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*Dionne Wells-Hedrington is sworn-in as Education Commissioner by Judge Deborah Watlington, presiding judge of the V.I. Superior Court.*

## **Dionne Wells-Hedrington Sworn-In as Education Commissioner**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington was officially sworn in on Wednesday, February 15, as the Education Department’s commissioner at a ceremony held at the Battery on St. John.

Video of the swearing-in ceremony can be found at [www.youtube.com/live/r5qeGGg5\\_SM?feature=share](https://www.youtube.com/live/r5qeGGg5_SM?feature=share)

During her remarks, Commissioner Wells-Hedrington shared her plans for the department, highlighting her intention to collaborate across public and private entities for resources and programs that benefit students.

“This is not a job that I take lightly nor one that I can do alone,” she said. “I don’t have all the answers, but what I do have is a passion and a desire to transform this department and to ensure that every single student that enters our school system leaves our doors ready for college, military, or the workforce. We are creating a pipeline for success for every student.”

“I am looking forward to the collaboration that VIDE will have with the Board of Education, the Legislature, as well as the parents and community stakeholders,” she added.

During his remarks welcoming the Commissioner into his Cabinet, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. spoke about the passion she brings to the job.

“With Dionne, it is like, she is so passionate she would do the job for free,” the Governor said. “She is about, and I try to get all my Cabinet members remember, it’s not about running the Department of Education. You’re about producing great Virgin Islands children. And what a gift to be able to influence 8,000 souls right now.

“Over the next four years, she will manage over \$800 million. Next to the Government of the Virgin Islands, she has the most employees in the Territory. You didn’t see her stutter when the judge asked her, ‘Without mental reservations,’” Governor Bryan said. “The difference between a fool and brave person is, a fool doesn’t know the danger. A brave person moves despite the danger, acknowledging what that danger is. I think that’s one thing about her. She is a brave person. Dionne ain’t afraid of nothing. She has a boldness of spirit.”

The Governor also praised Commissioner Wells-Hedrington for her emotional intelligence.

“A lot of people in leadership positions don’t have that, because to lead, sometimes you have to follow. And to lead, you have to do a lot of listening,” Governor Bryan said. “We are honored to have you, Dr. Wells-Hedrington, to have you as our Commissioner of Education.”

Commissioner Wells-Hedrington, who has worked in education for 30 years, said her decades-long experience has given her first-hand knowledge of the department’s needs.

“As a former teacher and principal, I know the change we desire can only come if we support teaching and learning in our schools,” she said. “Working at the district level has shown me the importance of being well-rounded and being involved to ensure that our end-users, our students, benefit from what we do. Being on the Operations side has opened my eyes to the conditions of our schools, which require extensive funding to transform our learning spaces so that they are conducive to twenty-first century learning.”

She added, “I publicly make a commitment to continue to advocate for every dime I can get from our federal partners to improve the infrastructure of this territory—our children deserve it.”

Prior to being named commissioner, Commissioner Wells-Hedrington was the Department of Education’s chief operations officer, overseeing the development and rollout of the Educational Facility Master Plan and Industry Standards, a first in the territory. The detailed documents will guide the new construction and modernization of the territory’s public schools for years to come.

During her six-year superintendency, Dr. Wells-Hedrington instituted a professional development model that supported teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and aspiring administrators. From the resulting Aspiring Assistant Principal Academy, six participants have been placed in assistant principal positions.

Dr. Wells-Hedrington has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology, a Master’s degree in Education Supervision and Instruction, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. She has three children, and five grandchildren, is active in her local church and is the leader of a women’s empowerment group.

The Bryan-Roach Administration is investing in the Territory’s people, infrastructure and future through transparency, stabilizing the economy, restoring trust in the government and ensuring that recovery projects are completed as quickly as possible. Visit [transparency.vi.gov](https://transparency.vi.gov)