

Article Series  
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For almost a year now, the Fall River Chamber's Education Committee has arranged for members from different sectors of the community to share their thoughts on education. We've heard from business owners, parents, educators, community leaders, and even students. Common perceptions have been challenged and the wider significance of education has been discussed.

Each writer presented a unique perspective on the value of education, whether it was in their own lives or in relation to our city's future, yet the underlying theme remained consistent – education is a community issue. It reaches much further than the confines of a classroom to touch every aspect of our society.

Children, their parents, teachers, and school administrators deal with it directly on a daily basis. The city, as well as its taxpayers and voters, have a say in educational policy and budgets. Employers hire based on educational aptitude, either through degrees or on-the-job training, while those seeking employment are constantly leveraging their skills and abilities. There is also the city's ability to draw new businesses to the area, long-term economic stability, and the development of a proficient workforce to consider. The list goes on and on. The specific scope of education's influence is difficult to capture precisely because of the extent to which it permeates our lives.

Although the issue may seem overwhelming, the city has already made great strides forward. The graduation rate has increased, and as a result of the difficult economy, many employers have a new appreciation for skilled, educated workers. There is certainly more work to be done, but we must remember to praise our successes even as we strive for improvement.

The original goal of the article series was to promote education and argue its relevance, but upon reflection, it becomes clear that they have begun to serve another purpose.

More than simply discussions of education, imbedded within the articles are models for action. They contain no half-baked plans or faulty promises for a cure-all solution – despite

what infomercials and politicians would have you believe, real change is never that easy – but are rather invitations for every member of our community to become involved. Each author took a few hours to reflect on the importance of education and express their commitment to promoting it. They remind us that there are many different levels of involvement. It can be as simple as a parent talking to their children about college, an employer encouraging workers to improve their skill-sets, or the decision to vote in favor of service-level funding for local schools. Imagine what the impact could be if each person made a commitment, large or small, to become involved.