

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
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Today in Vermont, we have winners and losers among our student population and, to a very large extent, it depends on where they live and where they go to school.

- Some school districts work really well for some kids in some towns, but,
- Not so for the others, and
- For some we have no data, so we don't know how kids are doing.

What this means today in our society and economy, is that we have two types of Vermonters:

- Those that are well-educated and prepared to engage their future; and,
- Those that are under-educated and poorly prepared for their future.

The well-educated student will be ~

- Eligible for enrollment in post-secondary education,
- Employable at higher skill levels,
- Able to earn a livable wage to support a family, and to rent or own a home,
- Pay taxes to support government services,
- Volunteer, vote, and be mobile.

In other words, she will be an asset for the state of Vermont.

The under-educated student will be ~

- Challenged to aspire to post-secondary education or training;
- Relegated to low-skill/low-wage jobs;
- Have difficulty affording adequate housing;
- Unable to afford quality child care, and likely require public assistance of some kind;
- May become dissatisfied with their quality of life ~ and not volunteer, not vote, and not engage in civil society.

In other words, he will be a liability for the state of Vermont.

How we address this issue of education reform today will define our economy and society well into the future.

We must improve equity, efficiency and accountability together, head on, in order to:

- Save money
- Improve school leadership
- Simplify governance
- Get better performance data, and
- Invest in closing student opportunity gaps.

To get there, we need to focus on getting more manageable ~ and better managed ~ PreK-12 school districts governed by a single board.

The Roundtable is asking the Legislature to lead us away from the status quo and into the 21st Century.

The future of all Vermont's children and the prosperity of our economy depends on it.

Thank you.