

LT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN NEWSLETTER

MARCH 28, 2018

Vermont has a long tradition of valuing and supporting our diverse education system. This includes both public and independent schools.

Funding is a perpetual political issue *even though* the public votes overwhelmingly to support local schools and budgets. Vermonters wisely look for efficiency and effectiveness for their hard earned dollars and while it is important to focus on education spending we also need to look at the bigger picture. What do we get for what we spend? Who pays how much? According to the Vermont Agency of Education, Vermont students rank extremely well when compared to students from states with similar demographics. Others spend less, but they get less too.

We should always strive to improve but we are doing well and sometimes that gets lost in the political rhetoric. A friend recently said to me, "Vermont without our good schools would be Kentucky but with more snow."

According to the U.S. Department of Education (NAEP tests), in 2015 Vermont students scored higher than the national averages in math, science and reading assessments. Vermont students also enjoyed consistently high graduation rates."

Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations

I have long supported a seamless integration of our state's education and human services systems as one way to reduce redundancy, improve outcomes and save money. Providing Vermonters with better access to human services, such as family support and healthcare services, in each community through our schools, would be a win-win situation.

What I continually return to is the purpose of our schools. Public education is society's great equalizer and vital to our social and economic development. Nelson Mandela stated it best with his famous quote, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."



(Over)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Every Friday 8:30-10:00AM
'Coffee with Constituents' All are welcome to join the Lt. Governor for coffee or tea in his office at the State House.

March 29 9:00PM
Sleeping out for Spectrum Youth and Family Services Unitarian Church, 152 Pearl Street, Burlington

March 30 11:30
Recognize State House Pages Senate Chamber, Montpelier

April 2 1:30PM
Public Hearing on Green Mountain Secure Retirement Plan, BCA, 135 Church Street, Burlington

April 4 12:00PM
'Lunchtime Town Hall with Lt. Gov. Zuckerman and Guests'
Theme: Paid Family Leave. Live on Facebook VTGov

April 5
7:00 – Live with Charlie, Ernie & Lisa on WVMT 620AM
9:00 – Visit 4th Grade Students at St. Albans Elementary School, 29 Bellows Street, St. Albans

April 6 7:30AM
Meet with South Burlington Rotary
Trader Dukes, South Burlington

For a complete list of events please visit our website:
www.LTGov.vermont.gov

RUTGERS REPORT ON VERMONT EDUCATION

Every Wednesday at noon I host a Town Hall 'live' on Facebook. Recently we focused on a report by the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations called "*Women's Work? Voices of Vermont Educators.*" Here are a few keys statistics from the report:

- Over three quarters of Vermont's educators are women, including 75% of teachers and 87% of paraeducators.
- In Vermont, teachers are paid only 87% of the typical salary of other professionals with the same level of education.
- Nearly 70% of educators say they know a family in their school that has been affected by opioid addiction in the past year.

Watch this and all previous Town Hall meetings by visiting my Facebook Page @VTLtGov and clicking on Videos.

"TURN PRISONS INTO COLLEGES" OP-ED

Elizabeth Hinton, a professor at Harvard, wrote an insightful NY Times op-ed about the need to change the way our prison system approaches education for inmates. Below is an excerpt of the piece. "Imagine if prisons looked like the grounds of universities. Instead of languishing in cells, incarcerated people sat in classrooms and learned about climate science or poetry – just like college students. Or even with them. This would be a boon to prisoners across the country, a vast majority of whom do not have a high school diploma. And it could help shrink our prison population. While racial disparities in arrests and convictions are alarming, education level is a far stronger predictor of future incarceration than race."

In Vermont we have the Community High School of Vermont (CHSVT), which operates in our state prisons. On April 17th, I will visit the Newport Correctional Facility's CHSVT and participate in a class discussion around criminal justice reform. Students from Sterling College will also attend. Studies show a decrease in recidivism by prisoners who receive education during their incarceration.

GOV. SCOTT'S PROPOSED STUDENT-TO-STAFF RATIO

Governor Scott has introduced a proposal to mandate an increased student-to-staff ratio for all Vermont schools. He claims that by increasing the number of students per staff he will reduce the education fund gap we are facing in this year's budget. The Governor's recent call for more "one size fits all" cuts at the state level is misdirected. What he has failed to mention is that this proposal will lead to deep cuts in programs for students and a massive layoff of thousands of middle class Vermonters. The responsibility for further savings lies not in short term political maneuvers, but responsible leadership. Through improving coordination between the Agency of Education and the Agency of Human Services, the Governor can lead us on a path towards far greater savings and far better outcomes for our youth. The Governor could also fulfill his commitment to make Vermont more affordable to working class Vermonters by supporting S.58, a bill that would create no new taxes but would require all Vermonters to pay their fair share based on income. This would reduce taxes on working class Vermonters.

Vermont Lt. Governor David Zuckerman

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