

POSITION STATEMENT

EDUCATION

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit business advocacy and economic development organization. It has a diverse membership base of 1,000 businesses – primarily small and medium size - in the Southcoast region of Massachusetts. This policy position is intended to serve as guidelines for the Chamber's Government Affairs efforts and has been reviewed and approved by the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee and Board of Directors.

Originally Adopted: December 17, 2009

Revised: March 27, 2014

Position: The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce believes that the quality and accessibility of public education is critical to the health and prosperity of New Bedford and the SouthCoast economy. The Chamber supports programs, policies, and legislation that encourage world class public education systems and enables and fosters collaboration between the education and business communities. The business community is a stakeholder in the quality of public education. Public education should provide a well-educated workforce that will enable the development of new businesses and maintain a well-qualified pool of labor for local businesses.

The Chamber supports the following:

- A. Efforts that ensure and expand access to public higher education to all residents of our community. Specific points of focus:
 - The Chamber supports efforts for continued expansion of the New Bedford campus of Bristol Community College. An expanded community college campus will address the critically important need for a better educated and trained workforce in New Bedford which has a diverse population and is plagued by low educational attainment levels, low income levels and chronically high unemployment.
 - The Chamber supports adequate funding for the higher education system, as well as research and development efforts, and capital improvements. The Chamber recognizes the tremendous impact in education, research, and economic development that the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth has played in New Bedford and the SouthCoast and supports expanded future investment.
 - The Chamber supports efforts to keep tuition to public higher education institutions affordable for SouthCoast residents.
- B. K-12 Education – The Chamber believes that improving the performance of the K-12 education system in New Bedford and the SouthCoast region is essential for ensuring an educational system that prepares our youth to succeed and our region to be competitive in our rapidly changing world. Specific points of focus:
 - The Chamber supports programs that will strengthen science and math education from K-12 through college

- The Chamber supports efforts to strengthen the authority of school management to make the changes necessary to improve our schools.
- The Chamber supports efforts to provide more accountability in our school systems for more measurable results.
- The Chamber supports more stable, equitable, and adequate funding and revenue systems to support public education
- The Chamber supports collaborative efforts between districts within the region
- The Chamber supports vocational training programs that prepare students for careers in specialized vocations and trades with the goal of every student having an equal opportunity.
- The Chamber supports the expansion of Charter and innovation schools that provide students with choices for their education and that are linked to mandates for improved sharing of best practices.

While this statement is policy as of the effective date of this document, the Chamber reserves the right to adopt changes and make modifications and additions to its policies, and will continue to monitor issues as they develop.

Please contact Roy Nascimento, President & CEO at (508) 999-5231 with any questions regarding this policy position.