  
Demi Trimm  
Janay Ventura  
Tatyana Wheeler  
Gidal Williams

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