

May 26, 2017

Dear Principals,

As we close in on the end of the year, Agency of Education is thinking about where our graduating seniors will go next. Will they pursue some type of postsecondary education? Will they enter the workforce? Do they have the skills they need to secure a job that pays a living wage and enables them to thrive in their communities?

Increasingly, we know that to earn a livable wage and contribute to the economic growth of the state, our children need to get some kind of postsecondary experience, whether it leads to an industry-recognized credential in a trade or a college degree.

In the table below, for example, the fastest growth in employment opportunity is associated with the highest median salary and the highest level of education. Moreover, while there are many jobs for students with less education, they do not pay enough to support a family.

| Typical Educational Required for Entry | Net Change in Employment 2014-24 | % change in employment 2014-24 | Median Annual Occupational Wage, 2015 |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Professional Degree | 1,486 | 7.6% | \$66,700 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 4,120 | 5.6% | \$62,770 |
| Associate's Degree | 89 | 0.9% | \$54,530 |
| Post-secondary non-degree award | 1,152 | 4.8% | \$36,140 |
| Some college, no degree | -323 | -2.5% | \$37,900 |
| High school | 4,665 | 3.4% | \$35,050 |
| Less than High School | 5,335 | 5.8% | \$23,940 |
| Total | 16,524 | 4.4% | |

Data prepared by the Economic and Labor Market Information Division, VDOL

At the state level, our employers are telling us that they cannot find enough graduates with high enough levels of skill to fill the jobs they have. As a result, some of these businesses are unable to grow and drive prosperity for our Vermont economy.

This is not just a state phenomenon; nationally, we know that higher levels of education are associated with greater access to jobs, good salaries and creation of wealth. If we want to give



our kids a fair chance at a prosperous future, we must push them to consider career and postsecondary opportunities beyond high school.

This brings me to YOU. What are you doing locally to move your students to promising careers or postsecondary opportunities? Part of making the difference we need to make for our young people is showing them what opportunities they have before them, and why they matter.

Yet supporting aspirations is not enough. We know there is a tremendous amount of “summer melt” in what students *intend* to do in June, compared to what they *actually* do the following September. Please help us move the needle on postsecondary participation.

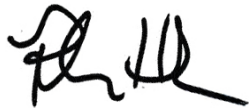
We are excited to announce a new partnership between the Agency of Education and Vermont Technical College (VTC). In an effort to help reach out to students and reduce summer melt, VTC President Patricia Moulton has created a website (vtc.edu/summerstart) where students who are interested in attending VTC or learning more about VTC can enter their contact information. VTC staff will contact them over the summer to ensure that they have what they need to move forward in their plans.

Please encourage any graduating seniors who might be interested in or benefit from enrollment at VTC to visit this website. Students can enter brief contact information and VTC staff will reach out to them over the summer about enrollment.


Feel free to forward the attached letter to your students if you prefer.

Thank you for helping us increase students’ educational opportunities and achieve their postsecondary aspirations!

Sincerely,



Dr. Rebecca Holcombe
Secretary



Dr. Heather Bouchey
Deputy Secretary



Dear Vermont Senior,

What will you be doing in September? We hope that like many graduating seniors, you plan to be pursuing some credential in a trade or some college degree. The Vermont Agency of Education has partnered with Vermont Technical College (VTC) to make it easier for you to pursue options at VTC.

In Vermont, the job sectors that are hiring AND that pay a good wage all require some education beyond high school (whether it is an industry-recognized credential or a college degree). We hope you have set your sight on a credential that lets YOU earn a good wage and thrive here in Vermont.

For many students, VTC is a great option. It has a 100% job placement rate for graduating students, and its graduates have the third highest average salaries of students from all colleges in Vermont, both public and private. Many Vermont students have figured out how to apply dual enrollment and Fast Forward program courses towards a degree at VTC. For students who like hands-on learning and real world experience with industry professionals, VTC may be a great fit.

If you are interested in learning more about options at VTC, please click on this link and provide your contact information:

vtc.edu/summerstart

Someone from VTC will use this information to reach out to you over the summer about your options.

Best of luck with the end of the year.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education

