Final: Chittenden County VT Education Analysis

On January 25, 2012 the Steering Committee accepted these Analysis Reports with the understanding that that as a part of the final ECOS product they remain open for amendment until the whole product is finalized.

1/25/2012

An ECOS Analysis Report

This analysis, prepared by the Champlain Initiative, provides data and a description of education challenges relating to school readiness, K-12 success, higher education and adult learning, to help stakeholders understand and identify education needs in Chittenden County. It is important to note that this report is in DRAFT form, and not as refined as the other analysis reports.

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INTRODUCTION

The ECOS Project Steering Committee is a broadly-based 60+ member partnership committed to implementing strategies to improve Chittenden County's long-term sustainability: economically, environmentally and socially. The Steering Committee has committed to a five-phase project:

1. Adopt common goal statements

2. Analyze reports regarding economic development, housing, energy, land use and transportation, natural resources and health/human services/education

3. Develop indicators tied to the goal statements

4. Prioritize implementation actions for the next five, ten and twenty years

5. Invest in high priority implementation actions.

The results will inform regional, municipal and other plans as they are updated. This analysis, aggregated from a variety of existing sources, is part of ECOS Phase Two.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

Education is the cornerstone of individual and community success. But with more than 1.2 million children dropping out each year, America faces an education crisis. The cost? More than $312 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes[i]. These trends are reversible, but only when communities and public, private and nonprofit sectors work together.

GOAL: Each student graduates from high school and/or college with the confidence, enthusiasm, skills and knowledge they need to build a satisfying and sustainable future for themselves, their community and their world.

GOAL: Each adult has the essential skills education to further their educational, employment and personal goals in order to expand their options and capabilities in the family, community and workplace.

GOAL: Each person has the social community supports they need to achieve academic success.

To achieve academic success, or proficiency, people must be:

- Able to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information;
- Able to effectively communicate with others;
- Proficient in science, mathematics, computer/technical skills, foreign languages, as well as history, geography, and global awareness;
- Capable of collaboratively working in culturally diverse settings;
- Leaders who see projects through to completion;
- Responsible decision makers who are self-motivated and active political participants; and;
- Ethical individuals who are committed to their families, communities, and colleagues.

(Source: Building Partnerships for Youth, (http://cals-cf.calsnet.arizona.edu/fcs/bpy/content.cfm?content=academic_success)

The following ECOS Project goals statements relating to education are included in the areas of Economic Development and Social Community:

- Improve education, workforce education, and training.
- Provide youth with high-quality education and social supports.
- Provide lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Like many communities around the country, Chittenden County schools have an “achievement gap” - a disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates, among other success measures. This analysis aggregates current data that explores troubling performance gaps between African American students, those with limited English-language proficiency and white peers - and the similar academic disparity between students from low-income families and those who are better off.

HOW WILL WE RECOGNIZE IT?

The purposes of this analysis are to:

- Identify existing data that illustrate who is, and who is not, achieving their full potential in the K-16 education system;

- Identify factors that contribute to an achievement gap;
- Inform the development of indicators that measure progress in closing this gap.

WHAT MUST WE DO?

- Engage students in learning while in school;
- Support families to improve academic achievement;
- Connect students with the resources they need outside of school;
- Build stronger systems to support children and youth; and
- Create a robust information system.

(See Recommendations, P. 42)

HOW DO THINGS LOOK NOW?

In Chittenden County there are 6 school districts and three supervisory unions, with a total of 22,313 students enrolled[ii].:

- Burlington (3,917)
- Colchester (2,183)
- Essex Town (1,239)
- Milton (1,757)
- South Burlington (2,582)
- Winooski (850)
- and three supervisory unions, each of which includes a number of school districts:
  - Chittenden East (2,847 - includes Huntington, Bolton, Jericho, Richmond, Underhill)
  - Chittenden Central (2,599 - includes Essex Jct. and Westford)
  - Chittenden South (4,347 - includes Williston, Shelburne, Charlotte, St. George and Hinesburg).

Chittenden County is home to five institutions of higher education:

- University of Vermont
- Champlain College
- Community College of Vermont
- St. Michael's College
- Burlington College

Demographics

[EXCERPTS FROM ECOS PROJECT, ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS AND CHITTENDEN COUNTY, VT COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT]

Population growth in Chittenden County has outpaced the state for the past 80 years. During this period the County's population has nearly tripled while the balance of the State has grown by about 50 percent. The gap between the two continues to widen steadily. Currently one of every four Vermont citizens lives in Chittenden County.

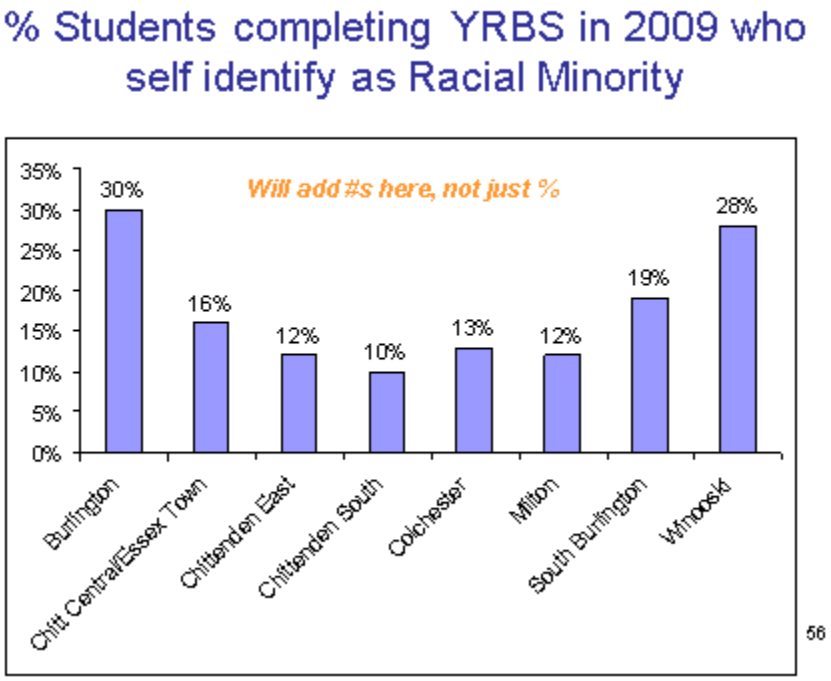
Chittenden County had a 2010 population of 156,545 residents, one quarter of the state's total. During the past decade the population grew significantly more than the state average (6.8% versus 2.8%), but trailed the national average (9.7%). The population is relatively young, with a median age of 36.2 years, according to the 2010 census, versus a state median of 41.2 years. Available forecasts show the County's median age will rise faster than the national average between 2010 and 2015, due to an anticipated decline in the number of residents under 54 years and growth in the number of residents over the age of 55.

The County's median household income is high at $61,363, compared to state and national medians of $52,289 and $52,795 respectively. Educational levels among residents 25 years old and older exceed state and national norms.

Chittenden County is the state's most diverse region. Since 1989, total 5,967 refugees have been resettled in Vermont, primarily in Chittenden County. In 2011, 417 refugees were resettled in Vermont. Chittenden County's K-12 student population is the most ethnically diverse in the state. Two school districts, Burlington and Winooski, have the highest percentages of non-white students.

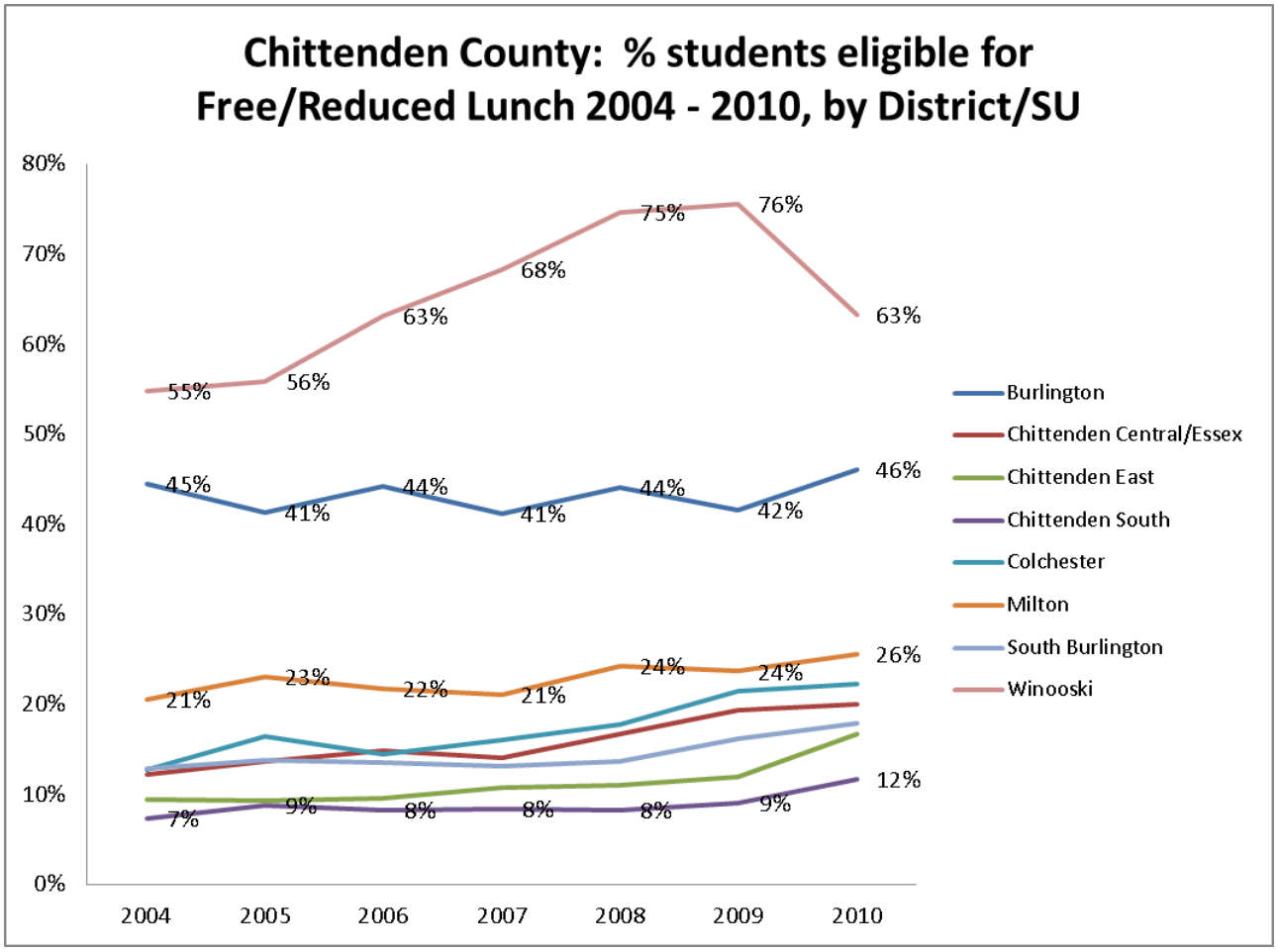
In the 2009-2010 school year, the Burlington School District served 613 English Language Learner (ELL) students, while the Winooski School District served about 235 ELL students.[iii]

In the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, approximately 30% of Burlington and Winooski respondents self-identified as a racial minority.[iv]



Chittenden County K-12 schools also have a significant number of students from low-income families. The percent of students eligible to receive Free/Reduced Price School Meals has increased from 2004 to 2010[v]. In 2010:

- Burlington (46%)
- Chittenden Central/Essex (20%)
- Chittenden East (17%)
- Chittenden South (12%)
- Colchester (22%)
- Milton (26%)
- South Burlington (18%)
- Winooski (63%)



New England Common Assessment Program Scores for Vermont

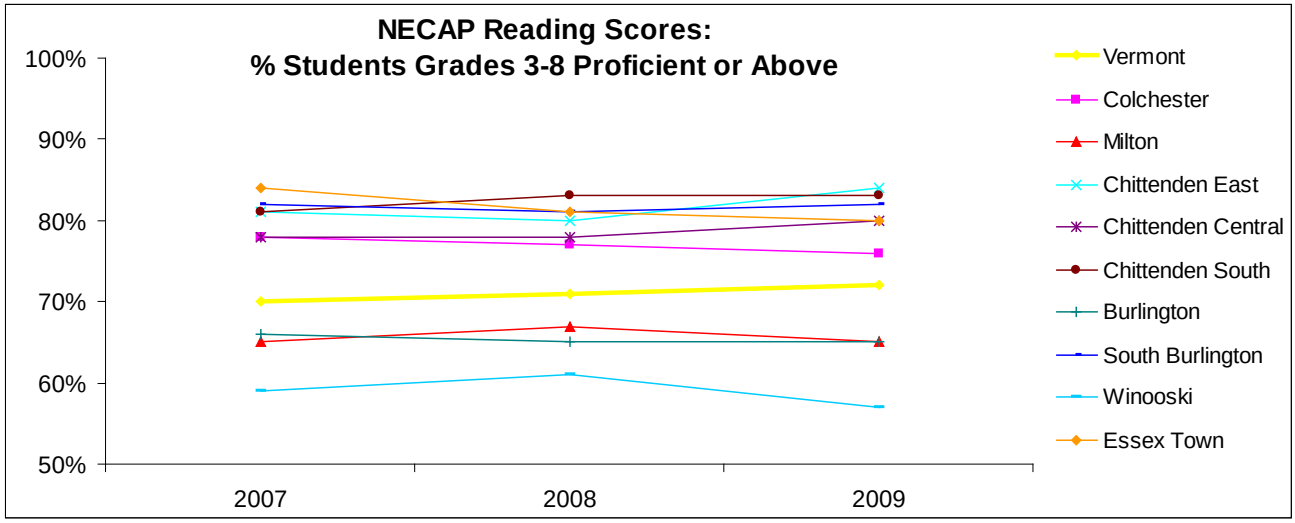
EXCERPTED FROM: "BRIDGING THE GAP: PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR ALL VERMONT STUDENTS, PUBLISHED BY VOICES FOR VERMONT'S CHILDREN"

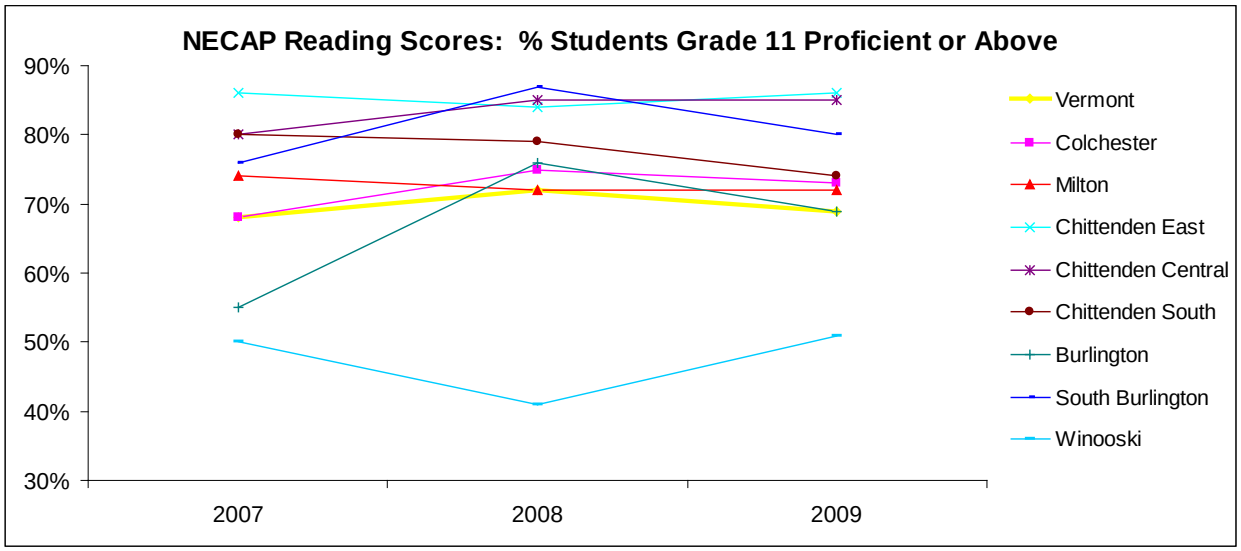
http://www.voicesforvtkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/bridgingGAP_2c1.pdf

The Vermont Department of Education administers the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) annually during the first three weeks of October. The NECAP assesses skills in reading, math, writing, and science. Tests administered in grades 3 through 8 and 11 evaluate students' reading and mathematics proficiency, with additional writing and science assessments being conducted in grades 4, 5, 8, and 11. NECAP results reflect the knowledge

and skills (known as Grade Level Expectations) that proficient students should have mastered by the end of the previous school year.3 Results are reported for all students and disaggregated by: gender; major racial/ethnic categories; students with disabilities; economically disadvantaged students; students with limited English proficiency; and migrant students.

In Chittenden County:

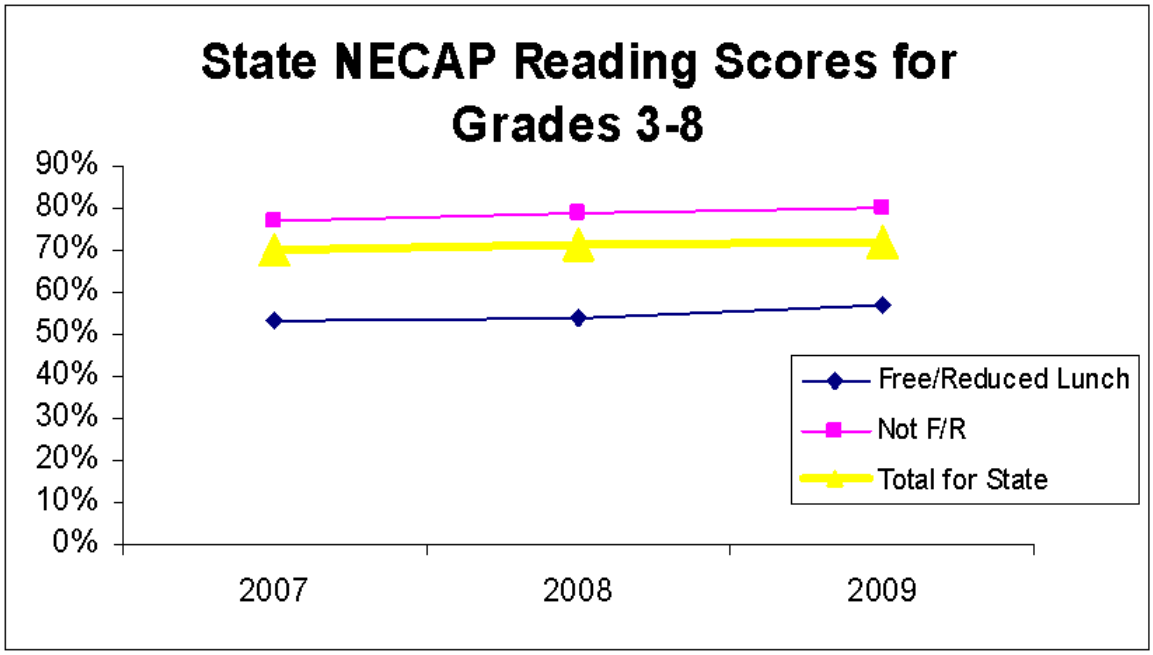


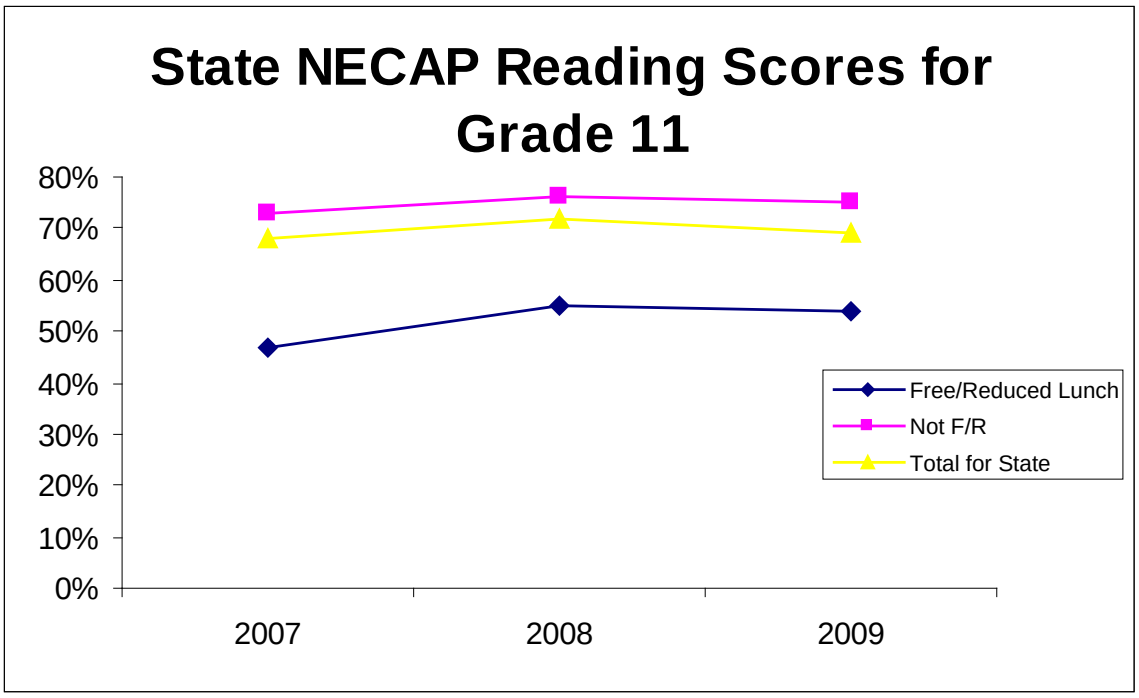


A significant proficiency gap exists between students who live in poor and low-income households and those who do not.

Statewide averages of the 2008-2009 NECAP results indicate that the gap in proficiency between these two groups averages 25 percentage points. Low-income boys seem to struggle the most. In most grades, less than half of low-income males are proficient in reading, compared with over 80 percent of non-low-income females.

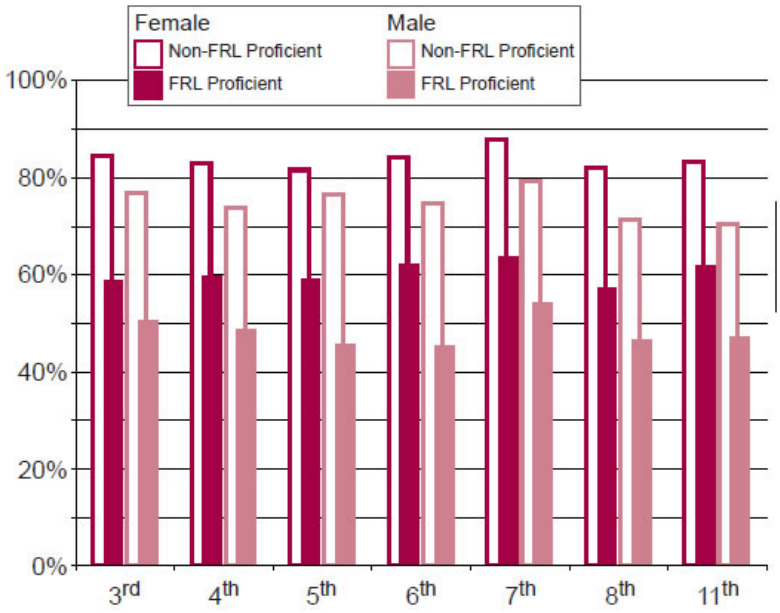
These poverty-based proficiency gaps are persistent across subjects and grade levels, and performance is worst when students take their final NECAP test in eleventh grade. In 2008, just 19 percent of FRL-eligible males were proficient in math, while 41 percent of their non-poor male peers were proficient. While neither group's score is particularly encouraging, the fact that the gap between the two groups is over twenty percentage points wide at this late stage in their educational experience makes clear that we are not doing enough to ensure all students have the skills they need to reach their full potential.




State NECAP Reading Scores for Grade 11
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2007
2008
2009
Free/Reduced Lunch
Not F/R
Total for State

Reading Proficiency Gap Evident from Grade Three On

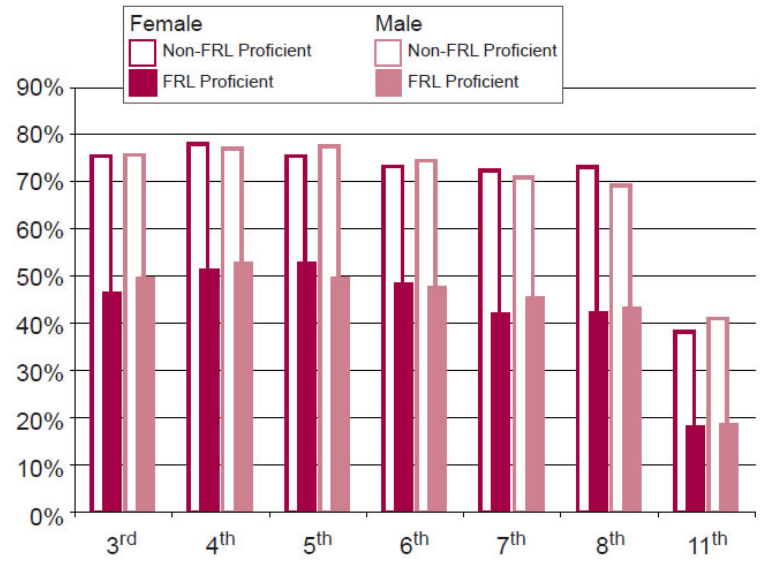
2008-2009 NECAP Reading Results by Grade, Gender and FRL Status



Source: Voices for Vermont's Children

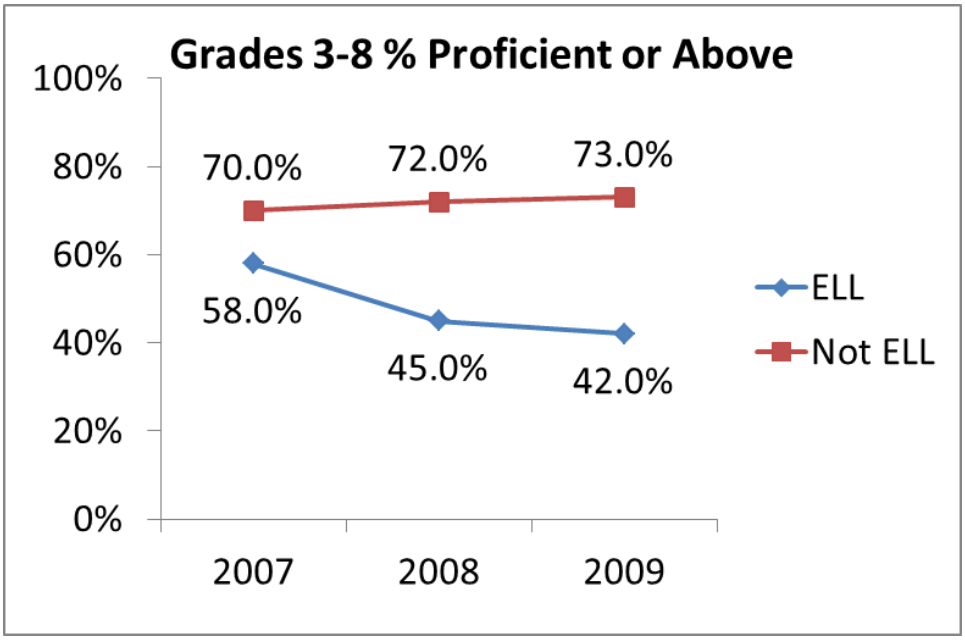
Math Proficiency Gap Persists - High School Performance Troubling for All Students

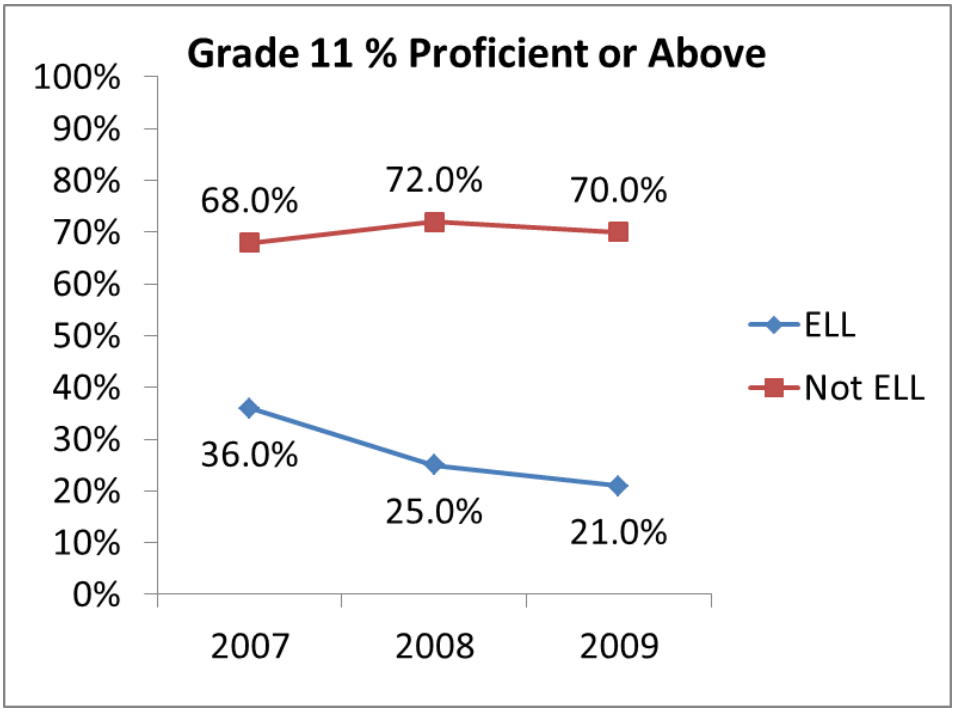
2008-2009 NECAP Math Results by Grade, Gender and FRL Status



Source: Voices for Vermont's Children

Similarly, students with limited English proficiency (English Language Learning – ELL) face challenges in academic achievement.





Challenges for ELLs in Reading[vi]

English language learners face many obstacles when reading literature in English. Most literature is culture bound. We expect students to have prior knowledge of literary genres such as fairy tales, myths, legends, and tall tales. If the teacher has not activated prior knowledge or built background information, knowing the vocabulary will not solve the problem. ELLs may be able to read the words but it doesn't mean they will understand the text. They are not aware of information that the author left unsaid; the information that "everyone knows."

Challenges for ELLs in Mathematics

Mathematics is not just arithmetic. There are considerable challenges for English language learners in math. There are challenges for teachers of mathematics, too. We may find that our ELLs use a different process to arrive at answers. Many teachers do not validate other systems and prior mathematical knowledge. Problem solving is not just language but a thought process. Students from other cultures may be more concerned with getting the correct response than with the process. They may not be able to justify their answers.

Source: Challenges for ELLs in Content Area Learning by Judie Haynes, www.everythingesl.net

School Readiness

[Prepared by the United Way of Chittenden County]

Indicator: % of children entering Kindergarten “meeting the standard” for school readiness

Indicator Source: VT Kindergarten Readiness Survey

Since 2000, Vermont has gathered information on the readiness of children entering kindergarten by surveying kindergarten teachers about the “readiness” of their students within the first six to ten weeks of school. This effort to measure school readiness is a collaborative project of the Vermont Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services.

Vermont’s concept of children’s readiness is multidimensional; it includes:

- social and emotional development
- communication
- physical health
- cognitive development/knowledge
- approaches to learning (e.g., enthusiasm for learning, persistence, curiosity).

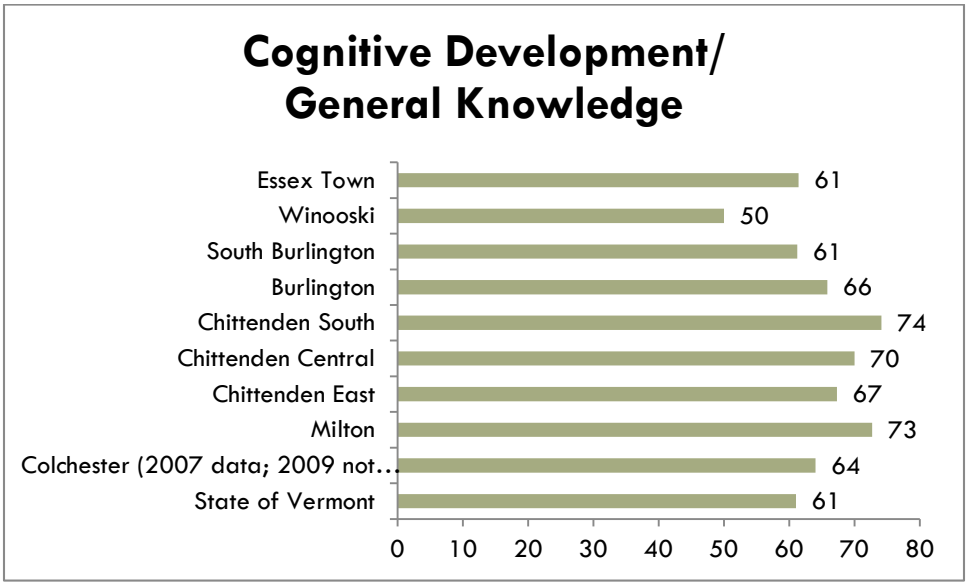
Kindergarten teachers from around the state completed a Ready Kindergartners Survey for each of their students. This survey is not a direct assessment of children; rather it relies on the accumulated observational knowledge the teacher has developed. Teachers rate each child's current skill level on several items within each domain; a child is deemed "meeting the standard" in a domain if s/he is "practicing" or "performing independently" all of the skills in that domain.

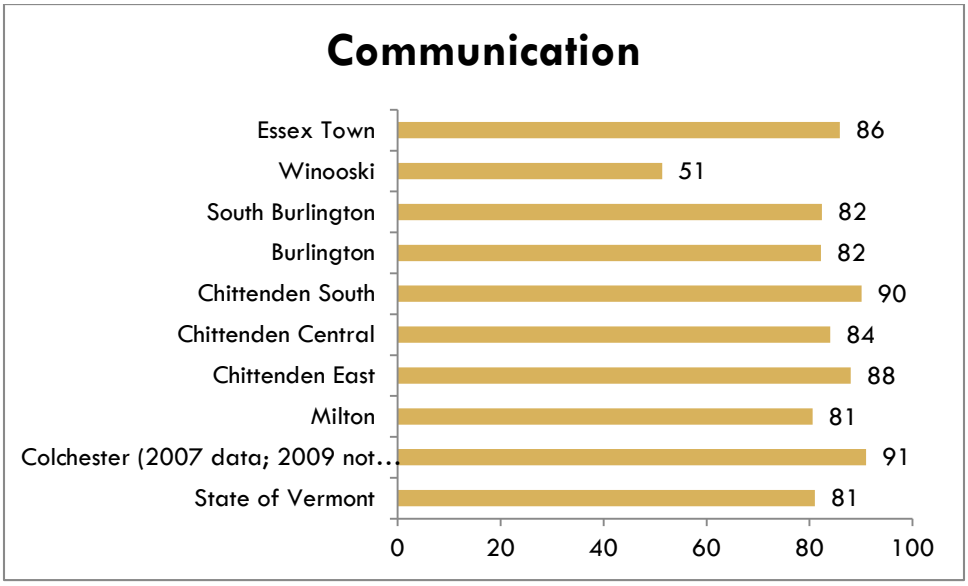
How do things look in Chittenden County?

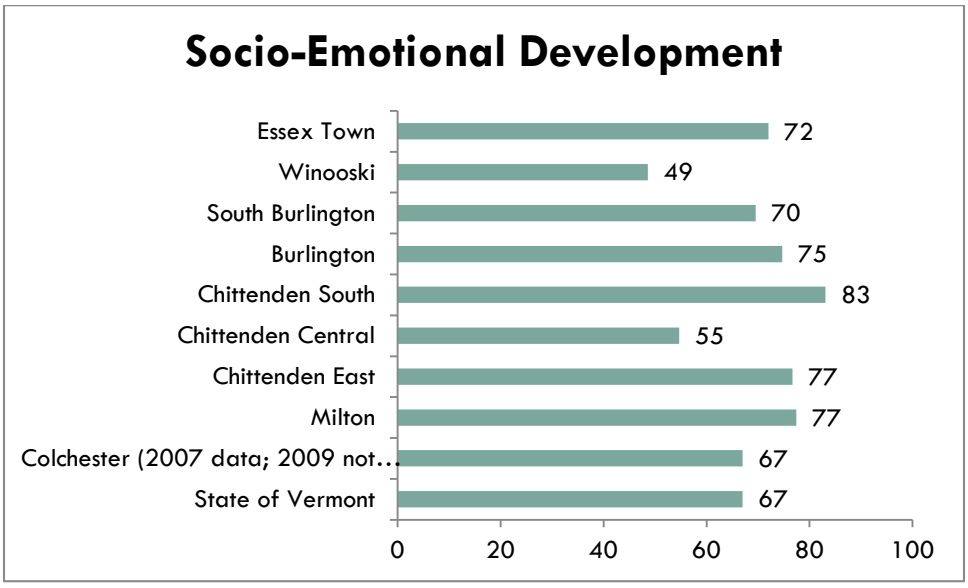
- *Who is not achieving this outcome? Where is the need the greatest?* Rates of kindergarteners "meeting the standard" for school readiness are at or above State wide levels for all Chittenden County communities except Winooski.
- *Are we moving in the right direction?* Comparison of data from 2004 – 2010 indicates no general or consistent trends over time in Chittenden County; however, there is some variation over time for all communities (and this is often more pronounced within communities with relatively smaller student populations).

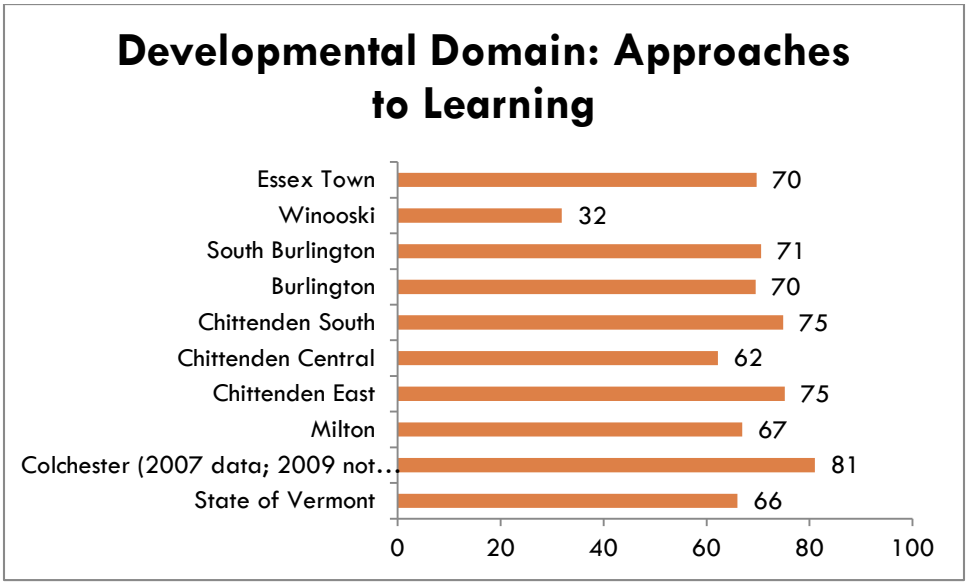
Kindergarten Readiness: Rates by town/district

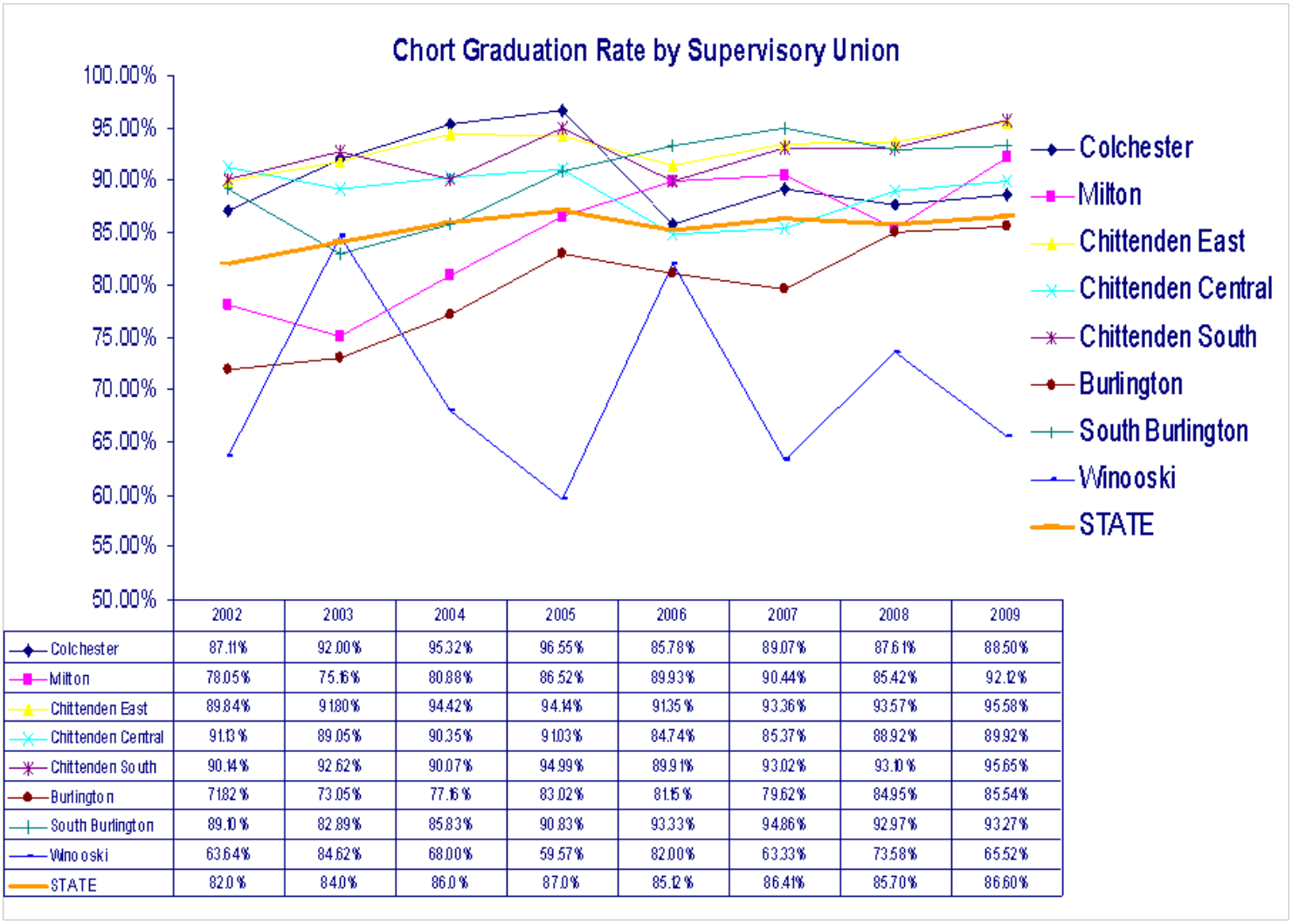
		% of kindergarteners "meeting the standard" (rated as practicing or proficient on all skills for that domain)				
	Year	Approaches to learning	Cognitive Dev./General Knowledge	Communi-cation	Socio-emotional Development	Health
State of Vermont	**2009**	**66**	**61**	**81**	**67**	**n/a**
Colchester (2007 data; 2009 not available)	2007	81	64	91	67	86
Milton	2009	67	73	81	77	n/a
Chittenden East	2009	75	67	88	77	n/a
Chittenden Central	2009	62	70	84	55	n/a
Chittenden South	2009	75	74	90	83	n/a
Burlington	2009	70	66	82	75	n/a
South Burlington	2009	71	61	82	70	n/a
Winooski	2009	32	50	51	49	n/a
Essex Town	2009	70	61	86	72	n/a


Cognitive Development/
General Knowledge
Essex Town
Winooski
South Burlington
Burlington
Chittenden South
Chittenden Central
Chittenden East
Milton
Colchester (2007 data; 2009 not…
State of Vermont
61
50
61
66
74
70
67
73
64
61
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80


Communication
Essex Town
Winooski
South Burlington
Burlington
Chittenden South
Chittenden Central
Chittenden East
Milton
Colchester (2007 data; 2009 not…
State of Vermont
86
51
82
82
90
84
88
81
91
81
0
20
40
60
80
100


Socio-Emotional Development
Essex Town
Winooski
South Burlington
Burlington
Chittenden South
Chittenden Central
Chittenden East
Milton
Colchester (2007 data; 2009 not…
State of Vermont
72
49
70
75
83
55
77
77
67
67
0
20
40
60
80
100


Developmental Domain: Approaches to Learning
Essex Town
Winooski
South Burlington
Burlington
Chittenden South
Chittenden Central
Chittenden East
Milton
Colchester (2007 data; 2009 not…
State of Vermont
70
32
71
70
75
62
75
67
81
66
0
20
40
60
80
100



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Colchester	87.11%	92.00%	95.32%	96.55%	85.78%	89.07%	87.61%	88.50%
Milton	78.05%	75.16%	80.88%	86.52%	89.93%	90.44%	85.42%	92.12%
Chittenden East	89.84%	91.80%	94.42%	94.14%	91.35%	93.36%	93.57%	95.58%
Chittenden Central	91.13%	89.05%	90.35%	91.03%	84.74%	85.37%	88.92%	89.92%
Chittenden South	90.14%	92.62%	90.07%	94.99%	89.91%	93.02%	93.10%	95.65%
Burlington	71.82%	73.05%	77.16%	83.02%	81.15%	79.62%	84.95%	85.54%
South Burlington	89.10%	82.89%	85.83%	90.83%	93.33%	94.86%	92.97%	93.27%
Winooski	63.64%	84.62%	68.00%	59.57%	82.00%	63.33%	73.58%	65.52%
STATE	82.0%	84.0%	86.0%	87.0%	85.12%	86.41%	85.70%	86.60%

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

[Prepared by the United Way of Chittenden County]

Indicators: % of youth participate in clubs and organizations outside of school

% of youth who volunteer

% of youth who have an adult in their lives they can usually turn to for help and advice

% of youth who regularly talk with their parents about school

% of youth who regularly eat meals with family

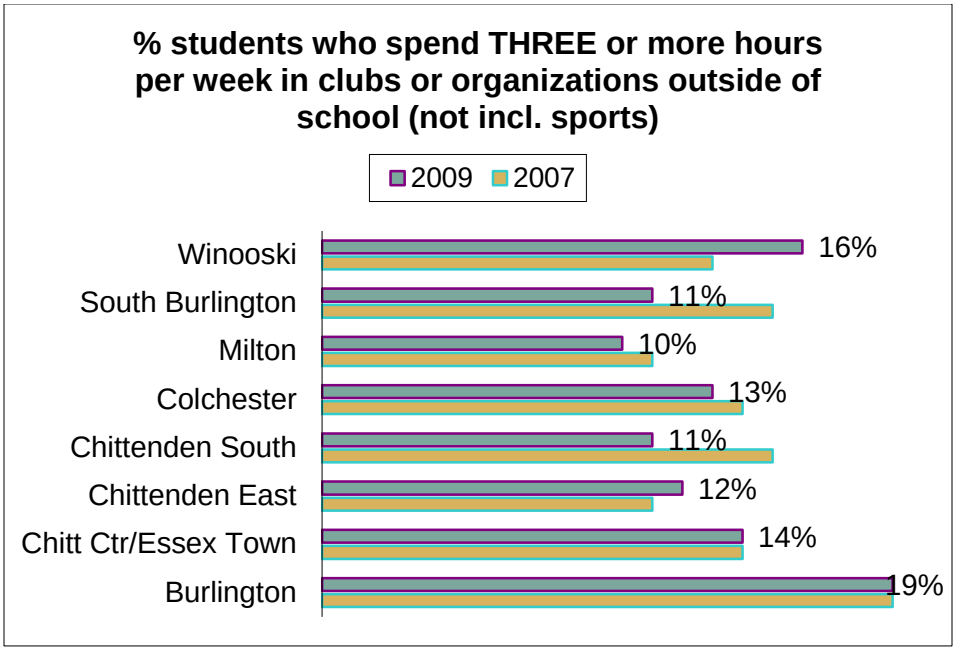
Indicator Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Every two years since 1993, the Department of Health Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs and the Department of Education Coordinated School Health Programs have sponsored the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The YRBS measures the prevalence of behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disease, and injury among youth. The YRBS is part of a larger effort to help communities increase the "resiliency" of young people by reducing high risk behaviors and promoting healthy behaviors.

How do things look in Chittenden County?

Youth Reports of participation in activities

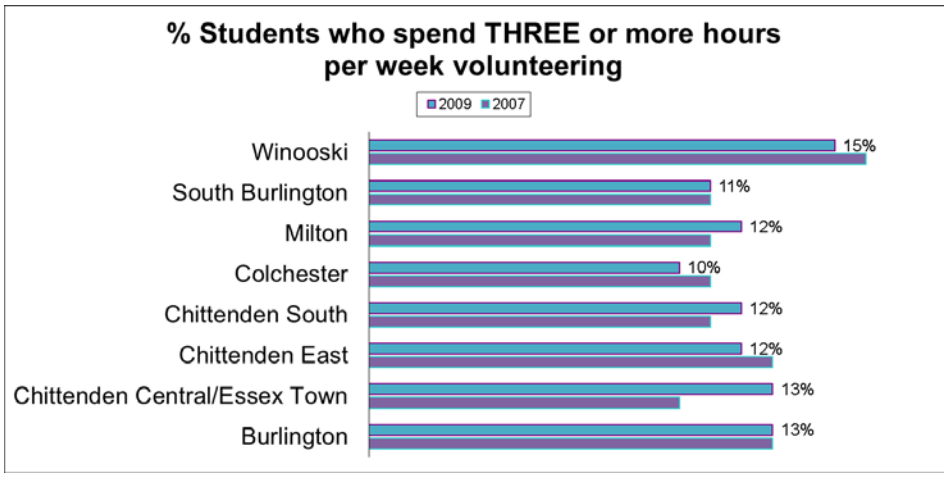
- In 2009, 10-20% of youth in Chittenden County who completed the YRBS reported spending 3+ hours/week participating in clubs or organizations outside of school. Some variation by town/district (may reflect different opportunities in relatively urban v. rural communities), with highest rates of participation in Burlington (19%).

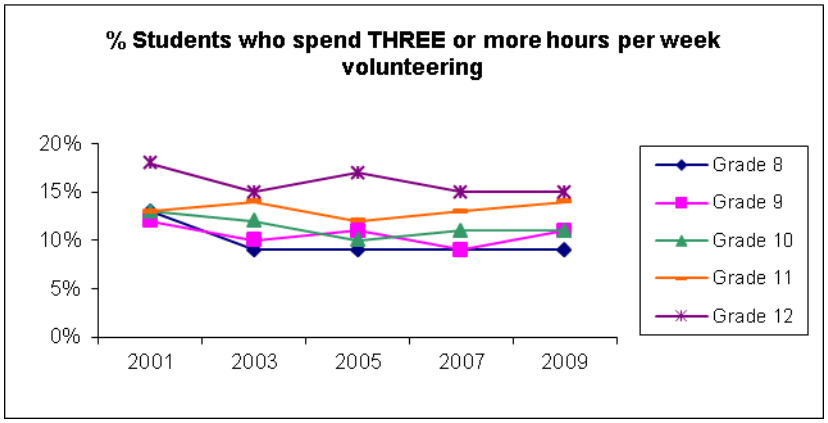


- In 2009, 10-15% of youth in Chittenden County who completed the YRBS reported spending 3+ hours/week volunteering (with the highest rates of volunteering reported in

Winooski). While there are some relatively minor differences by town, there are no consistent trends over time.

- Youth reports of volunteering increase by grade, with higher grade students more often reporting 3+ hr/week of volunteering.

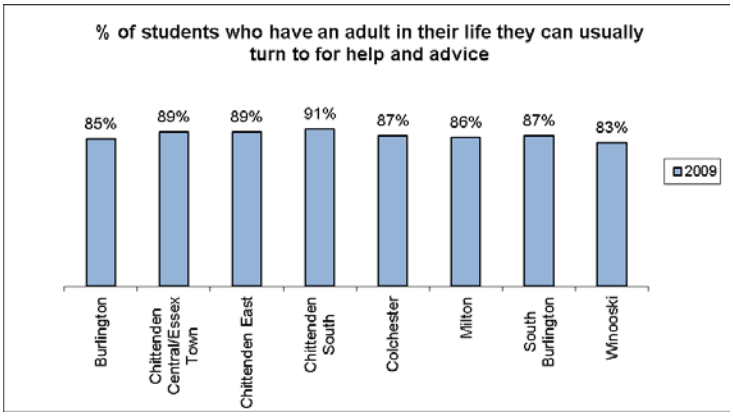




Youth Reports of Support from Adults

- In 2009, 89% of youth in Chittenden County who completed the YRBS said they had someone in their lives they could usually turn to for help and advice. This is consistent with data from 2005 and 2007, when 88% of youth said they had someone to turn to.
- The 11% who said they did not have someone they could usually turn to represents approximately 700 – 800 youth in Chittenden County.

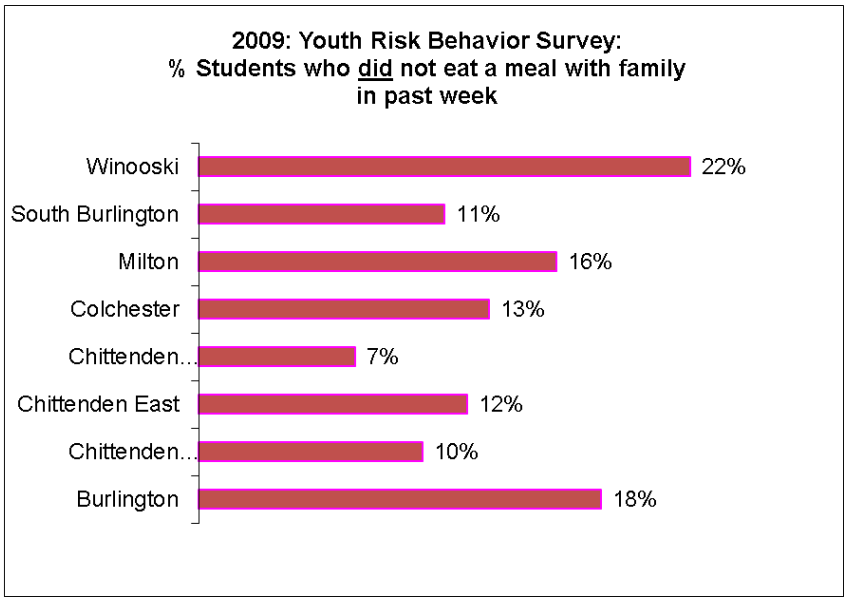
- There is slight variation by district, ranging from 83% of youth in Winooski to 91% in Chittenden South supervisory union who say "yes," they have someone an adult they can usually turn to for help and advice.



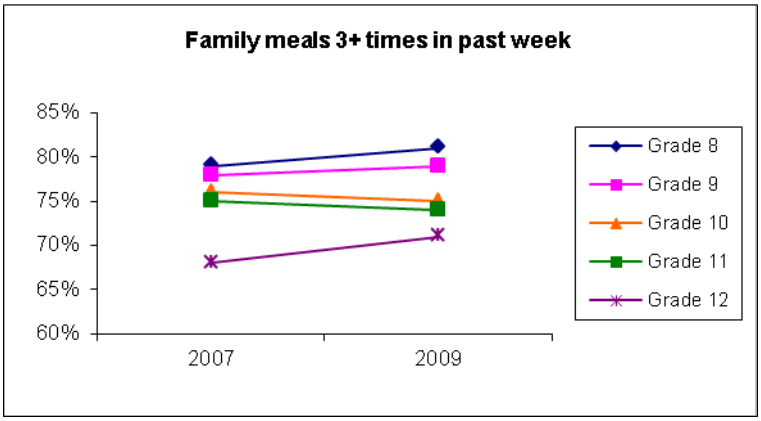
- In 2009, 76% of Chittenden County youth who completed the YRBS reported eating 3+ meals with family during the past week. Youth in Winooski, Burlington, and Milton were least likely (<70%) to report eating 3+ family meals in a week. Youth in these communities were also most likely to report having eaten no family meals in past week.

% youth eating 3+ family meals in past week	
	2009
Burlington	68%
Chittenden Central/Essex Town	78%
Chittenden East	76%
Chittenden South	82%
Colchester	71%
Milton	68%
South Burlington	76%

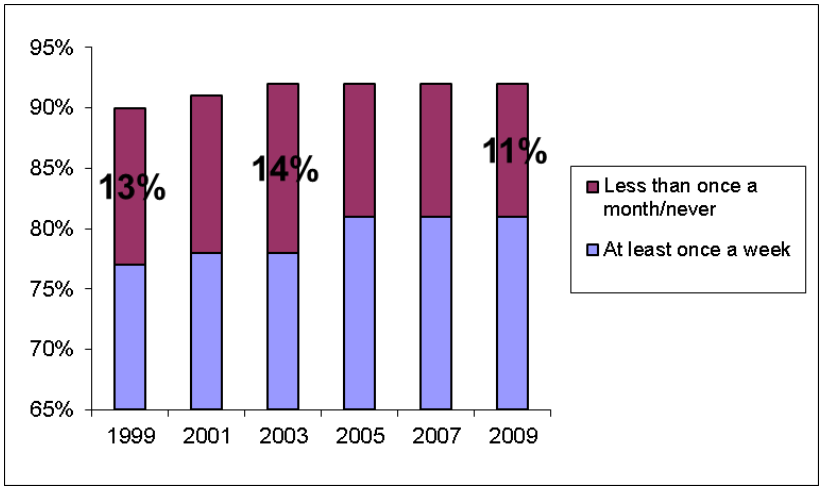
Winooski	60%



- Overall, Chittenden County youth in older grades were less likely to report eating frequent family meals; this pattern was evident in most communities.

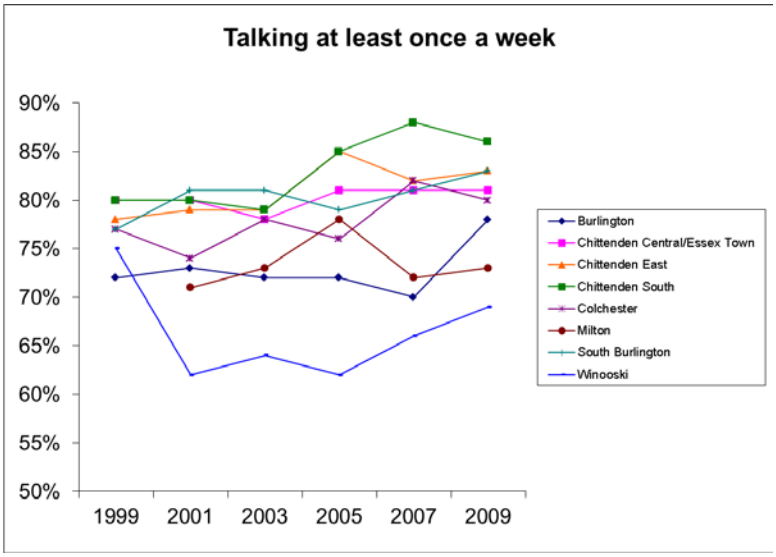


- In 2009, 89% of youth said they talk to their parents about what happens in school at least once a week; whereas 11% said they talk less than once a month (or never). There has been slight improvement in this indicator since 1999.



- Slight gender difference: girls are consistently more likely to report that they talk to their parents about school at least once a week (e.g., in 2009, 82% of girls v. 79% of boys).

- Rates of youth reports of talking to parents about school vary by community, and vary over time within communities, with Winooski youth consistently being least likely to say they talk to their parents about school at least once a week.



UWCC Note: YRBS questions about family practices (e.g., eating meals, talking about school) may be influenced by cultural values and/or different assumptions or interpretations and should not be interpreted as direct indicators of family values or functioning.

HIGHER EDUCATION

EXCERPTED FROM: "ECOS PROJECT - CHITTENDEN COUNTY, VT COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT, 2011

In Chittenden County, educational levels among residents 25 years old and older exceed state and national norms. The estimated percentage of County residents with a four year bachelor's degree, or higher is 42.4% compared to a state average of 32.6% and a national average of 27.5%. The percent with graduate degree also exceed state and national averages by significant margins.

EXCERPTED FROM: "REPORT OF THE VERMONT PREK-16 COUNCIL" FEBRUARY 4, 2007.

http://www.leg.state.vt.us/reports/2011ExternalReports/265132.pdf

For over half a century, America viewed high school completion as the minimum educational requirement for a secure economic future. Today, it is widely accepted that a postsecondary degree or credential will be essential for success in a global economy that is predicated on knowledge and innovation. President Obama, in his recent State of the Union message, set the goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. Vermont's postsecondary attainment picture is challenging, especially when compounded by demographic trends showing that in approximately 20 years, there will only be two working-age Vermonters for every senior citizen. Increasing the numbers of college educated Vermonters will be critical to maintaining a strong workforce and tax base. In Vermont, for every 100 9th graders:

- 85 will complete high school
- 44 will enter college the following fall
- 33 will return for their second year
- 26 will receive a degree within 150% of normal time (6 years for a 4-year degree and 3 years for a 2-year degree)1

According to the Vermont Business Roundtable, 38 of Vermont's 50 fastest-growing occupations — including six of the 10 fastest-growing jobs — require significant postsecondary education. Vermont's economic, social and intellectual well-being depends on educational attainment through a continuum of accessible and affordable educational opportunities. The current divisions between early learning, K-12, higher education, and workforce development

are often blamed for declining levels of educational preparation and attainment within the U.S. educational system. PreK-16, an integrated system of education designed to raise student achievement at all levels, preschool through degree attainment, has gained interest in many states because of its focus on collaboration—to ensure better alignment and educational attainment.

EXCERPTED FROM: "COMPACT WITH THE STATE OF VERMONT, HIGHER EXPECTATIONS FOR VERMONT:THE SIXTY PERCENT SOLUTION - *INCREASING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR A STRONGER VERMONT,*" DECEMBER, 2009

http://www.leg.state.vt.us/reports/2011ExternalReports/265132.pdf

Vermont support for higher education is among the lowest in the nation, regardless of the measure. According to State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO):

- In 2007 Vermont ranked 48th in higher education support per $1000 of personal income ($3.70 in Vermont versus the national average of $7.19, with the highest level of support in New Mexico at $16.57).
- In 2007 Vermont ranked 50th in higher education appropriations per full-time equivalent student ($2,281 in Vermont versus the national average of $6,773, with the highest level of support in Wyoming at $14,709).
- In 2005 Vermont ranked 50th in higher education funding relative to tax revenues and lottery profits (3 percent allocation in Vermont versus the national average of 6.5 percent, with the highest level of support in California at 7.3 percent).

Demographic trends in Vermont further compound the challenge. After Maine, Vermont is the second "grayest" state, and according to population forecasts, the number of Vermonters over the age of 65 will double by 2030. At the same time, the working age population (those between 21 and 64) will rise slightly until 2015 and then decline. Today there are five working age Vermonters for every individual over the age of 65. By 2030, it is estimated that there will be only two working-age Vermonters for each senior citizen. Increasing the numbers of college educated. Vermonters will be critical to maintaining a strong workforce and tax base.

In Vermont:

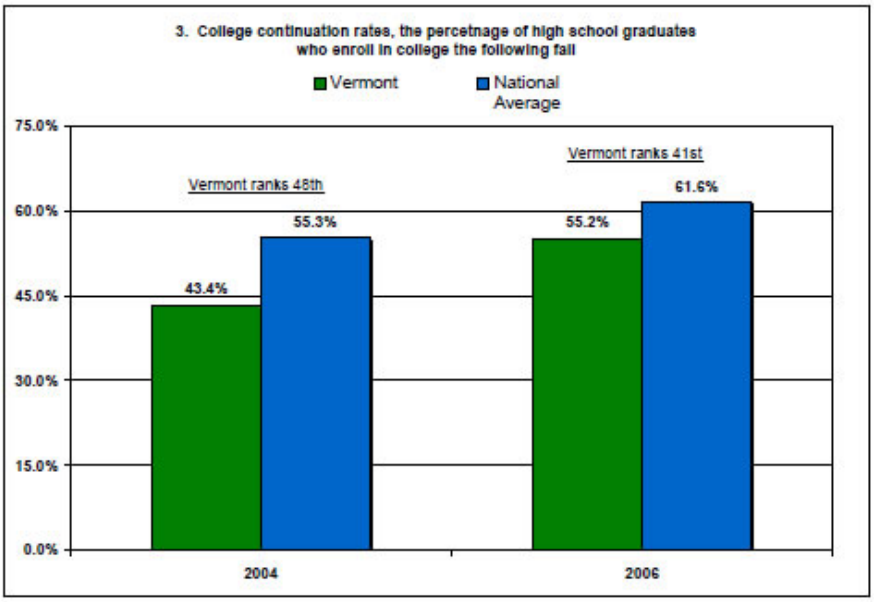
- 85 percent of ninth graders complete high school (2006, Vermont Department of Education).
- 70 percent of high school graduates aspire to continue their education beyond high school within one year of graduation (2007, VSAC).
- 44 percent of all nineteen-year-olds are enrolled in college (2006, Postsecondary Opportunity).
- 42 percent of Vermonters over the age of 25 have an associate's, bachelor's or graduate degree (2007, U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey).

We also know that low-income students drop out of high school and fail to go on to college at disproportionate numbers. Expanding early career awareness and increasing postsecondary aspirations are vital to the goal of increasing educational attainment and, thus, to Vermont's future economic growth and vitality. Programs that are successful in increasing postsecondary aspirations start early, in middle school or before, and combine goal setting, career awareness and education planning—giving students and their families the tools to successfully navigate life beyond high school.

VERMONT COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING
Major Benchmarks and Indicators-- 2008

3. BENCHMARK: Percentage of high school graduates who enroll in college the following fall:

Fiscal year	Vermont	National Average
2000	45%	57%
2002	45%	57%
2004	43%	55%
2006	55%	62%



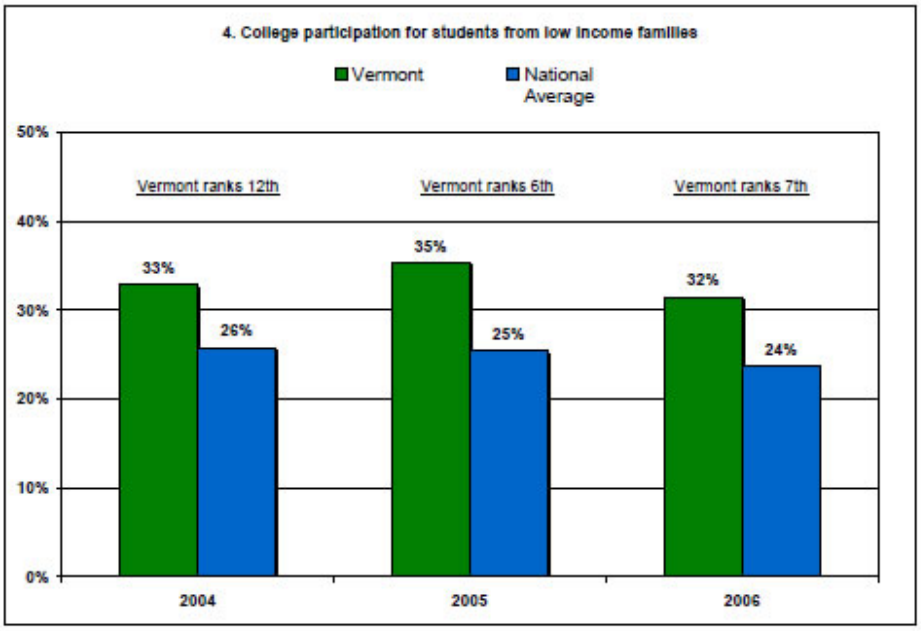
CHEF Goal: at or above U.S. average

Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity.

VERMONT COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING
Major Benchmarks and Indicators-- 2008

5. BENCHMARK: College participation for students from low income families:

Fiscal year	Vermont	Vermont Rank	National Average
2003	36%	6th	25%
2004	33%	12th	26%
2005	35%	6th	25%
2006	32%	7th	24%



CHEF Goal: 30% of students from low income families enrolled

ADULT EDUCATION

From Vermont Adult Learning [http://www.vtadultlearning.org/html/programs.shtm]

Vermont Adult Learning provides education services to out-of-school youth and adults ages 16 and older who are without high school level skills and able to make academic skill gains within a period of 75 instructional hours; want to complete a high school diploma or its equivalent through GED testing; and need to learn English. We also are a provider of Work Keys testing, a national work readiness credential, and the preparatory software, Key Train.

In Chittenden County, there are 104,007 adults ages 16 and older. Twenty-eight percent of these adults have literacy skills below fourth grade level skills. Thirteen percent of these adults are without a high school diploma or GED. Eight percent of these individuals do not speak English in the home.

In Burlington, rates are significantly higher. The population of 16 and older adults is 33, 611. Thirty-five percent of these adults have literacy skills below a fourth grade level; 13% are without a high school diploma or GED; and, 12% do not speak English at home.

Adults who do not speak English at home are double in Burlington (12%) than in the remainder of the state (6%). Fourteen percent of the state's population is without a high school diploma or GED. Chittenden County, including Burlington, is slightly below at 13%.

Below, is a chart of student numbers and credentials earned over the past three years.

	Students-AEL	# Credentials	% under 22	Students-ESOL	Total for Year
2009	543	131	60%	425	968
2010	557	145	66%	339	896
2011	528	140	64%	344	872

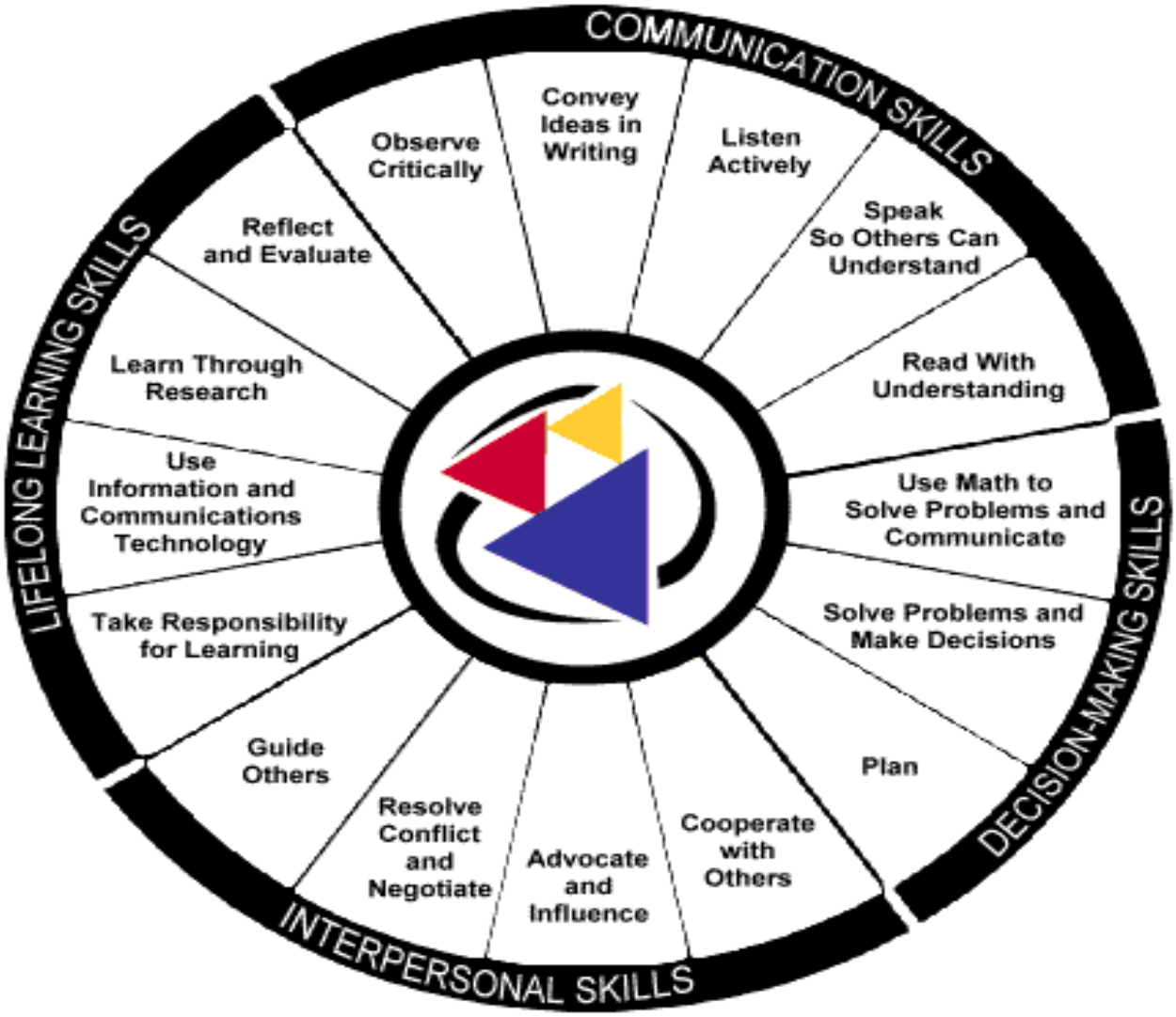
Enrollment

Every student who comes through our doors is expected to attend an orientation session. We assess their skills in the areas of reading, writing and math so they have a clear understanding of their current skills and where they need to go. Students are assigned an Educational Adviser who will help them set goals and create a clear educational path. Our process is structured, and the emphasis is on student support and outcomes.

VAL uses federal and state approved assessments for both baseline and future post-assessment. Once a baseline is set, we use assessments to measure and communicate skill gains and gaps to students, as well for use in determining credential readiness.

Standards-based Instruction

Nationally, adult education has its own set of content standards that are based holistically on skills adults need to have to be successful at work, at home, and in the community. Below is the “Equipped For the Future” wheel of 16 standards.



Program Options

Basic Skills

1. **Foundations** of reading, writing, and math integrated with technology classes and learning labs are available for folks that do no have high school level equivalency skills.

2. **ESOL** classes are offered for refugees and immigrants interested in learning English or enhancing their current English skills. Students also study American culture as well as gain skills and knowledge to obtain US citizenship. Classes and curriculum range from pre/low/non literate through completing high school and transitioning to college.

3. **College Essentials** - two classes are taught at the Community College of Vermont campus in Winooski. VAL offers a basic math class that may be extended through pre-algebra. In addition, we offer an ESOL reading and writing class. Participants are co-enrolled at CCR; there is an entry skill level requirement.

Credentialing

Credentialing services consists of four specific options that students can choose from depending on age and learning style. All credential options have set standards for entry and exit.

1. **General Educational Development Certificate (GED)**: GED is a series of five tests – reading, writing, math, social studies, and science – that tests basic skills and knowledge. VAL offers GED testing three times/month. Minimum age is 16

2. **Vermont Adult Diploma Program (VADP):** In cooperation with the Vermont State Department of Education, students earn a high school diploma from their local school by completing five projects that demonstrate academic skills and meet educational standards. Minimum age is 18

3. **High School Completion Program (HSCP):** youth 16-22 have the option to work in partnership with their high school of residence and Vermont Adult Learning to write a graduation plan that will lead to a diploma using community resources as learning tools. Only students 16 to their 22nd birthday are eligible.

4. **Work Keys (WK):** Work Keys is a national work readiness certificate comprised of three computer-based tests– reading for information, applied math, and locating information. There is companion software, Key Train, that can assist in preparing for the examination.

Partnerships and Employer-based Programs

VAL is a member of Creative Workforce Solutions through its lengthy partnership with Reach-Up. We provide job coaching and community service placement development as well as short-term workshops on work readiness and communication for referred RU participants.

We have the capacity to design customized classes to meet the educational and training needs of local businesses (literacy, certificate programs, assessment, and work readiness skills can be addressed). Current partners include the University of Vermont Custodial Services Department and Fletcher Allen Health Care Environmental Services Department.

VAL also partners with other not-for-profit organizations to provide an education component for their existing services. Association of Africans Living in Vermont, King Street Center, the VNA Family Room, Youth Build, the Sara Holbrook Center, St. Michael's College, Essex Technical Center, Community College of Vermont, and the Milton Family Center are the current partnerships that provide either in-kind or financial support.

CHALLENGES

In addition to the challenges previously stated, our community also faced the following challenges:

Data Collection and Use - The way our community and others around the country currently collect data does not tell the story of disparities in areas such education and health. Disaggregating current data, as well as collecting good future data, will spotlight the inequities overshadowed by general trends

Geography – Chittenden County's geography, development patterns and transportation infrastructure combine to create obstacles, particularly for low-income students and their families. These include challenges include participating in after-school academic and sports activities.

Community Supports – Despite a variety of community organizations dedicated to providing critical support to families in Chittenden County, there remains much to be done to help close the achievement gap.

EXCERPTED FROM: "THE HEALTH DISPARITIES OF VERMONTERS" – VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, JUNE 2010

(http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/healthdisparities/education.pdf)

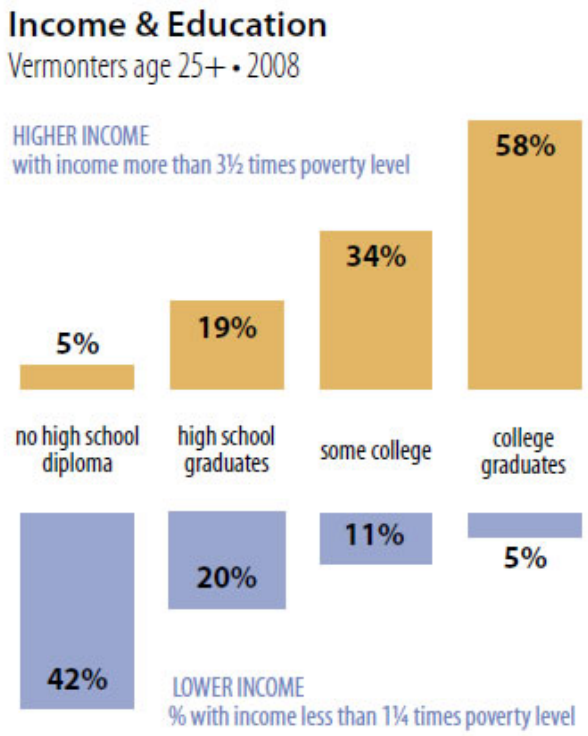
Education and occupation combine with income to provide a thorough measure of socioeconomic status – and a person's socioeconomic status is one of the strongest predictors of his or her health.

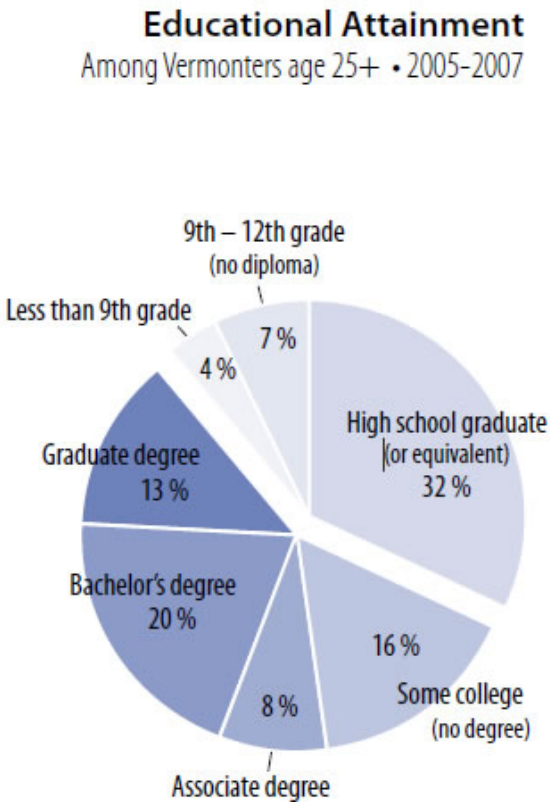
Research suggests that people who complete higher levels of schooling have greater cognitive and social survival skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, structure, routine, and dependability. And gainful employment can have a beneficial effect on health, both directly and indirectly–as a way to access benefits that promote health, earn the income to pay for basic necessities and often, to give a sense of purpose and wellbeing.

Although income, education and occupation each play a unique role in a person's overall health, all three measures are closely linked:

- While 42% of Vermonters who have less than a high school education earn an income below the federal poverty level, only 5% of those who have a college degree earn so little.

- 5% of Vermonters who had less than a high school diploma were unemployed, as compared to 2% of those who had a college degree or more.





How educated are Vermonters? Vermonters are slightly more educated than people in the rest of the country:

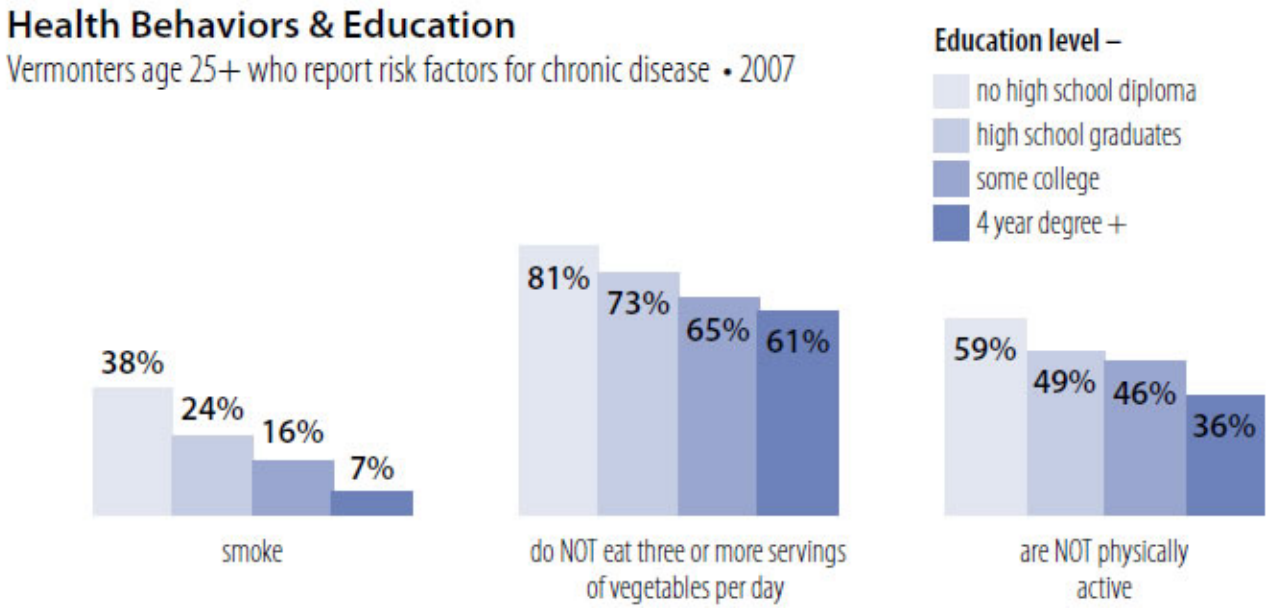
- While 42% of Vermonters who have less than a high school education earn an income below the federal poverty level, only 5% of those who have a college degree earn so little.
- Nearly 90% of Vermont adults have a high school education or more, compared to 84% for the U.S.2
- 33% hold a bachelor's degree or more, compared to 27% for the U.S.2
- Educational attainment varies across the state. Chittenden and Washington counties have higher levels of educational attainment, while Vermont's northern counties have lower levels.

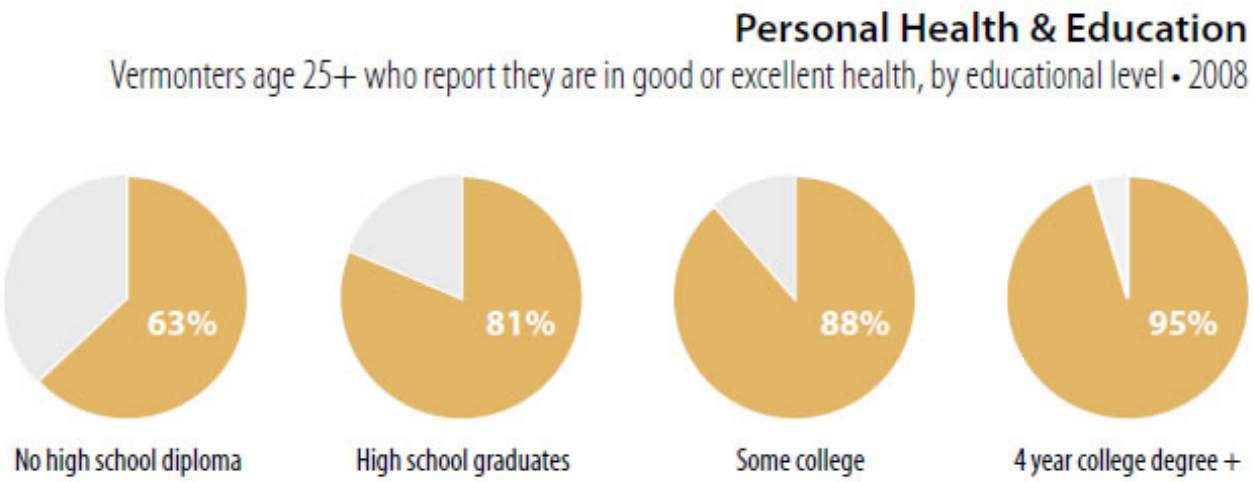
Higher Education = Better Health

Vermonters with less than a high school education are more likely to have diabetes, heart disease, asthma, obesity or depression, compared to those who have a college degree.

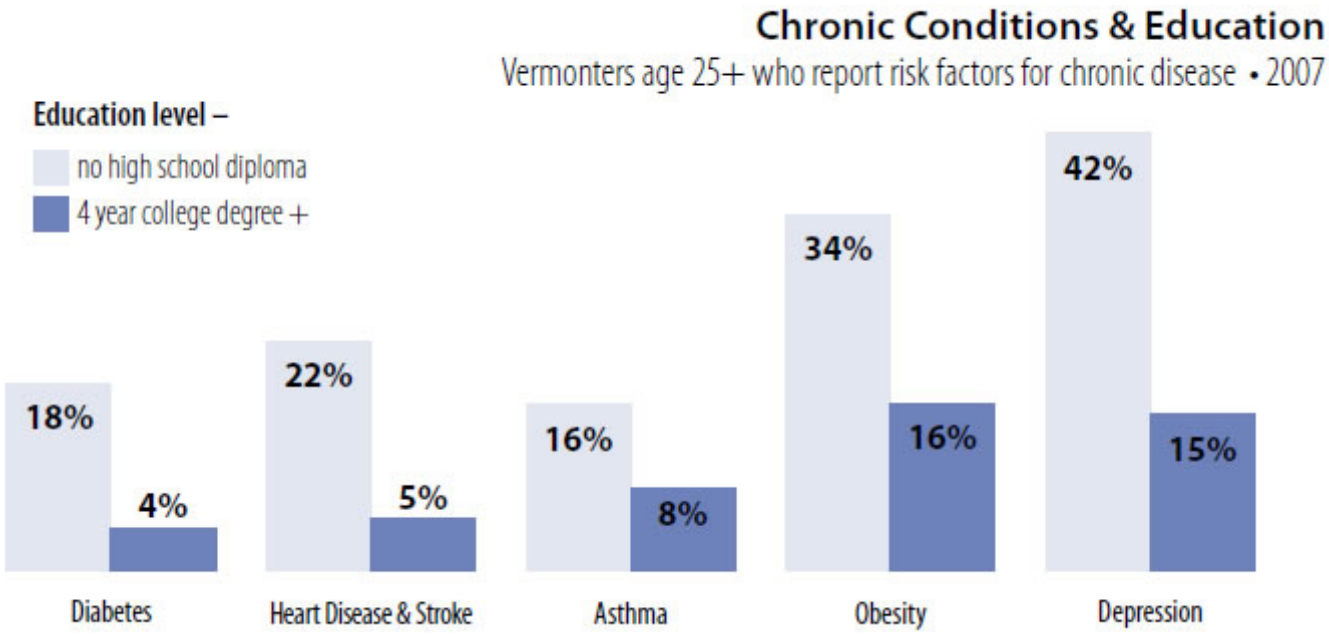
- While 42% of Vermonters who have less than a high school education earn an income below the federal poverty level, only 5% of those who have a college degree earn so little.
- Two-thirds of people with less than a high school education report having one or more chronic conditions, compared to one-third of those who have a college degree or more.
- A person's perception of his or her own health is more positive among those who are more educated.

The well-known risk factors for chronic health conditions–smoking, inactivity, poor nutrition–are less common among those with more education.

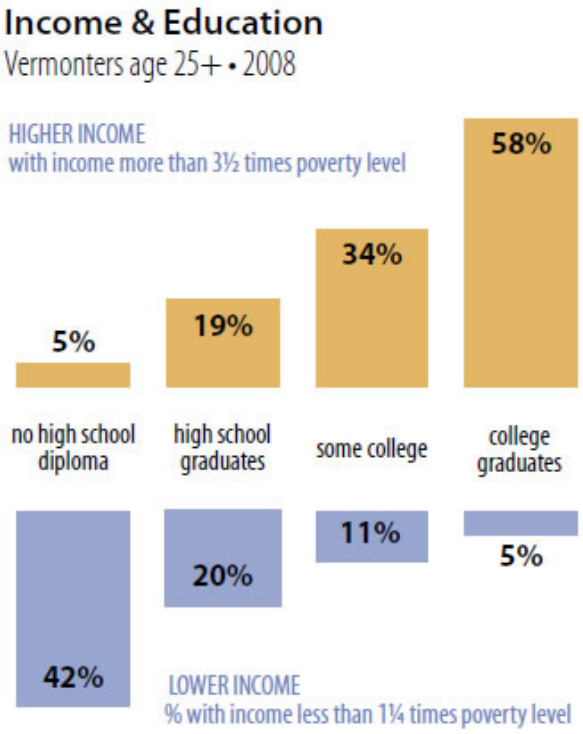


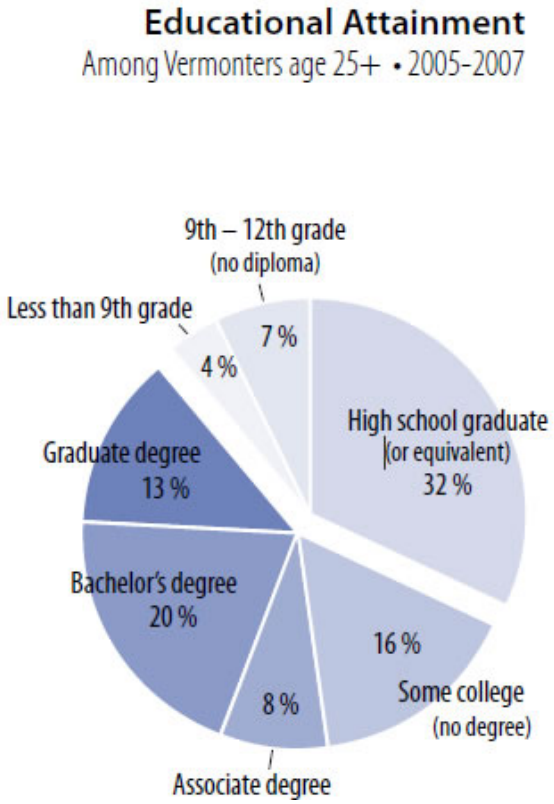


In Vermont, alcohol and drug use do not appear to vary according to educational attainment. However, studies have shown that even when these risk factors are present, people with a higher socioeconomic status are less likely to suffer from chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and stroke. This is possibly because they do not have to struggle to meet the basic needs of daily life.



More data about the connection between education and health can be found in the source





document at http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/healthdisparities/education.pdf.

EXCERPTED FROM: "THE CHALLENGE IS THE OPPORTUNITY - EDUCATION RESEARCH OVERVIEW" UNITED WAY OF AMERICA

(http://www.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=x3oDKjTI8G8%3D&tabid=4701&mid=11285)

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? THE CASE FOR ACTION - SCHOOL READINESS

Quality early learning experiences for all children are critical to a community's economic success, a key driver of school readiness – and vital to improving high school graduation rates. Studies show that children entering kindergarten with the cognitive, social and emotional skills necessary for success are more likely to graduate high school.

That's because a child's early years, from birth until school age, are a unique period of growth and development: learning to walk and talk, beginning to think independently, understanding how to communicate and learning to control thoughts and emotions. All of those are critical early learning skills that build a foundation for successful future learning.

Achievement Gap Starts Before School

Many children enter school lacking the fundamental skills necessary to succeed. In particular, children of color and those from low-income families are more likely to enter school with fewer language skills, literacy, social and other skills needed to ensure school success, compared with more advantaged children. Unfortunately, the arc of failure starts early. A child who starts behind falls even farther behind, long before school.

Disparities in child outcomes are evident by nine months. That achievement gap widens in school. For every 50 children who don't learn to read in kindergarten, 44 of them will still have trouble in third grade. These disparities exist across cognitive, social, behavioral and health spectrums. Children without reading skills by third grade are unlikely to graduate. Low grades and high absenteeism rates by third grade are predictors of high school dropouts.

Early Learning Opportunities

One factor that undercuts a child's positive development (and contributes to disparate outcomes) is a lack of quality early learning experiences. The need for quality care and education is a common one across America. In 2007, 60% of mothers with children under three held a job, while 78% of mothers with children age six through 17 worked.

About half of the nation's youngest children are cared for by family, friends and neighbors in informal care settings. The fact that a child isn't in regulated care doesn't mean the care is

lacking, but too often these caregivers – especially grandparents – are isolated from formal and informal supports. Family, friend and neighbor caregivers often lack information about what children need to be ready for school.

For many families, especially those with low incomes, the demand for affordable early care that promotes healthy development and early learning far exceeds the supply.

In general, quality early learning experiences support long-term child development and are linked to higher vocabulary scores, math and language abilities and success in school. Negative impacts of low-quality care are more likely felt among children who are at increased risk. Yet, the children who need help often aren't getting it. Head Start and Early Head Start, federally funded comprehensive programs for families living at or below the federal poverty line, provide quality learning opportunities for pregnant women and children birth to age five. But currently, Head Start serves only 50% of eligible children and Early Head Start serves 3% of eligible families.

Unfortunately, cost remains a major obstacle to good, affordable child care. While families below the poverty level are eligible for publicly funded child care assistance in all 50 states, eligibility does not mean access – especially in today's economy. In 2009, 19 states had waiting lists for subsidized child care. Many working families earn too much for subsidies but too little for good child care. A two-parent family with just one child earning $36,620 could pay almost 25% of that income for full-time care of one infant in a child care center, and almost 20% for a preschooler. This often leaves too little to cover basic living expenses.

Families

Parents are a child's first teacher, but they often underestimate their contribution to their children's school readiness. Families and others who care for young children understand that the early years are important. Yet many don't know exactly what to do to encourage early learning, or feel they don't have time to do what it takes to prepare their child for school.

In parent focus groups conducted by United Way for the Born Learning parent engagement campaign (www.BornLearning.org), parents from all economic walks of life were surprised to learn that talking with kids everyday can mean the difference between a child having a vocabulary of 3,000 or 15,000 words by kindergarten.

Language and Literacy

Wherever children are in the early years, their experiences contribute significantly to the language and literacy skills that drive success at school.21 Children are building language skills even before they can speak. Parents with access to child development information may know that speaking with children in full sentences, using advanced words, telling stories and singing songs can help children build pre-literacy skills, but that's a rarity in low-wage families.

For example, children from low-income families do not develop (on average) the same vocabulary as their peers in middle-income families. One study showed that by age three, children from middle income families know about 1,100 words, while children in low-income families know about 525 words or less.

Children who enter school with poor language and communication skills often have a hard time catching up. Furthermore, children who enter school with untreated health conditions or social and emotional developmental concerns struggle to acquire language, communication and cognitive skills in classroom settings.

Research shows that early grade reading mastery is one of the best predictors of children's success in school. Early language and literacy development plays a key role in supporting learning experiences that are linked with academic achievement, reduced grade retention, higher graduation rates and enhanced productivity in adult life.

Return on Investment

As global competition demands for high workforce skills increases, the U.S. economy is producing fewer educated workers. "This is a major drag on our competitiveness," says Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman. That's why many of America's top economic thinkers are calling for stronger support for early learning, saying that a strong Return on Investment (ROI) in early learning is especially strong for young, at-risk children. Heckman says investing in early education pays off, especially for young, poor children. The ROI includes higher graduation rates, better job skills, increased homeownership and less chance of criminal activities. According to Heckman, "evidence from economics, sociology, and public policy suggests that… early interventions that partially remedy the effects of adverse early environments can reverse some of the damage done… and have a high economic return relative to other policies. Data shows that early childhood interventions are more effective than interventions that come later in life." Policymakers should invest in young children, because the ROI is stronger than in low-skill adults, Heckman says.

"Investment in human capital breeds not only economic success for those being educated, but also for the overall economy," says Arthur J. Rolnick, Senior Vice President and Director of

Research of the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis. “Early childhood development programs are rarely portrayed as economic development initiatives and... that is a mistake.”

Viewed through any lens – economics, education, brain development or family support – it is clear that providing all children with a strong foundation of good early learning experiences in the first five years can be part of a strategy to build a stronger community and country.

EARLY GRADE READING PROFICIENCY

Reading is a critical predictor of high school success— or failure. That’s because children are learning to read until fourth grade; after that, they’re reading to learn.

Students who don’t read on grade level by the time they are in fourth grade typically don’t catch up. In later grades, coursework gets harder, reading becomes more challenging, and those with reading troubles have difficulty coping. This can lead to bad grades, bad behavior, “checking out” from school – and eventually dropping out.

For children to become strong readers, they need a literacy-rich environment. Ideally, their parents and caregivers surround them at an early age with books; use the local library regularly; and read with them daily. Starting in kindergarten, children learn the skills they need to sound out new words and find meaning in written text. By third grade, they may be reading chapter books to their parents, and are hopefully developing a love of reading that promotes future learning. By fourth grade, their strong reading skills are supporting increasingly harder academic work. Reading skills build a strong foundation for academic success and high school graduation. These successful readers will better understand the world around them, and will be able to use those skills to succeed in a demanding workplace and to be a fully engaged citizen. But today:

Research shows that early grade reading mastery is one of the best predictors of children’s success in school, work and life. Early language and literacy development plays a key role in supporting learning experiences that are linked with academic achievement, reduced grade retention, higher graduation rates.

MIDDLE GRADE SUCCESS

The middle grades play a critical role in young people’s lives. These years that connect elementary school and high school are a key transition time for young people, and the time when students build the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for high school success.

A successful transition into ninth grade, a year when many students are held back or drop out, is especially important to high school success.1 While declines in academic achievement are

typical during this transition, students with the greatest amount of decline are the most likely to drop out.

The middle grade years are also a crucial time for social and emotional development. Students at this age are especially susceptible to risk factors that can heighten the chance of dropping out. Many middle grade students experience negative attitudes towards school, social alienation and disengagement.4 Healthy academic and social engagement can make a difference by improving attitudes toward school.

Steady Academic Declines

Academic performance often declines in the middle grades. By eighth grade, gains in student achievement made during elementary school are often diminished.5 For example, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) —the nation's "report card"— for the 2008-2009 school year show that a lower proportion of eighth graders in the U.S. (33%) scored at the proficient level on state math assessments than fourth graders (38%) did.6 Furthermore, NAEP scores for fourth graders in math, reading and science have improved to a greater extent than scores for eighth graders have over the last 35 years.7 And, American 13- and 15-year-olds are more likely to be educationally disadvantaged compared with their peers in other developed nations.

Significant Adolescent Development

New research on brain development shows that adolescence is a very active period of growth and change. According to experts at the National Institute of Mental Health, "If a teen is doing music, sports or academics, those are the connections that will be hard wired. If they're lying on the couch playing video games or watching MTV, those are the connections that are going to survive."8 This research suggests that the middle grade

Declining Parental Involvement

At the same time, parental involvement declines significantly in these years. The percentage of parents who attend a general school or PTO/PTA meeting drops from 91% in elementary school students to 76% in middle school. This decrease is rooted in changes in both school structure and adolescent development.10 Middle schools are typically more complex than elementary schools, with more teachers who spend less time with each student. Meanwhile, developmental changes lead to adolescents' increased desire for independence and autonomy and increased decision-making abilities. Yet middle grade students benefit greatly from developmentally appropriate parental involvement—that is, when parents communicate the value of education and help connect the choices adolescents make to their long-term goals, while at the same time giving them room to develop their independence.

The Critical Juncture

If students do not experience success in middle grades, they are much less likely to experience success later on. Middle school students who are held back are seven times more likely to drop out, and 80% of students who repeat a class more than once are likely to drop out as well. In fact, the highest proportion of students drops out of school between ninth and tenth grade—just one year after middle school. In some states, dropout rates between these grades can be as high as 20%. Racial disparities also exist—while 7% of white students drop out between ninth and tenth grade, 17% of Hispanic students and 20% of African American students do so.

Yet middle grades are also the time when fewer after-school opportunities are offered in many communities, and more students are home alone after school. Educators call the hours between three and six in the afternoon the "danger zone" for young adolescents, because that's when they can get into trouble—crime, teen pregnancy and substance abuse—without supervision or other healthy activities.

It's time for a brighter spotlight on the crucial middle years. It is essential that students have the necessary social and emotional supports, and access to rigorous and engaging academic work that promotes subject mastery while providing opportunities for exploration. Middle grade students need to see the connection between work and school, and need opportunities for engaging activities outside of school. Both inside the classroom and out, they need experiences to provide them the knowledge, skills and resources needed to succeed in high school, college, work and life.

EXCERPTED FROM: "THE CHALLENGE IS THE OPPORTUNITY - EDUCATION RESEARCH OVERVIEW" UNITED WAY OF AMERICA

(http://www.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=x3oDKjTI8G8%3D&tabid=4701&mid=11285)

RECOMMENDATIONS – LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE: FROM CRADLE TO CAREER

— These are the kinds of things communities must do to improve education:

1. **Engage students in learning while in school.** If students are not engaged in school their attendance suffers. When children "check out" from school, they are in the fast

lane to dropping out. For example, in Philadelphia, among sixth graders who missed at least a day of school per week on average, more than 80% failed to graduate high school. Disengagement starts early, often connected to undiagnosed disabilities, developmental delays or a lacking of critical school readiness skills in the first few years. Some students disengage because they are bored or because they don't feel known and understood by anyone at school.

Experts say engaging our children – meeting them where they are, having high expectations and challenging them – is critical. Throughout their school careers, connecting them with as many supportive adults as possible can nurture their strengths and make sure help is directed where it is needed most. Gathering and analyzing early warning data can identify which students are checking out at which points, which can help family-school-community partnerships create the right interventions at the right points.

2. **Support families to improve academic achievement.** Research shows that when families are actively involved in their child's learning, it improves that child's attendance, behavior, social skills, grades and chances of staying in school. This is true for young children as well as for middle and high school students.

   Although many disadvantaged parents express high aspirations for their children's educational success, this does not always translate into high levels of engagement with schools. The barriers they face – socioeconomic status, language, transportation, knowledge of available resources, access to services or simply knowledge about how to help their children move along the education continuum – suggest that schools must develop new approaches to family engagement.

   Community-centered strategies for parent involvement, respecting community culture and parents' abilities to contribute to their children's education, are sorely needed. Facilitating stronger family-school-community partnerships can make a difference. We also need a holistic definition of family involvement that goes beyond engagement in schools and values contributions beyond school-based involvement. Studies cite higher levels of engagement of low-income/minority parents in supporting academic success at home rather than simply "face time" in schools.

3. **Connect students with the resources they need outside of school.** Only about 20% of a student's waking hours are spent in school, so out-of-school-time learning is a key part of the success equation. Children learn in every aspect of their life – from the minute they're born – so a community web of social, cultural, educational and economic resources should be in place (and sustained) to encourage learning.

This means that before- and after-school programs, weekend activities, summer camps, cultural institutions (like libraries and museums) and informal child care settings must be considered part of the learning environment. This also includes community "wrap around" supports for kids who need more, and early warning systems that help identify kids who may be headed off track – and trigger effective interventions – before it's too late.

Supports such as community- or school-based mentoring, tutoring and family-focused services offered in schools have been shown to improve outcomes for children and youth. Viewed in this way, United Way's call to action – Give, Advocate and Volunteer – is a call for strengthening community resources that support success for children and youth of all ages, in and out of school.

4. **Build stronger systems to support children and youth.** Fragmented community systems – such as schools, health care, human service and juvenile justice systems – deal with children and families from one particular perspective. Too often, those efforts are not connected. For example, housing and health systems correlate factors to school performance, yet the data they collect isn't used to coordinate services that could support student success. And while chronic absences, behavior and grades can signal problems as early as third grade, few schools are gathering, sharing or acting on the data in a coordinated way as a prevention strategy.

   Research shows that when leaders of schools, health care, family support, youth development, child welfare, justice and other systems find ways to work together to support student success, children and youth benefit from higher quality, more coordinated services. Developing mechanisms that identify obstacles to coordination and delivery of needed services and referring them for system-level action can promote sustainable educational supports for students and their families.

EXCERPTED FROM: "CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP, REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT JACK O'CONNELL'S CALIFORNIA P-15 COUNCIL" JANUARY 2008

Create a Robust Information System - Design, develop, and implement a rich, robust, high-quality information collection system that meets the needs of educators, school systems, and state-level policymakers in their efforts to create a culture of data examination at the state, regional, and local levels.

At the heart of closing the achievement gap lies the need for complete, robust, high-quality data to support efforts to make informed decisions. A robust data collection system is coherent, useful, accessible, structured, and timely. This type of system is vital so that educators can determine the services, programs, and interventions students need to improve their academic achievement. Policymakers and researchers will also rely heavily on this system. Policymakers will use these data to make regulatory and legislative decisions, and researchers and academics will use it to study the longitudinal effects of decisions made by all stakeholders.

The National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) proposes that a robust data system contain ten essential elements. California has seven of those elements. Elements 5, 6, and 9 have not yet been implemented. Only the following four states have data systems that include all ten elements: Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, and Utah. The ten essential elements identified by NCEA are:

- A unique statewide student identifier that connects student data across key databases across the years;
- Student-level enrollment and information on demographic and program participation;
- The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth [longitudinal data tracking];
- Information on untested students and the reasons they were not tested;
- A teacher identification system that matches teachers to students;
- Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned;
- Student-level college readiness test scores;
- Student-level graduation and dropout data;
- The ability to match student records between the P–12 and postsecondary systems;
- A state audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.

The Council of Chief State School Officers has identified the following as pertinent issues that need to be addressed to develop this culture of data:

- The ability to match student records between the P–12 and postsecondary systems;
- A state audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability;

- Developing a new level of collaboration and synergy among all levels of data users to make data agile, portable, responsive, and sharable for all users;
- Transforming not only technological infrastructures but also the way in which educational organizations operate, use, and distribute data;
- Creating a cultural shift to embrace the notion that good data provide information needed to improve student outcomes;
- Understanding that lack of use of data leads to underutilization of critical resources.

Provide Professional Development on use of the Data - Design, develop, and implement coherent professional development in the areas of data collection, analysis, and interpretation for all educational leaders that address the needs of students subject to the achievement gap.

Although the state and some districts often gather more data than they need, they often fail to use all or even some of the data to their fullest potential. Knowing how to use the data is the key to knowledge-based decision making. Developing the robust data collection system discussed in recommendation will not guarantee any measure of success unless all educators and CDE management, synthesis, and use of data to guide decision making in classrooms, schools, and districts. Researchers have concluded that:

The state needs to make significant investments in human capital and capacity building at all levels of the educational system. Personnel policies must ensure that California educators have the time, knowledge, and skill they need to improve the performance of their schools and students.

Data analysis training needs to be implemented at the state and the local levels through a prioritization system. This training should focus specifically on trends associated with content standards, adopted materials, standardized assessments, funding effectiveness, state laws and regulations, and CDE policies.

At the local level the CDE should assist schools, districts, and county offices of education with data analysis by developing specific training modules. The CDE, in collaboration with higher education, the research community, and representative groups and organizations should also develop a comprehensive training model, complete with themes, strands, and syllabi for local implementation. This training model should engage the entire local school system in understanding, collecting, and consistently using data to support programmatic decisions and systemic change throughout the organization. After this model has been created, the CDE should distribute it to school systems and county offices of education, allowing them to create their own training programs. All local training programs will be subject to approval from the

State Board of Education. Instead of creating their own programs, school systems may contract with other local educational agencies to obtain this training.

PROMISING INITIATIVES

EXCERPTED FROM: "BURLINGTON AND WINOOSKI: PARTNERING FOR CHANGE - CREATING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER ONE STUDENT AT A TIME"

http://www.winooski.k12.vt.us/2076101289469850/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=56907

Nellie Mae-District Level Systems Change Grant

DWELLING IN POSSIBILITY

Vision: Each young person in Burlington and Winooski, Vermont will graduate from high school with the confidence, enthusiasm, skills and knowledge they need to build a satisfying and sustainable future for themselves, their community and their world.

Mission: We will transform Burlington and Winooski School Districts by establishing a student-centered learning system that enables each learner to develop the skills, knowledge and relationships necessary to become confident, motivated, and self-sufficient learners who are successful in college and careers and engaged in their communities. We will draw upon the collective wisdom, courage, and compassion of learners, teachers, families and community partners in supporting every learner to pursue excellence.

BACKGROUND

Burlington & Winooski High Schools are embarking on a process to re-design learning so ALL students will thrive. With support from a planning grant from the Nellie Mae Foundation, Voices for Vermont's Children, Vermont Adult Learning, the Tarrant Institute and Linking Learning to Life are working closely with the school districts to develop a preliminary plan to create a high school model that is better equipped to increase students' skills and knowledge so that all our young people have what it takes to succeed in today's world. Preliminary planning runs through October, when we will apply for a multi-year Nellie Mae systems change grant for the next phase of planning and implementation. With or without foundation resources, the schools have committed to doing this work. Burlington and Winooski High School have embarked on this journey because:

- The world is rapidly changing and the educational system has not been able to keep pace.

- Preparing ALL students for their future requires different approaches than used in the past.
- Not all students are succeeding in our current educational system.
- Each student has unique strengths, interests, talents, and needs.

The educational system was not designed to be flexible and customized to empower ALL learners to reach their potential and meet their future.

We know that schools can't do this work alone. For Burlington & Winooski to empower all students to thrive, the wisdom, compassion and courage of students, teachers, families and community members is required. The schools are in the process of creating ways to increase student leadership and family partnership. Our project team has begun to build a larger stakeholder group, to host small dialogues, and to conceptualize broader community conversations.

CHITTENDEN COUNTY TRUANCY PROJECT

In the late 1990's, nearly 100 students each year were dropping out of high school in Burlington, almost 10% of the students grades 9-12. In 2002, the graduation rate (students who enter in 9th grade and graduate four years later) was just 71%. In addition, research revealed that 25% of students in two Burlington elementary schools and 19% of students in two middle schools were missing more than ten days of school per year. Many of the students who dropped out, or who were habitually truant, ended up on the streets or in the Corrections System.

In 2006, a county-wide attendance policy was adopted by all school districts in Chittenden County, as well as three other contiguous counties. In addition, the Burlington School District annual drop-out rate has fallen from 9.5% in 1998-99 to 3.0% in the '09-'10 school year. In 1999, the estimated graduation rate (4 year cohort) was just 67%. In the '08-'09 school year, that graduation rate increased to 85.5% and matches the statewide rate. Annually, approximately 60 more students are graduating today than did in 1999! Overall absences in Burlington School District have decreased by 25% since 2000.

APPENDIX A – COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Source: http://vtshares.vermont.gov/chittenden

United Way of Chittenden County

Bringing together people from across our community to find solutions through strategic partnerships and investment in a network of high-performing programs to achieve lasting results.

Website: www.unitedwaycc.org

Telephone: 802-864-7541

Email: info@unitedwaycc.org

Lund Family Center

Only in-patient facility that treats young mothers and their children under one roof in Vermont; comprehensively support at-risk families; building families through adoption.

Website: www.lundfamilycenter.org

Telephone: 802-864-7467

Email: barbarar@lundfamilycenter.org

04-210 - Maple Leaf Farm Associates, Inc.

Maple Leaf Farm in Underhill provides comprehensive substance abuse services including medically supervised detoxification and residential treatment for adults age 18 and older.

Website: www.mapleleaf.org

Telephone: 802-899-2911

Email: info@mapleleaf.org

04-219 - Dismas of Vermont, Inc. (Burlington Dismas House)

Offers transitional housing for men and women being released from prison into the Burlington community, providing food, shelter and structured support.

Website: www.dismasofvermont.org

Telephone: 802-658-0381

Email: janet@dismasofvermont.org

04-230 - ReSOURCE: A Nonprofit Community Enterprise

Serves as environmental stewards by reducing the amount of materials going to landfills; provides educational training; and helps alleviate poverty through economic opportunities.

Website: www.resourcevt.org

Telephone: 802-658-4143

Email: info@resourcevt.org

04-235 - Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Inc. (CVOEO)

Provides a wide variety of vital services to approximately eight thousand households every year from 18 locations scattered around the Champlain Valley region.

Website: www.cvoeo.org

Telephone: 802-863-6248 ext 736

Email: mtreanor@cvoeo.org

04-259 - Spectrum Youth & Family Services, Inc.

Works to meet the immediate, basic needs of homeless youth and then helps them get started on a path to independent and productive lives.

Website: www.spectrumvt.org

Telephone: 802-864-7423

Email: mredmond@spectrumvt.org

04-262 - Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAVT)

Offers fourteen free statewide prevention programs, including family support programs and child sexual abuse prevention programs.

Website: www.pcavt.org

Telephone: 802-229-5724

Email: pcavt@pcavt.org

04-263 - Vermont Bar Foundation (VBF)

Supports access to justice by obtaining and distributing funds to programs providing legal services to the disadvantaged or educate the public about courts and legal matters.

Website: www.vtbarfoundation.org

Telephone: 802-223-1400

Email: dbailey@vtbarfoundation.org

04-302 - Greater Burlington Young Men's Christian Association (Greater Burlington YMCA)

A charitable organization, provides programs and services focusing on Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. We strengthen our community, families and children.

Website: www.gbymca.org

Telephone: 802-862-8993 x121

Email: Kaldous@gbymca.org

04-309 - Sara Holbrook Community Center (SHCC)

Works to develop responsible and productive children, youth and families through educational, recreational and support programs: preschool, after-school, teens, English instruction, summer camps, mentoring, and emergency assistance.

Website: www.saraholbrookcc.org

Telephone: 802-862-0080

Email: LPollander@saraholbrookcc.org

04-311 - Howard Center, Inc.

A non-profit organization that improves the well-being of children, adults, families, and communities by providing mental health, substance abuse, developmental, and child and family services.

Website: www.howardcenter.org

Telephone: 802-488-6000

Email: hc@howardcenter.org

04-340 - Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS)

Provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, case management services, homelessness prevention grants, and counseling to individuals and families in Chittenden County.

Website: www.cotsonline.org

Telephone: 802-540-3084

Email: Stephaniem@cotsonline.org

04-390 - Community Health Center of Burlington

Provides affordable access to health and dental care for all community residents regardless of ability to pay or life circumstance.

Website: www.chcb.org

Telephone: 802-264-8190

Email: acalderara@chcb.org

04-393 - Starbase Vermont

Exciting hands-on learning that inspires student interest, knowledge and skills in science, math, technology, engineering, teambuilding, and personal development.

Website: www.starbasevt.org

Telephone: 802-660-5201

Email: douglas.gilman@ang.af.mil

04-394 - KidSafe Collaborative, Inc.

Engages agencies, individuals and organizations to work together to improve our community's response to child maltreatment.

Website: www.kidsafevt.org

Telephone: 802-863-9626

Email: kidsafe@idsafevt.org

04-411 - Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE)

Provides comprehensive family planning and health care services. Our mission also includes sexuality education, professional training services and public affairs advocacy.

Website: www.ppnne.org

Telephone: 800-287-8188

Email: supportus@ppnne.org

04-415 - Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Vermont

Grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.

Website: www.vermont.wish.org

Telephone: 802-864-9393

Email: makeawish@vermont.wish.org

04-421 - Milton Family Community Center (MFCC)

Comprehensive, multi-social services agency providing services throughout Chittenden County for families and individuals birth to adult.

Website: www.miltonfamilycenter.org

Telephone: 802-893-1457

Email: bchornyak@miltonfamilycenter.org

04-422 - Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council (VCCICC)

Provides professional development opportunities for child care professionals, including Registered Apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training (incumbent workers) and Certificates of Proficiency at the high school level.

Website: www.vtchildcareindustry.org

Telephone: 802-985-2700

Email: vccicc@comcast.net

04-425 - Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties (VNA)

The VNA cares for individuals and families through health and related services in homes and other community settings.

Website: www.vnacares.org

Telephone: 802-658-1900

Email: info@vnacares.org

04-426 - The DREAM Program, Inc. (Directing through Recreation Education Adventure and Mentoring)

Is a Village Mentoring program that partners college student mentors with children from low-income housing communities in long-term, supported relationships.

Website: www.dreamprogram.org

Telephone: 802-338-8979

Email: mloner@dreamprogram.org

04-429 - Women Helping Battered Women(WHBW)

Supports, identifies options and advocates for victims of domestic violence with 24 /7 hotline, Emergency Shelter, Economic Justice, Children's Services, Legal Advocacy and Education.

Website: www.whbw.org

Telephone: 802-658-313

Email: tarap@whbw.org

04-430 - Vermont Works for Women (VWW)

Celebrating 25 years of helping women and girls recognize their potential and explore, pursue and excel in work that leads to their economic independence.

Website: www.vtworksforwomen.org

Telephone: 802-655-8900

Email: tbluemle@vtworksforwomen.org

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