

PreK - 16 Education

POLICY BRIEF

2016

As business leaders representing every sector of the economy, Vermont Business Roundtable members understand that our state needs a world-class, skilled workforce to lead in innovation, ensure future economic growth and drive job creation. We are committed to ensuring all students and workers are prepared to work and ready to succeed.

We believe that it is possible to have a high performing PreK-16 education system, but it requires strong leadership from the government, education, business and community sectors to make the difficult curricular, funding, and governance decisions necessary to enable all children to succeed. In particular, the Roundtable is guided by the following principles adopted by the membership in 2014:

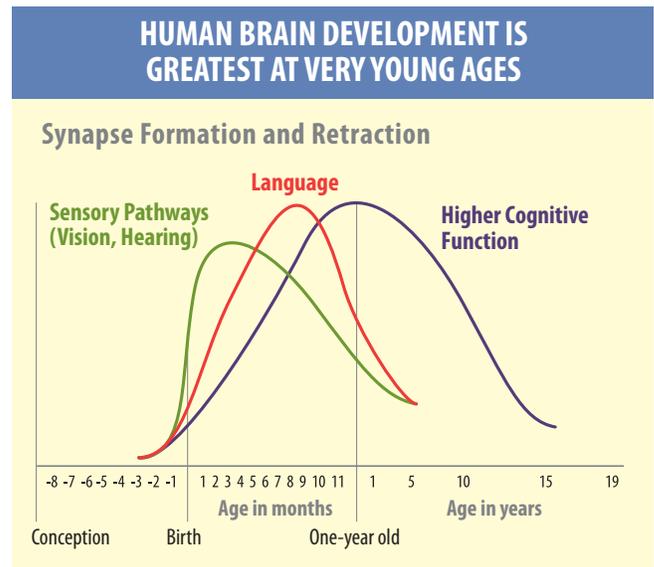
1. **State-developed standards and competencies contained within Common Core;** to ensure that our high school graduates are college and career-ready upon receiving a standards-based diploma. ⁱ
2. **Quality teaching focused on student-centered learning;** rigorously prepared, evaluated and supported teachers; and system-wide investments that ensure teacher success in the classroom, including teacher preparation, professional development, mentoring and training.
3. **Sustainable spending levels and strategic allocation of Vermont's \$1.5B education budget,** to ensure that resources are allocated in support of the full spectrum of PreK-16 educational opportunities, not just K-12.
4. **Consolidation of Vermont's school districts, which allows for greater equity of learning opportunity while minimizing costs of school administration;** to ensure that adequate level of state resources are available to support the implementation of Act 46.

5. **K-12 system elements of choice and support for Public/Private Independent schools;** to ensure equalization of opportunities within Vermont's education system.

BIRTH TO FIVE

- ◆ Pre-K Quality
- ◆ Pre-K Access
- ◆ Pre-K Resources

High-quality early learning and reading programs build a critical foundation for future educational achievement. Studies show that children who attend high-quality early childhood education programs are more likely to excel in school, graduate from high school, and earn higher wages than those who do not attend such programs. ⁱⁱ



Source: PEW Center on the States
Proposed State and Federal Resource Allocation Principles

The Roundtable supports

- ❖ Voluntary access to high-quality early childhood programs, as well as financial assistance that enables participation by low-income children who are most at risk of starting school behind their peers.
- ❖ Policy and programmatic efforts to improve/ meet all the quality standards set by the National Institute for Early Education Research.

K - 12

- ◆ Literacy
- ◆ Student – Centered Learning
- ◆ High School Graduation

Children who do not read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out of school by age 19 than students who read at or above their grade level. ⁱⁱⁱ Unfortunately, in Vermont roughly half of all nine year olds struggle to read at grade level. Writing skills are necessary for critical thinking and for full participation in any learning experience. Yet, writing proficiency declines as youths progress through the grades. ^{iv}

Because students learn in different ways, schools must provide students with multiple pathways to college and career readiness. Student-Centered Learning emphasizes authentic instruction, mastery-based assessment, and engagement of students in real-life experiences that take their learning beyond the school walls and school day—all in an effort to connect students’ learning to their experiences, strengths, and interests.

Vermont has among the highest high school graduation rates in the country, however, roughly half aspire to some form of post-secondary education or certification. Lack of career or college readiness is a problem that develops over time, but that opportunity gap must be closed so that 100% of high school students graduate into a successful start to either career or college.

The Roundtable supports

- ❖ Proven policies and programs that focus on all students reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade including high-quality prekindergarten programs,

research-based reading practices to prepare pre-Kindergarten through grade 3 teachers, policies that reduce chronic absenteeism, and extended time for students who need extra help to develop their reading skills.

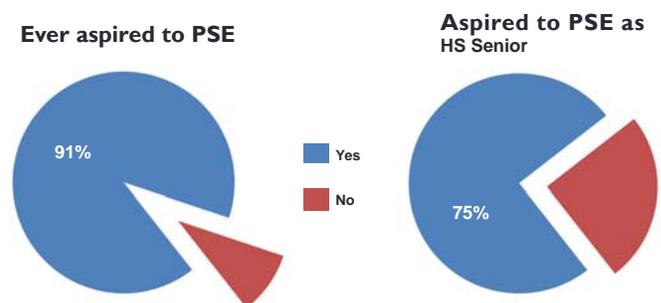
- ❖ Student-Centered Learning (personalized learning plans) as an effective means of addressing the current achievement or “opportunity” gap, improve college readiness, and reach our post-secondary credential goals.
- ❖ Efforts to provide additional resources to fund technical and community-level assistance to those schools and communities that struggle to develop their own goals and visions in this new era of school district consolidation.
- ❖ Programs both within and outside of school that promote improvement of youths’ writing skills.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

- ◆ Post-secondary Eligibility
- ◆ College Aspiration and Completion
- ◆ College Affordability

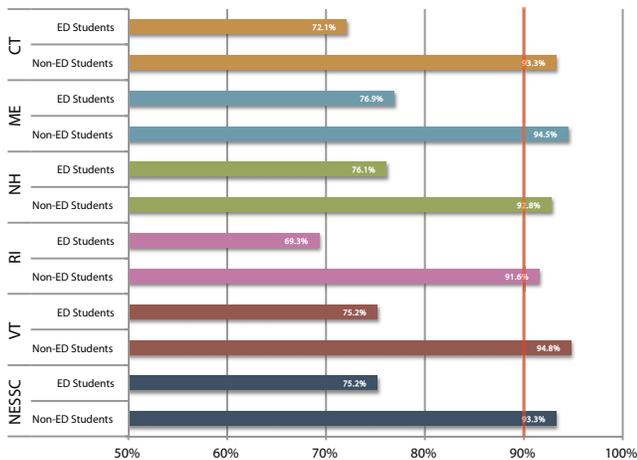
Postsecondary education and training is critical to building a skilled, prepared workforce and, ultimately, boosting the long-term growth of the U.S. and Vermont economy. ^v Between 1973 and 2010, the share of all jobs requiring postsecondary education and training more than doubled — increasing from 28 to 59 percent.

The postsecondary aspirations for the Vermont Class of 2012



Source: VSAC Senior Survey 2012 First Follow-Up

2013 Graduation Rates: Economically Disadvantaged Students



Source: NESSC Common Data Project 2014 Annual Report

The importance of postsecondary education and training is expected only to grow in the future, with roughly 65 percent of all jobs requiring postsecondary education and training by 2020.^{vi}

While the high school completion rate for Vermont students is roughly 90 percent, which ranks among the highest in the country, only 60 percent pursue education or training after high school, and only 46 percent of these students obtain a degree within six years.^{vii}

Additionally, both empirical and anecdotal evidence from employers and college administrators demonstrate that many of these graduates are not prepared for success in either career or college.

And, rising concerns about the affordability of postsecondary education and training are compounding these trends. Aside from mortgages, student loans are now the most widely held debt in the country. Improving affordability will be critical to increasing the number of young adults with degrees and credentials that are valued by Vermont's employers.

The Roundtable supports

- ❖ Expansion of pathways between Education and the Workplace, including apprenticeships, modernization of technical and career education, completion of credentials valued by employers, and greater involvement by the business community.

- ❖ Efforts to achieve the goal of 70 percent post-secondary credentialing by 2020, by improving the affordability of higher education, including increased state appropriations to Vermont's state colleges and flagship university, and leveraging technology to deliver high-quality education at a lower cost.

CALL TO ACTION / NEXT STEPS

The Roundtable is an enthusiastic champion for the implementation of Act 46 that will improve the state's K-12 governance and education delivery systems, and lead to better opportunities for all our children and better outcomes for taxpayers. We support increased state appropriations to our higher education institutions that will make college degrees accessible for Vermont's low-income and 1st Generation college-bound students. And, we support efforts to make high-quality early childhood learning accessible for low-income and working class Vermont families.

ENDNOTES

i The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are state-developed K-12 standards in math and English language arts (ELA)/literacy that is grounded in research, internationally benchmarked, and anchored in college and career readiness.

ii The Pew Charitable Trusts (2010). The Costs of Disinvestment: Why States Can't Afford to Cut Smart Early Childhood Programs. April 2010. http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=56874

iii Hernandez, Donald J. (2011). Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation. April 2011. [http://www.aecf.org/Newsroom/NewsReleases/HTML/2011Releases/~media/Pubs/](http://www.aecf.org/Newsroom/NewsReleases/HTML/2011Releases/~/media/Pubs/)

iv Ibid.

v Swail, Watson Scott, and Adriane Williams (2005). Is More Better? The Impact of Postsecondary Education on the Economic and Social Well-Being of American Society. May 2005. Available at <http://www.educationalpolicy.org/pdf/gates.pdf>

vi Ibid.

vii Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl (2013). Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020. Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Center on Education and the Workforce. Available at <http://cew.georgetown.edu/recovery2020>

VERMONT BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE 2015 EDUCATION DASHBOARD

INDICATOR	VT TODAY	BEST BENCHMARK	GOAL by 2020
BIRTH TO FIVE			
◆ Pre-K Quality	Meets 4 of 10 NIEER standards; 72% of all programs participate in STARS; 52% of programs in top three levels.	10 NIEER Standards	50% of all Pre-K programs will have all 10 NIEER standards; 80% of all programs in the top three levels.
◆ Pre-K Access	Act 166 provides 3-4 year olds with 10 hrs./wk; 57% of school districts offer state program during academic year	Minimum of 20 hrs./wk.; 70% enrollment (OK)	60% of all 3-4 year olds will be enrolled in public Pre-K; 100% of school districts will be participating
◆ Pre-K Resources	Act 166 provides \$3,000/10 hrs/per child enrolled in Pre-K; Help Me Grow phone line VT 2-1-1; expansion of home visiting services; Promise Communities	K-12 per pupil spending (PPS) (\$21,263 in 2013)	Reduce K-12 PPS to national average (\$10,700 in 2013) and increase VT student/teacher average (10:1 in 2013); reallocate resources to Birth to Five
K-12			
◆ 4th Grade Reading and Math Proficiency	Reading - 45% in 2015; 42% in 2013 Math - 43% in 2015; 52% in 2013	2015 Average scale scores: US: 240 / VT: 243 2013 US: 241 / VT: 248	75% proficiency
◆ 8th Grade Reading and Math Proficiency	Reading - 44% in 2015 45% in 2013 Math - 42% in 2015 52% in 2013	2015 Average scale scores: US: 281 / VT: 290 2013: US: 284 / VT: 295	75% proficiency
◆ Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs)	Act 77 requirement by Fall 2015		100% of students have PLPs
◆ High School Graduation	88% graduation rate		95% graduation rate
POST-SECONDARY ED.			
◆ Postsecondary Eligibility	48% CCV students require remediation		10% students requiring remediation
◆ College Aspiration	53% of VT high school (HS) seniors		70% of students enroll in college within one year of graduating high school
◆ College Completion	45% of 2009 HS grads completed post-secondary degree in 6 yrs; 30% for low-income students	Retention rates vary from 45% to 87% at VT institutions	95% complete degrees in 6 yrs.
◆ College Affordability	35% of low-income Vermonters enroll in a post-secondary institution	Regional low-income enrollment average is 47%	50% of low-income Vermonters enrolled

SOURCES:

Agency of Education, Vermont; National Center for Education Statistics; National Education Association; National Institute on Early Education Research; U.S. Department of Education; Vermont Statutes