

SUCCESS IN VERMONT SCHOOLS 2007-08

A snapshot of public education in Vermont from the VSA, VPA and VSBA

High Performing Schools

Education Week's Quality Counts 2008 determined that **Vermont schools performed 4th best in the nation in achievement and achievement gains**. The determination was made using 13 indicators, including NAEP scores, graduation rate, and recent improvement in achievement.

Educator Staffing

69.6% of Vermont public school employees are educators or instructional staff, fourth-highest in the country. Nation-wide, just 62.2% of school employees are educators or instructional staff.

2007 Vermont NAEP Results

2007 NAEP scores ("The Nation's Report Card") show high achievement results for Vermont students. Only Massachusetts has a higher rate of reading proficiency among 4th graders, and **no state has a statistically significant higher rate of reading proficiency among 8th graders than Vermont**. Math scores were similarly strong. Only two states have a higher rate of proficiency among 4th graders, and just one state rates better than Vermont among 8th graders.

Highly Qualified Teachers

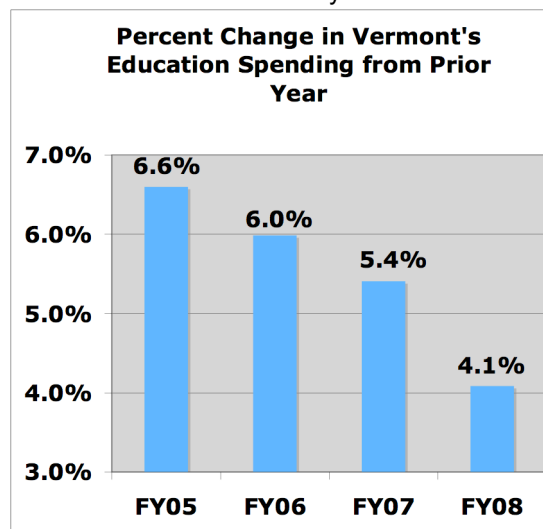
90% of Vermont teachers in core academic classes are "Highly Qualified," a federal designation indicating that an educator is suitably educated, trained and competent. In addition, Vermont is one of five states where **100% of teachers receive High Quality Professional Development annually**.

Music and the Arts

Three Vermont schools have won Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education "National School of Distinction" awards since 2001, and six more have earned state-level recognition. Fourteen Vermont music students have been awarded full scholarships to study at the National Symphony Orchestra Summer Institute since 2000.

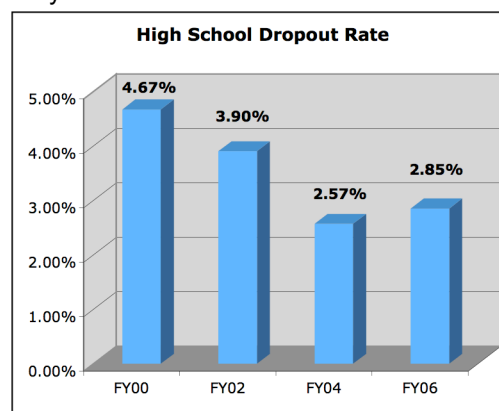
Education Cost Growth Slowing

School leaders and voters are working together to control costs. **95% of school budgets passed on the first vote in 2008**, approving budget increases of less than 4.5% for the second consecutive year.



High School Completion

Vermont schools have made impressive strides in retaining and graduating their students. **In the 1990s, Vermont decreased the number of students who do not complete high school by 66%**. By the year 2000, Vermont had the highest high school completion rate in the nation at 88.2%!¹ Since then, the percentage of students who drop out each year has remained low:



¹ *One-Third of a Nation*, Paul E. Barton, Educational Testing Service

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Vermont is the “Smartest State”

“For the second consecutive year, Vermont holds on to the top of Morgan Quitno Press’s education rankings as the nation’s Smartest State. Vermont has earned this distinction by demonstrating a strong commitment to students and teachers, an emphasis on excellence in the classroom and support for efficient public schools.”²

Opportunity for Success

Quality Counts 2007 ranks the states on a “Chance-for-Success Index” that tracks the life-long benefits of residents’ educational experience. It includes some traditional indicators such as residents’ NAEP scores combined with adult educational attainment, annual income, and availability of reliable employment. **It determined that Vermont youth have the 5th best chance for success in the nation.**

NECAP Leadership

Vermont has developed and implemented a common educational assessment tool in collaboration with New Hampshire and Rhode Island for grades 3-8. 2007 was the third year of testing, and the results confirm Vermont’s commitment to education. 70% of Vermont students were found to be proficient or better in reading, and 63% were proficient or better in math.

Youth Risk Behavior Declines

A biannual survey administered to Vermont high school students determined that:

	Cigarette smoking is down
1999: 36%	2007: 16%
	Alcohol consumption is down
1999: 46%	2007: 39%
	Marijuana use is down
1997: 32%	2007: 21%

Sources: American Legislative Exchange Council’s Report Card on American Education (2003), College Board, Editorial Projects in Education’s Quality Counts 2007, Education Vital Signs 2007, Morgan Quitno Press, US Dept. of Education, Vermont Alliance for Arts Education, Vermont Dept. of Education, Vermont Dept. of Health, Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust, Vermont Superintendents Association

² Morgan Quitno Press, 2006, an independent private research and publishing company

Employee Wellness

More than 3000 Vermont school employees participated in reducing health insurance costs by partaking in the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust “PATH to Wellness” pilot program this year. PATH is opening up to all schools in the summer of 2008.

Renewable Energy and Efficiency

Vermont schools lead the nation in the use of renewable fuels. 35 schools use biomass heating systems, serving over half the students in the State. The VSA’s School Energy Management Program works directly with schools and helps them convert to renewable fuels and improve efficiency. **This program saves local schools more than one million dollars a year in energy costs.**

More Early Readers

Vermont 2nd graders are reading at their highest level ever. The State Developmental Reading Assessment shows that:

- ▶ The number of 2nd graders below the standard has been cut in half since 1999.
- ▶ **85% of 2nd graders are meeting or exceeding the reading standard in 2007,** up from 73% in 1999.

AP Achievement

Advanced Placement allows high school students to prepare for college by taking college-level courses and earning college credit. **Vermont students taking AP exams scored a mean of 3.14 in 2007, 5% better than the national mean.** Vermont students’ achievement is even more pronounced in some subjects:

AP Subject	VT Mean	US Mean
Calculus (BC)	3.91	3.70
Comp. Sci. (A)	3.40	2.83
Econ. (Macro)	4.00	2.75
Econ. (Micro)	3.69	2.98
World History	3.66	2.71

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