

## Early School Risk Assessments

### Why do early risk assessments matter?

- Starting at birth, the preschool years are the most important developmental stage in life. Research shows that 80% of a child's adult brain is fully formed by age three.<sup>1</sup> During these years, not all children have access to high-quality learning that fosters and builds skills for age-appropriate and more demanding learning at age five -- when children enter kindergarten.
- "Delayed" children at kindergarten age, without interventions, are likely to remain academically delayed in later years, and are more likely to leave school before graduating.
- School districts measure entering-kindergarten students' proficiency in cognitive, language, social-emotional and physical areas to assess their skills. The level of these skills indicates whether the child is developing according to expectations for his/her age and predicts their likely future success in school.

<sup>1</sup> ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. (2009). Brain Development: Frequently Asked Questions, retrieved 9/15/09 from [www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=key\\_brain](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=key_brain) - 21k

### What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

- St. Thomas/St. John:** In the school year 2007-2008, the Early Prevention of School Failure (EPSF) assessment was administered to approximately 462 young children entering public kindergarten.
- Early Prevention of School Failure is a nationally valid assessment that measures kindergarten students' proficiency in vital cognitive and physical areas. Results for the STT-STJ district are below.

#### auditory skills

(the child's ability to take in and process sound)

- auditory discrimination:** 70% of children tested performed at or above age level (up from 61% last year)

#### expressive and receptive language

(the child's ability to express words and ideas, and to understand what others are communicating)

- expressive language:** 74% performed at or above age level (up from 67% last year)
- receptive language:** 39% performed at or above age level (unchanged); 61% performed below expected age level, including 19% considerably below age level (slightly improved from 22%)

#### visual discrimination and visual memory

(the child's ability to recognize learned shapes and objects, and to recall information about them)

- visual discrimination:** 38% performed at or above age level (unchanged); 62% performed below age level, including 19% considerably below age level (improved from 32%)
- visual memory:** 79% performed at or above age level (unchanged)

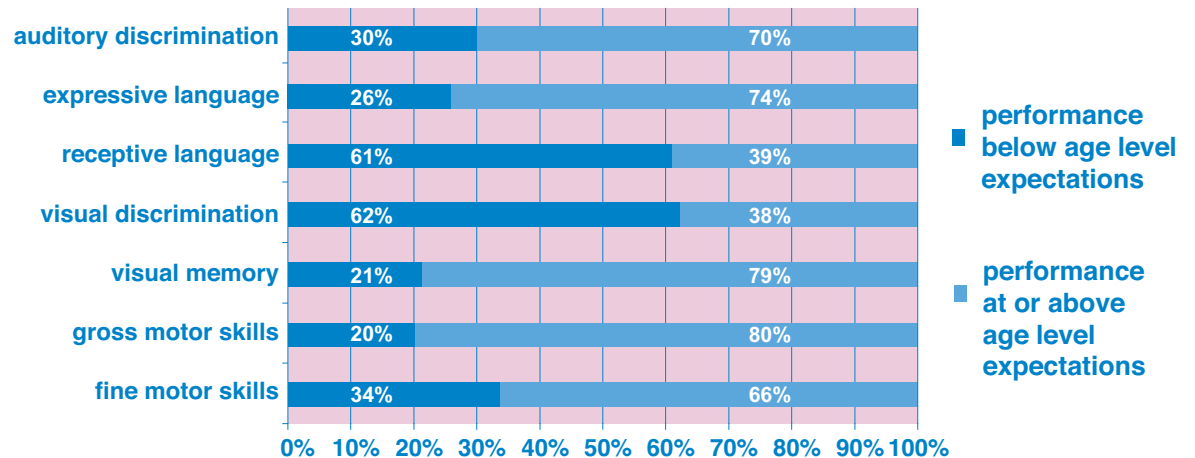
#### fine and gross motor skills

(the child's ability to perform and coordinate small muscle movements, and large body movements)

- gross motor skills:** 80% of children performed at or above age level (down from 89% last year)
- fine motor skills:** 66% performed at or above age level (up from 58%)

- Greatest-ability areas: gross motor skills and visual memory skills.
- Greatest-concern areas: receptive language skills and visual discrimination skills.

### What is the EPSF Assessment of STT-STJ Public Kindergarten Students' Proficiency, 2007-2008?



## Early School Risk Assessments, cont.

### What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands, cont.

**St. Croix:** In 2007-2008, a new assessment called Battelle Developmental Inventory Test, Second Edition (BDI-2) was administered to approximately 516 young children entering public kindergarten. Like the EPSF, the BDI-2 is a nationally valid individualized assessment tool, able to measure or screen for students' school readiness. Skills measured are in five domains. Results for the St. Croix district are reported at right and in the graph below.

*Note: Comparisons with previous years' data or with the St. Thomas/St. John district results are not appropriate, due to the dissimilar measuring instruments used.*

#### adaptive domain

(the child's ability for self-care and personal responsibility)

- 79% of children tested performed at or above age level

#### personal-social domain

(the child's self-concept and social role; ability for interactions with adults and peers)

- 83% performed at or above age level

#### communication domain

(the child's expressive and receptive skills for communication and understanding language)

- 77% performed at or above age level

#### cognitive domain

(the child's ability for attention and memory, perception and concepts, reasoning and academic skills)

- 74% performed at or above age level

#### motor domain

(the child's fine motor skills, gross motor skills and perceptual motor skills)

- 89% performed at or above age level

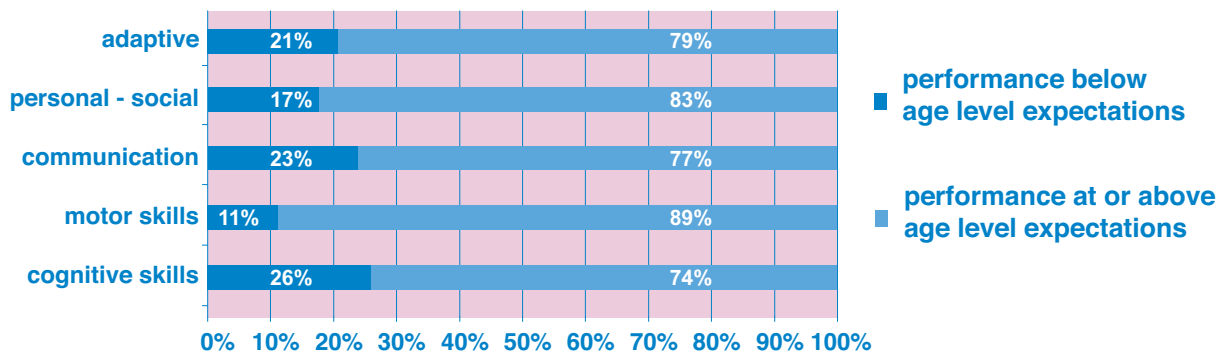
Neither district has results that can be considered acceptable.

The high portion of children entering kindergarten with less than school-readiness skills are a call for responsive and concerned action by the VI community.

The measurements indicate that:

- at least 1 of every 5 VI students entering public kindergarten has skills below expected age levels in ALL areas
- 2 of every 3 children assessed for receptive language (understanding what others are communicating) and visual discrimination (recognizing learned shapes and objects) perform below expected age level
- 1 of every 3 children assessed for auditory discrimination (ability to take in and process sound) performs below expected age level
- 1 of every 4 children assessed for cognitive ability (ability for attention and memory, perception and concepts, reasoning and academic skills) perform below expected age level.

What is the Batelle (BD1-2) Assessment of STX Public Kindergarten Students' Proficiency, 2007-2008?



## 2007-2008 Territorial Report Card for Public Schools

The VI Department of Education implemented the Virgin Islands Territorial Assessment of Learning (VITAL) in compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), requiring assessment and accountability for school performance. This annual report measures public school student progress toward reading and mathematics proficiency in grades 5, 7, and 11, as well as individual public school progress in proficiency, attendance rates and teacher qualifications.

### VITAL benchmarks and school performance.

Benchmarks for 'Adequate Yearly Progress' (AYP) for the VITAL assessment system are set at the following main criteria:

- 95% school **participation**
- **attendance** rate at or above 95%.
- specified percentages of students scoring at or above **proficiency** in reading and math (compare to table, p. 28).
  - 39.2% for 5th grade reading
  - 34.4% for 7th grade reading
  - 40.8% for 11th grade reading
  - 34.4% for 5th grade math
  - 44% for 7th grade math
  - 36% for 11th grade math

### What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

The following are VI Department of Education's own assessments of their 2007-08 AYP school performance and targets.

*Note: In order to improve school and student standards and performance over time through Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the VITAL benchmarks are set to raise every three years. In the 2007-08 school year the benchmark targets were raised, and VI public schools and students subsequently reflected an expected drop in their ability to meet the new targets, set higher than in previous years. It is expected that school and student performance rates will now improve toward this target, and others set at yet higher levels every 3 years.*

#### Grade 5.

- Most targets were met for grade 5 students, though not consistently for all subgroups.
- Participation, proficiency and attendance targets were met for black students, but not for Hispanic students, students with disabilities, or those with limited English proficiency.

#### Grade 7, grade 11.

- Participation targets were met for most grade 7 students, but not for those with disabilities. Proficiency and attendance targets were not met for grade 7 students, overall.
- Participation targets were met for most grade 11 students, but not for those with disabilities. Attendance targets were met for most, but not for Hispanic students. Proficiency targets (reading and mathematics) were met for most, except those with disabilities or with limited English proficiency. (See also "VI Student Academic Performance," page 28).

### School performance.

#### Elementary schools (K-6).

Only 4 of 23 elementary schools met AYP targets for elementary school teaching and learning.

- **St. Croix:** only 1 of 10 (ie. 10%) elementary schools met AYP targets.
- **St. Thomas/St. John:** 3 of 13 (ie. 23%) elementary schools met AYP targets.

#### Middle/junior high schools (grades 6/7-8).

- Only 1 of 6 middle/junior high schools met targets.
- **St. Croix:** only 1 of 3 middle/junior high schools met AYP targets.
- **St. Thomas/St. John:** none of 3 met targets.

#### High schools (grades 9-12).

- Only 1 of 4 high schools met AYP targets.
- **St. Croix:** none of 2
- **St. Thomas:** one (Ivanna Eudora Kean) of 2.

### Teacher qualifications.

- Only 11.5% of the classes (up from 6.7% last year) were taught by a teacher held as 'highly qualified,' based on requirements including bachelor's-degree education, state certification and subject matter competency standards adopted by the NCLB and the Board of Education.\*
- 47.8% of VI public school teachers were certified; 58.2% of public school teachers had a bachelor's degree, while 34% had a master's degree.

\*A "highly qualified teacher" as defined by NCLB and U.S. Virgin Islands Board of Education is one who:

- has a full state certification
- holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree
- has demonstrated subject matter competency in each core academic subject(s) he or she teaches (ie. English, Math, Science, Foreign Languages, Civics and Government, Economics, Arts, History, and Geography).

## 2007-2008 Report Card, cont.

### What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

A VITAL rating of **advanced** indicates:  
"exceeding grade level expectations."

A VITAL rating of **proficient** indicates:  
"academic performance meeting grade level expectations."

A VITAL rating of **basic** indicates:  
"approaching grade level expectations."

A VITAL rating of **below basic** indicates:  
"falling below grade level expectations."

### VI student academic performance, 2007-2008

#### For Grade 5 reading proficiency:

Advanced level: 8.8%... up from 5.7% (in '06-'07)  
Proficient level: 29.3%... up from 27.7%  
Basic level: 53.4%  
Below basic: 8.5%

#### For Grade 7 reading proficiency:

Advanced level: 4.3%... up from 3.3%  
Proficient level: 17.9%... up from 15.3%  
Basic level: 65.4%  
Below basic: 12.5%

#### For Grade 11 reading proficiency:

Advanced level: 3.7%... (similar to previous year)  
Proficient level: 25.9%... down from 27.4%  
Basic level: 47.7%  
Below basic: 22.8%

#### For Grade 5 math proficiency:

Advanced level: 15.7%... up from 13.3%  
Proficient level: 36.9%... up from 32.9%  
Basic level: 42.6%  
Below basic: 4.7%

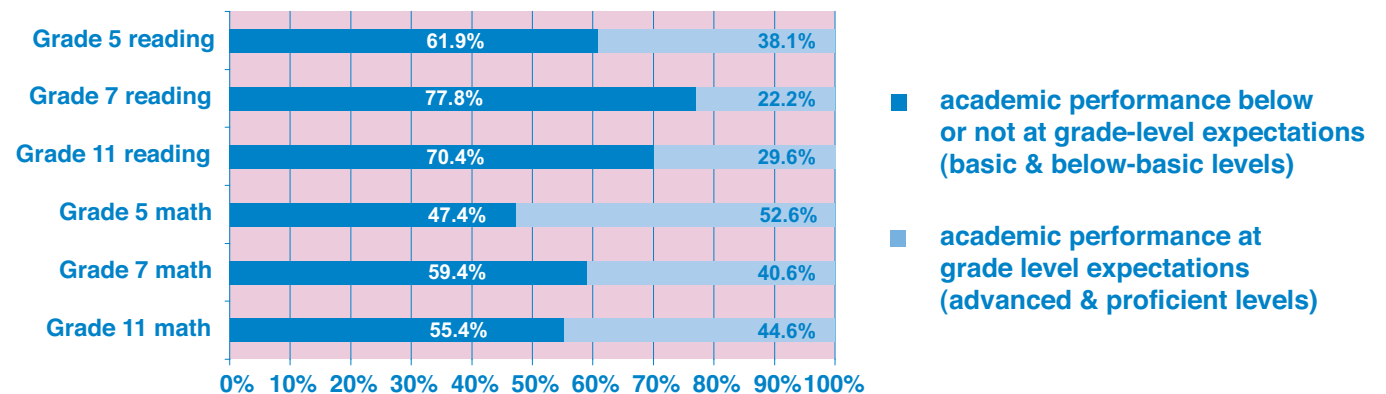
#### For Grade 7 math proficiency:

Advanced level: 4.1%... up from 2.9%  
Proficient level: 36.5%... up from 33.2%  
Basic level: 56.0%  
Below basic: 3.4%

#### For Grade 11 math proficiency:

Advanced level: 8.4%... up from 7.9%  
Proficient level: 36.2%... down from 38.6%  
Basic level: 54.2%  
Below basic: 1.2%

### What is the VI Territorial Assessment of Learning (VITAL) Student Academic Performance Report for 2007-2008?



## Public School Dropouts

### Why does school dropout matter?

- Because a high school diploma is a minimum requirement for most work in today's competitive marketplace, dropouts lack the essential credentials and skills for most steady, living-wage jobs.
- Only about half of high school dropouts hold steady employment. Dropouts are much more likely than high school graduates to be without savings, uninsured, living in poverty, relying on public assistance, in poor health, in prison (eight times more likely<sup>1</sup>), and a parent of children who also drop out of school.<sup>2</sup>
- Communities are profoundly impacted. Dropouts represent a loss of productive workers, and loss of the earnings and revenues these workers represent. Instead, dropouts represent increased public costs to the community and nation, for welfare assistance, health, social and public-safety services.

1 Harlow, C.W. Educational and Correctional Populations. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice. [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf)

2 Orfield, Gary (2004) Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Education Press, 1-2.

3 [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org)

\* The VI Department of Education reports the number of dropouts age 16-19 in 2007-08 as 411 students. KIDS COUNT also includes all teens age 16-19 who report no longer being enrolled in school, having attained less than the 6th or the 9th grade.

### What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

#### Rate of youth who are dropouts.

- 13.1% of VI teens age 16-19 are estimated by USVI KIDS COUNT to be high school dropouts in 2007-08, based on data from VI Dept. of Education and the VI Community Survey.
- This represents 10 more student dropouts (856) in 2007-08 than the estimated 846 dropouts last year.
- Note that the rate fell in 2007-08 due to more teens age 16-19 than during the previous year (6,517, up from 6,128 in 2006-07).

#### What is the national dropout rate?

- 7% of US teens age 16-19 were estimated to be high school dropouts in 2007-08.<sup>3</sup>

*Note: Data following is solely from VI Dept. of Education. Rates and numbers reported are for VI public school students, not youth in private or parochial schools, or youth not in school.*

#### VI public junior high schools (grades 7-8).

- 2.1% of enrolled junior high school students were reported as dropouts.
- 7th grade: 1.2% of enrolled students (or 19 students).
- 8th grade: 3.3% of enrolled students (or 40 students).

#### VI public secondary schools (grades 7-12)\*.

- 5.85% (462 students) are reported to be dropouts in 2007-08 (up from 4.3% in 2006-07).
- **St. Croix:** 137 students, or 30% of the 462 public secondary school dropouts reported, represent a 3.4% overall dropout rate. 66% were male, 34% female.
- **St. Thomas/St. John:** 325 students, or 70% of the 462 public secondary school dropouts reported, represent an 8.4% overall dropout rate. 68% were male, 32% female.

#### VI public high schools (grades 9-12).

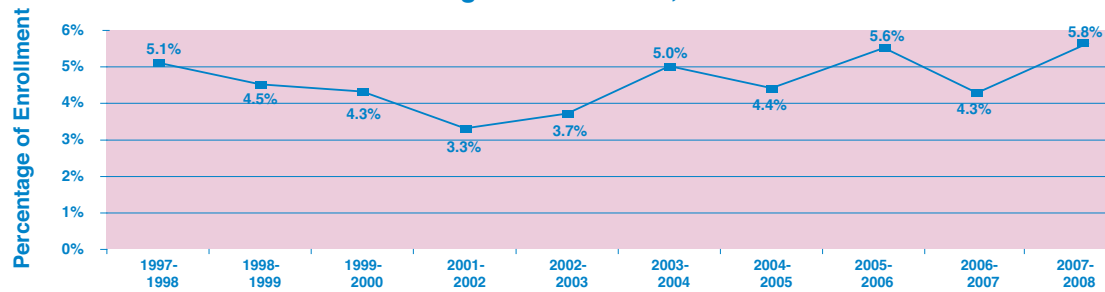
- 9th grade: 10.5% of enrolled students (or 199 students)
- 10th grade: 7.9% of enrolled students (or 93 students)
- 11th grade: 6% of enrolled students (66 students)
- 12th grade: 4.7% of enrolled students (45 students)

*Definition: Teen high school dropouts is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates.*

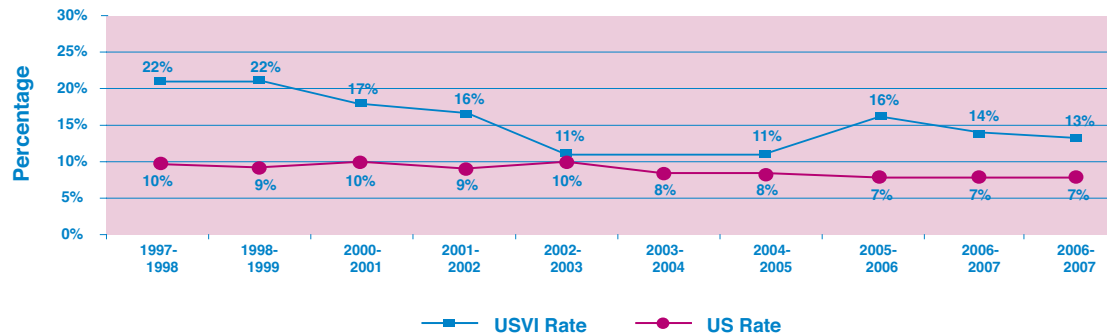
*Definition: Public secondary school dropouts is the number of children enrolled in public schools in 7th to 12th grades inclusively who did not enroll, graduate, report for class at the beginning of the school year, or meet the exclusionary conditions of transfer to another school, suspension, illness or death in the new school year.*

## Public School Dropouts, cont.

What are VI Secondary Public School Dropouts (Grades 7-12) as a Percentage of Enrollment, 1997-98 to 2007-08?



What Percent of VI Teens (age 16-19) are High School Dropouts, 1997-1998 to 2007-2008?



## Rate of youth who are dropouts (age 16-19) – how do we compare?

US national dropout (age 16-19) rate	Rate of best-ranked state, #1: ND	Rate of worst-ranked state, #50: NV	Rate of Puerto Rico (rank #36)	Rate of USVI (rank #52)	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the VI improve from last year?	To improve by 10%
7%	2%	11%	8%	13.1%	856 youth were dropouts in 2007-08 out of a population of 6,517 youth age 16-19.	13.8% (846 youth)	10 more dropouts (but a lower rate)	86 fewer youth dropouts

## Detached Youth, Employed Youth

### Why do 'detached' youth matter?

- 'Detached' youth are teens age 16-19, not in school and not working.
- Young people lacking a high-school diploma face far greater obstacles to steady employment, job advancement, and skill-based wages high enough to consistently support a family.
- More often unemployed than their peers with diplomas, these youth generally represent public welfare costs, and are at greater risk of antisocial or crime-related activity.
- Each high school dropout, during his or her adult life, costs the nation an estimated \$292,000 in public services. These costs include food stamps and other public aid, incarceration costs for those who commit crimes, and lost tax revenues based on their lower earnings than high-school graduates.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin et al, "The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School" (2008). Boston, MA: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University  
[http://www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/The\\_Consequences\\_of\\_Dropping\\_Out\\_of\\_High\\_School.pdf](http://www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/The_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School.pdf)

*Definition: **Teens not in school and not working** is the percentage of teenagers between ages 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and not employed. Employment may include part-time or full-time work.*

### What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

- The 6,517 youth who were age 16-19 in 2007 (389 more than in the previous year) represented one-fifth of the VI youth population.
- 17% of all 16-19 year olds in the Virgin Islands — 1107 youth — are not attending school and not working. This is a large increase from the 5.4% portion of VI 'detached' youth ten years ago, in 1997.

### What's the national 'detached' youth rate?

- 8% (unchanged from 2006).

### Educational attainment, age 18-19.

- Of the 2,693 VI youth age 18-19 in 2007, 58.3% (or 1,569 youth) reportedly did not have a high-school diploma (up from 57% in 2006, and 41% in 2004).
- 52 youth age 18-19 (2% of this age group) reported not finishing the 9th grade. This is a low portion given the trend of previous years (76 youth in '06, 240 in '05, 234 in '04, 189 in '03, 113 in '02).

### Employment attainment, age 16-19.

- 6% of this age group (or 410 youth) reported working full-time in 2007 (down from 8% or 487 youth in 2006).
- The unemployment rate for youth who were looking for work increased to 30.6% in 2007 (from 23% in 2006). This 2007 rate is seven times the 4.4% rate of adult unemployment.

### Educational attainment for older youth, age 18-24.

- Of the 8,370 youth age 18-24 (376 more than in 2006), 63% had completed high school by 2007; more than a third (36%) had not.
- Female rates of high school completion declined to 62.7% (from 71.5% in 2006).
- Of high school graduates age 18-24, 4.6% earned a college degree by 2007 (up from 3.8% in '06).
- Female rates of college completion slipped to 3.5% (from 4% in 2006).

### Employment attainment for older youth, age 18-24.

- 55.7% of youth age 18-24 (or 4,665 youth) were employed (down from 68% the previous year).
- Female employment rates also fell, to 50.4% (down from 66.6% in 2006).
- Of employed youth, 58.5% worked full-time or 40+ hours a week (up from 46% in 2006).
- Of full-time employed youth, 72.2% had a high school diploma (up from 56% in 2005).
- Of unemployed youth age 18-24, 62% reported having completed high school (63% in '06).
- The unemployment rate was 13.4% for all youth age 18-24 (down from 16.3% in 2006).

## Detached Youth, Employed Youth, cont.

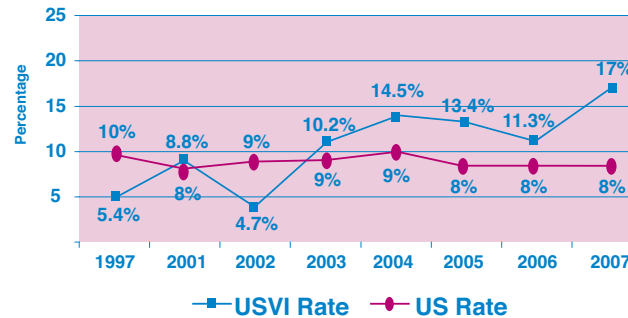
### What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands, cont.

*Note: KIDS COUNT this year has been able to access new data from the VI Community Survey (VICS) tables for greater in-depth reporting on detached youth. By accessing figures for youth age 16-19 who reported having attained some college, and youth 16-19 who reported some employment (but are not in the work force), KIDS COUNT is now able to document a smaller number of detached youth in the VI youth population than previously expected. Our improved formula is also able to revise and update rates for detached youth published in KIDS COUNT for years '06 and '05. Data from '04 and before is unchanged.*

### Updated Data: Detached Youth Numbers and Portion in the VI Youth Population

	2007	2006	2005	2004
number of all VI youth age 16-19	6,517	6,128	6,985	6,713
number of 'detached youth' age 16-19 (not enrolled or employed)	1107	692	935	974
% of detached youth within all VI youth age 16-19	17.0%	11.3%	13.4%	14.5%
(number of detached youth previously reported)		1396	1657	974
(% of detached youth previously reported)		22.8%	23.7%	14.5%

### What Percent of VI Teens Age 16-19 are Not Enrolled in School, and Not Employed?



*Note: Rates for 2005 and 2006 have been re-calculated this year, based on newly available information and data.*

## Detached youth – how do we compare?

US national detached youth rate	Rate of best-ranked state, #1: MN	Rate of worst-ranked state, #50: NV	Rate of Puerto Rico (rank #51)	Rate of USVI (rank #52)	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the VI improve from last year?	To compare
8%	4%	13%	15%	17%	1,107 youth are not in school and not employed, out of 6,517 youth age 16-19.	11.3%	o – the rate rose 1 mo re youth	11 fewer detached youth