



EDUCATION CONVENING REPORT

Human capital encompasses the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals and communities. These various attributes contribute to the overall creativity, vitality and wellbeing of communities.

BERMUDA VITAL CONVERSATIONS

The Bermuda Community Foundation (the “foundation”) introduced Vital Signs® as an important step in identifying resident’s priorities related to their quality of life in Bermuda and the issues most important to them. The Vital Signs® programme has become a standard of excellence among community foundations around the world. It provides a methodology that evaluates community vitality and wellbeing and plays an important role in informing the allocation of resources. The reporting and prioritisation process is tailor-made to suit each jurisdiction’s needs.

In Bermuda, we conducted research on the community’s priorities, determined standardised outcomes based on that information and then sought further input from field experts in order to prioritise funding needs. This last step is carried out through convenings, known as “Vital Conversations”.

The foundation is hosting the Vital Conversation Series to further refine the valuable information gathered from the community. In this phase, local stakeholders convene to access public opinion, local, and international data for each of the Vital Signs® areas and prioritize the top outcomes that will guide the foundation’s funding strategy.

THE FINDINGS

The 2017 Bermuda Vital Signs Report revealed Education as one of seven priorities contributing to the quality of life in Bermuda. Quality of education and access to higher education were the most important factors defining their quality of life in terms of education. Both factors, used to evaluate education in Bermuda on the Vital Signs® public perception survey, elicited moderate levels of satisfaction with 46% of residents giving high marks on the quality of education and 48% giving high marks on access to higher education.

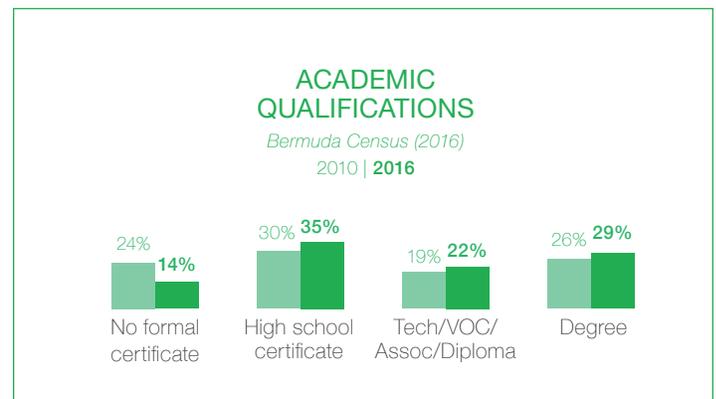
RESIDENT’S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF BERMUDA’S PERFORMANCE

QUALITY OF EDUCATION
46%
Residents rate Bermuda as high to extremely high

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
48%
Residents rate Bermuda as high to extremely high

Further statistical analysis revealed that the quality of education was, however, more of a concern for residents, and most likely to have an impact on the perceived quality of life. On the Island, the majority of students attend public schools despite the quality of public education being rated by residents as only fair or poor (73%). By contrast, private education was widely rated as good or excellent (82%). While the student/teacher ratio in public schools was considered appropriate, opinions were more divided with respect to whether or not the public school system adequately prepared students for post-secondary education, whether teachers are held accountable for their class performance, and whether they handle discipline matters appropriately.

When comparing Bermudian students to their international counterparts, average scores on the Cambridge International test suggest Bermudian students are on par with other students in English skills, but improvements are required when it comes to science and mathematics. Student performance at the M3 level was notably below the international level. Indeed, Bermuda M3 students scored an average of 2.4 in English, 2.2 in Mathematics, and 2.9 in Science, compared with Cambridge International averages of 3.4, 4.3, and 4.2. (The Royal Gazette, 2016; Ministry of Education & Workforce Development, 2018; Government of Bermuda, 2016)



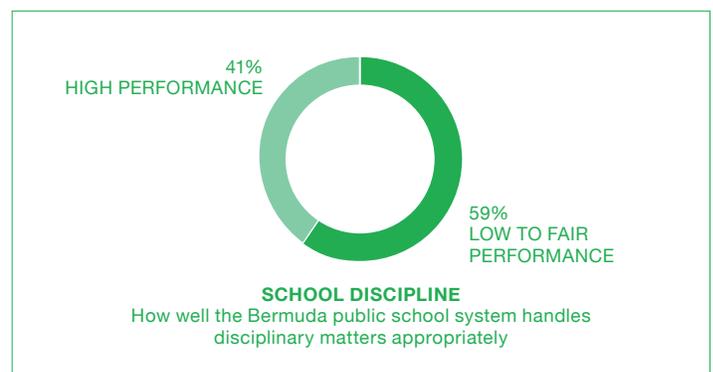
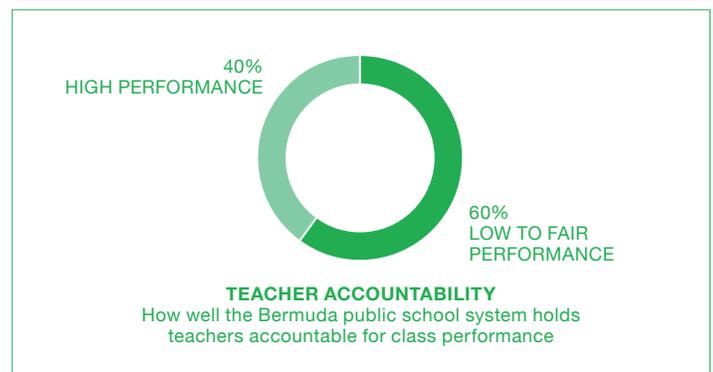
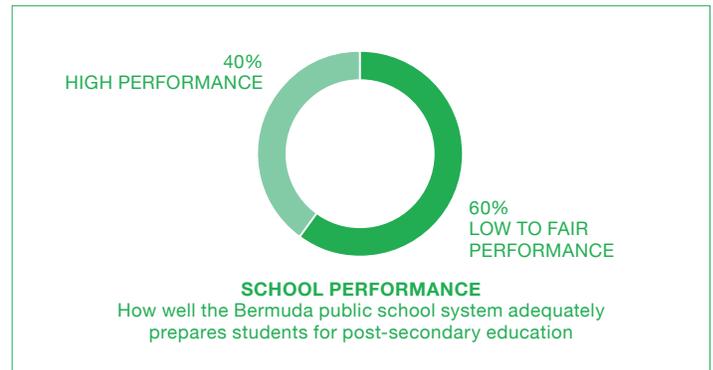
Despite limited access to higher education on the Island, the proportion of residents with post-secondary education continues to rise. It is worthy to note, however, that student enrollment at Bermuda College has notably decreased over the past six years. Between the last two Census periods (2010 and 2016) there has been a marked increase with

regards to the portion of residents 16 years of age and older reporting higher academic qualifications. Indeed, the population without a formal academic certificate declined notably during this time period. At the same time, increases are noted in the portion of population with high school certificates (49%, up from 38% in 2010), as well as those with technical or vocational certificates, associate degrees or diplomas (20%, up from 13%), and university degrees (11%, up from 9%, Department of Statistics, 2018).

In 2017, the Department of Education released its strategic plan for public school education with the intent to create transformational outcomes for Bermuda's public education system. These plans include increasing academic rigour and student engagement, ensuring career-college-workforce readiness, enhancing the quality of teacher practice and system leadership, and improving infrastructure and instructional resources. Together, they intend these measures to improve education in Bermuda.

THE PLAN

On March 1, 2019 the twelfth and final in the series of Vital Conversations was convened with sector experts to examine the public opinion data from the Vital Signs® Report as well as relevant local and international data. The Bermuda Community Foundation selected a list of outcomes and indicators for the group to examine and prioritise. The result of this collaborative prioritisation effort yielded the following key outcomes and indicators that the foundation, and potentially other funders, can use to guide its funding decisions through 2021.



VITAL CONVERSATIONS PRIORITISED OUTCOMES & INDICATORS

EDUCATION

Teachers and principals are effective		
<p>School faculty and administrators closely align the core instructional program with expanded learning opportunities <i>(including after school and summer programs)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core instructional learning is aligned with expanded learning opportunities 	<p>Strong and effective school leadership is evident</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of school leaders with graduate-level education • Principal and administrator turnover and retention • Years of service at the school 	
<p>Teachers are highly qualified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teachers with higher education degrees • Percentage of teachers with degree in their academic field • Percentage of teachers with teaching credential • Teacher turnover and retention rates • Years of service at the school (number of years teaching) 	<p>Teachers are supported by the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of professional development opportunities available to staff • Teacher satisfaction • Teacher turnover 	
<p>Teachers improve student performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and principal evaluations • Student feedback • Teacher performance reviews 	<p>Teachers understand their students and have cultural competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teachers who understand and appreciate students' cultural backgrounds 	
Children are ready to enter school		
<p>Children are motivated to learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported child interest in learning, books, toys, and others objects 	<p>Children attend high-quality early childhood programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average daily attendance at government or formal private early childhood programmes • Reported quality of early childhood programmes • Student enrollment in government and formal private early childhood programmes 	<p>Children have adequate motor development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbs up and down • Demonstrates throwing, kicking, and catching skills • Peddles and steers a tricycle • Reported basic locomotor skills • Shows balance while running
<p>Children have adequate physical well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children overweight • Number of children with health care coverage • Number of well-child visits 	<p>Children have attained cognitive and early literacy skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count to 20 or higher • Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test scores • Recognize letters • Write one's name 	<p>Children have developed social and emotional skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported sense of self

Key Outcome Category **Specific Outcome** • Indicator(s)

We are pleased to make more detailed outcome and indicators reporting available to BCF fund holders. Special terms and conditions apply. Contact info@bcf.bm

Public policy and expenditure that supports good quality employment, training and education

Improved government investment, expenditure and procurement	Improvements in policy and legislation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for public programmes/schemes that promote employability • Government expenditure on improving access to and quality of education • Government investment in employment, training and education • Use of procurement practices and public sector contracts designed to improve social outcomes (e.g. contracts that enable social enterprises and smaller SMEs to bid, outcomes-aligned contracts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in policy and legislation (e.g. promoting long term stable employment) • Changes to regulation • Level of relevant parliamentary activity (e.g. white papers published, committees formed, consultations or reviews conducted, citations made)

Families are involved with their children's education

Families support their children's education	Multiple opportunities for parent engagement exist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents who attend teacher-parent conferences or other events • Number of times parents met with teachers or principals outside parent-teacher conferences • Number of times parents read with their children • Student reporting of parents helping them with their homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education classes and other services are offered outside regular school hours • Teachers and staff communicate in ways and provide materials that parents understand

Parents are active participants in the school	Parents, teachers, and peers have high expectations for students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents who attend teacher-parent conferences or other opportunities • Percent of families who report positive interactions with teachers and other school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of students on track for meeting high school leaving requirements • Percentage of students taking Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or equivalent courses • Percentage of students taking SAT or ACT or other international tests • Youth report they are expected to do homework every afternoon/night

Students succeed academically

Students are achieving academically	Students are graduating high school	Students attend school regularly and stay in school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative assessment systems (e.g., student portfolio) • Standardised test scores • Student grades (average grades by school) • Students' progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropout rates • Graduation rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily attendance at school • Number of classes missed • Number of reported days missed • Number of reported times tardy for class/school (unexcused) • Reported early chronic absenteeism

Students do not repeat grades	Students have access to education services and supports inside and outside school	Students have postsecondary plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit completion/accrual • Number of students who repeat grades (fail each year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of student visits to the local library (and/or academically enriching programme) • Student attendance in before-school and afterschool programs • Students are enrolled in clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated employment is lined up for the summer • Reported aspiration to go to college • Students neither are enrolled in school nor working

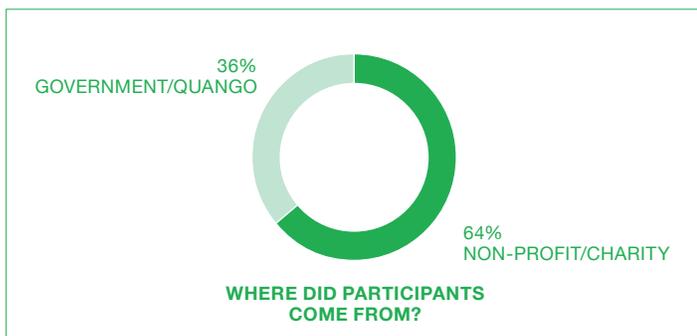
Key Outcome Category **Specific Outcome** • Indicator(s)

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WHAT THE EXPERTS SAID

The majority of participants for this conversation were from the charity/non-profit sector (64%), including schools, and the remainder from the Bermuda government/QUANGO sector (36%). Together, this group engaged in a rigorous and thoughtful conversation. Participants valued the opportunity to convene as evidenced by these comments, *“our results are based on real collaborative work”*, and *“it was helpful to hear other perspectives as it did help to influence and refine the priorities for greatest impact.”* Others specifically valued the intellectual exchange of ideas, *“the conversation was extremely stimulating with diverse points of view that certainly stretched my thinking.”* Similarly, some participants felt that the conversation challenged their perspective, *“I really learned a lot from hearing different viewpoints and looking at things from a different vantage point and through a different lens. Many opinions presented confirmed and supported my own, but some also challenged my thoughts and ideas, which is excellent as a tool for increasing understanding.”*

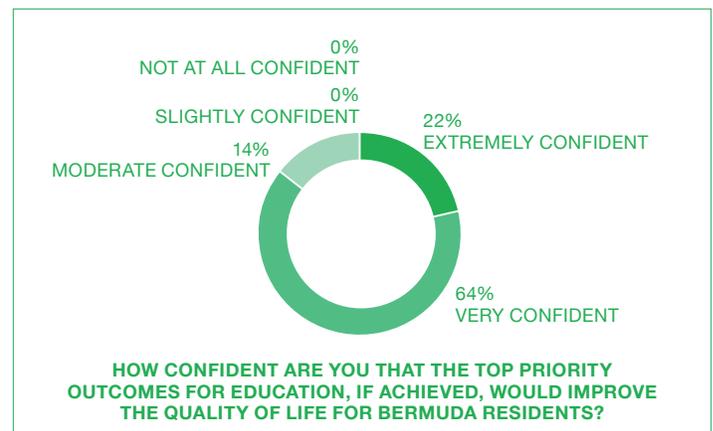
The majority (86%) of participants reported that the conversation expanded their own understanding of what outcomes are important to improving the quality of life in Bermuda. As well, 71.43% reported that the conversation caused them to examine their own organizational goals. Overall, the participants valued the opportunity to share ideas and believed that this type of activity was vital to making the most desired improvements in education. A participant stated that, *“convening a diverse group of ‘experts in the field’ to engage in rigorous discussion, sharing of ideas and deepening the understanding of community issues is VITAL to moving the dial in a meaningful way.”*



The majority (85.72%) of participants felt confident that the outcomes, if achieved, would improve the quality of life for residents in Bermuda. Despite the high level of confidence in the outcomes, there was skepticism about the degree of financial support that would be provided, *“the key words ‘being achieved’ are important for me, but not confident that funds will be prioritized for education.”* Another participant commented, *“if public policy is number one then we need to make sure our government doesn’t do business as usual. They have to listen to educators and produce policy that lifts up education.”*

“ The conversation was extremely stimulating with diverse points of view that certainly stretched my thinking. ”
- Participant comment

There was a clear understanding amongst the group that increased funding supporting education, children, and families would be necessary to achieve many of the prioritised outcomes. One participant stated, *“If we invest early, there is a return on the back end. The investment we make on services to families we save kids from dropping out and going to prison. The early investment creates whole and healthy people who can sustain themselves and our community.”* Another participant commented that the Bermuda government had the ultimate power to improve education, *“when we think about the money the government has to spend on education, we have to accept that the government is much more powerful in making improvements!”*



As evidenced by the prioritized outcomes, participants recognized the complexity involved in improving education on the island. There are a multitude of interrelated factors that contribute to the success or decline of the educational enterprise. Beyond increased funding, the group addressed the primary players including ministry and school leadership, quality of teachers, and student readiness to learn, as evidenced by this comment *“One of the biggest outcomes we voted on had teachers and principals being effective, followed by children being ready to enter school. If the school is ready to receive the child and the student is ready to learn so many things will begin to fall in place. This includes public policy and families becoming involved lining up to support what is happening.”*

School leadership was believed to play an important role in student success. A participant stated, *“if we have weak leaders in charge of schools, they will be unable to prioritise resources and engage in problem solving around the increasing needs of*

students.” Another participant shared, *“Principals’ supervision and leadership have the power to ensure effective teaching for all children.”* These opinions are rooted in the idea that leaders hold the discretionary power to access and direct resources to solve problems but does not address whether or not these leaders have the knowledge to do so. Not only do schools leaders need to have the ability to allocate resources, they also need the ability to assess and coach classroom teachers, support students, while simultaneously rallying parent and community involvement.

There was the recognition that certain expertise in educational matters was imperative at the legislative and ministry level and that policies needed to be created by individuals with educational knowledge, *“public policy, at this point in time, is not necessarily set by people who are experts in education.”* Similarly, another participant commented, *“A number of education non-profits are working very hard to try to fill the gaps created by poor policy that results from people, who are not education experts, being in charge of education policy. Structural changes are needed to change the status quo and I believe the public supports an independent education authority.”*

“ Principals’ supervision and leadership have the power to ensure effective teaching for all children. ”
- Participant comment

Comments about professional capacity tended to be directed toward the preparedness and quality of teachers. It is not uncommon, nor misdirected, to assume that teacher quality plays an integral role in education. Many believe that teachers hold the ultimate power to change the lives of students. One participant stated, *“Teacher effectiveness is critical for student success. Principal effectiveness is important too but teachers are the key.”* Another participant felt that regardless of the neighborhood, teachers are the most important factors in student success, *“you can have a school anywhere and make a difference in children’s lives. The teacher can make a world of difference for their trajectory and outcome.”*

It goes without challenge that classroom teachers are integral to student success. However, there were no comments related to teacher education. Teacher preparedness does not necessarily result from brief professional development opportunities but is the result of participating in a comprehensive and progressive educational experience themselves. Perhaps further

“ you can have a school anywhere and make a difference in children’s lives. The teacher can make a world of difference for their trajectory and outcome. ”
- Participant comment

examination is required to fully understand the importance of the *“teacher pipeline.”* One participant commented, *“I think there are three main reasons why having strong leadership and high quality teachers in every school would make a very positive impact. Firstly, research shows that an effective teacher is the single most important contributor to student success. I define effective teachers as having strong classroom management skills, excellent instructional expertise and passion for the job. I think the number one factor that deters many Bermudians from sending their children to public schools is lack of confidence in teacher quality. By ensuring strong recruitment, accountability for teacher performance levels and adequate ongoing professional development and coaching for teachers, schools can restore the public’s faith in the system.”*

Beyond principals and teachers, there was the acknowledgement that other school professionals play an important role in student success. Primarily, the social support and/or mental health providers were also seen as valued partners in education. One informed participant commented, *“the social needs of the students in the public schools have increased exponentially over the past twenty years. In order to ensure that students are healthy and that their learning and emotional needs are met, we need to invest in preventative early childhood development programs while simultaneously building a stronger student services model to meet the needs of students with challenges who are already in the system. We need more psychology and counselling resources. Local research studies need to be commissioned to examine causes of challenges and effectiveness of interventions. Particularly at the primary level we need to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Mathematics Strategy. This should include reinstating the content specialist roles in order to resume instructional coaching in literacy and mathematics. All of these initiatives need to be paid for and from the point of view of effective use of public money, we need to cut costs at the primary level by consolidating schools. The SCORE report revealed at least three cases of two small schools sitting in the same catchment areas. There is a strong case to be made for a smaller number of primary schools and weeding out any underperforming teachers and principals.”*

Student readiness to learn and family involvement were also prominent in the recipe for educational success. Comments included, *“family involvement in education leads to readiness for school with the tools they need to engage meaningfully”, “family involvement is underneath children being ready for school”, and “being ready for school means children are healthy and competent socially and emotionally so that they can be ready to learn.”* Many participants acknowledged the importance of early childhood education in student preparedness. One participant commented, *“child development should inform how we think about what is best for education. Early Childhood Education is where investments have to be made.”* Similarly another participant stated, *“government and grass roots mobilization [is needed] that will bring about a shift in funding, legislation, services to provide early intervention, high quality early education from birth to eight, tools for parents, child care providers, teachers and administrators.”*

While it is not uncommon for professionals in the education space to attribute their lack of effectiveness to student preparedness and parental engagement, group participants were more focused on the need to involve families in the effort to increase student preparedness. Participants stated, *“families are important because children don't come alone”, and “how parents value education is important. Private schools parents have more engagement and financial investment. How do public education parents value education? Do they think they are sending them off to be the best that they can be? Valuing education as a way out of poverty is important.”* The latter comment assumes that financial resources equate to parental engagement.

Beyond the various constituents (e.g., leaders, teachers, and students) there were comments that questioned the generally accepted paradigm of education. One participant shared a whimsical yet profound perspective, *“I feel that the important things to change at the outset are our concepts of education, our concepts of delivery of education, and our concepts of what it means to learn. Similarly we need to begin to embrace the fact that academic achievement (at least in the way that it is traditionally viewed) is less important than ensuring that children understand “how to learn.” We must teach children that mistakes are a tool for growth; that collaboration is a GOOD thing; that exploration is how we learn. An academic base is, of course, important.*

“ government and grass roots mobilization [is needed] that will bring about a shift in funding, legislation, services to provide early intervention, high quality early education from birth to eight, tools for parents, child care providers, teachers and administrators.”

- Participant comment

However, children must be encouraged to embrace the concepts of cognitive flexibility, complex problem solving and creative thought processes, and to embrace them in a collaborative fashion. We use the analogy of “absorbing like a sponge” which is, when you think of it, a very passive example. Perhaps a better analogy would be to learn like an octopus - flexible, adaptable, changeable and active in seeing out its own education. Education that is learner-focused and self-directed is the kind of education that produces more lasting results.”

Ultimately, the group recognized, as evidenced by the prioritized outcomes, that there are many levers of change in the enterprise of education. The Bermuda government must provide certain resources in the form of pro-education and supportive family policies and funding. Ministry and school leaders play an important role in directing these resources in the appropriate fashion and shaping school practices that are intended to support teachers and students in the classroom while also championing parental engagement. Teachers and social support professionals must be equipped to educate both the prepared and under-prepared student. The latter is paramount as, in any community, there will be resourced and under-resourced families that present their children with the hopes of achieving great things. One participant stated, *“we have to work hard to figure out how we educate children we don't know how to educate.”* A similar comment was made, *“child readiness for school is important but schools have to be ready for the child!”*

Key in these perspectives is that “we” have to work together. All players (i.e., legislature, ministry, principals, teachers, social support professionals, and parents) must work together to ensure that every child matriculates through the education system and emerges as a confident and competent individual capable of contributing toward a vital Bermuda.

WHO NEEDED TO BE IN THE ROOM

Representatives of key government entities, policy influencers and makers, nonprofits, vendors and service providers in the relevant field were invited to participate in the convening. They were also encouraged to nominate additional participants we may not have considered. The purpose was to ensure that the convening outcome would reflect input from those with the greatest experience and knowledge of the topic under review. This would include senior civil servants, nonprofit executives, industry leaders and community experts in their respective fields. At the convening, participants were asked to step aside from their individual affiliations and participate in the discussions as policy influencers, programme and service providers, researchers and other professionals for the benefit of Bermuda.

WHO WAS THERE

Becky Ausenda	Executive Director	Bermuda Education Network
Sherrì Bucci	Assistant Director	Early Childhood Development, Government of Bermuda
Cindy Corday	Co-founder	Bermuda Centre for Creative Learning
Chris Crumpler	Executive Director	IMPACT Mentoring Academy
	Board Member / Trustee	Board of Education
Donna Daniels	Executive Director	Adult Education School
Phyllis Curtis-Tweed, PhD	Vice President, Academic & Student Affairs	Bermuda College
Glenn Faries, PhD	Executive Director	The Reading Clinic
Chelsea Jacobs	Executive Assistant	IMPACT Mentoring Academy
Clare Mello	Executive Director	YouthNet
David Horan	Principal	Warwick Academy
Angela Fubler*	Director	Chatmore British International School
Kimberley McKeown	Policy Analyst	Ministry of Education
Nikkita Scott	Board Member	Bermuda Community Foundation
Jaleesa Simons	Jr Policy Analyst	Ministry of Education
Lindsey Sirju	Co-founder	Bermuda Centre for Creative Learning
Dawnnelle Walker, PhD*	Strategist	BermudaFirst

*Regrets = Confirmed but not in attendance

The Vial Signs Convenings are facilitated with the support of the BCF Vital Signs team: Research Coordinator, Dr. Tamara Gathright Fritz of Strategic Evaluation Consulting; BCF Managing Director, Dr. Myra Virgil; BCF Programme Associate, Michelle Grant; and BCF Intern Mercedes Pringle.

AN EVOLVING PROCESS

We strive to inform these convenings with high-level field and content area expertise. We ask participants to use their knowledge to inform this work at a national level. We appreciate the participation of the attendees of this convening. Also considered for participation, and therefore, potential community resources on this issue are:

Adult Education School
 Berkeley Institute
 Bermuda Centre for Creative Learning
 Bermuda College
 Bermuda Community Foundation
 Bermuda Education Network
 BermudaFirst
 Bermuda High School
 Bermuda Institute
 Bermuda Principal Association / Association of School Principals
 Bermuda Union of Teachers
 Care Learning Centre
 Chatmore British International School
 Cedarbridge Academy

Government of Bermuda

- Board of Education (Chair and Trustees)
- Child Development Programme
- Department of Education and Workforce Development
- Ministry of Education
- Success Academy

Home Schools Association
 IMPACT Mentoring Academy
 Institute for Talented Students
 Knowledge Quest
 Mount Saint Agnes
 National Parent Teacher Association
 New Beginnings Education Trust
 Saltus Grammar School

Scholarships.bm c/o ABIC
 Somersfield Academy
 Reading Clinic (The)
 Technology Leadership Forum
 Warwick Academy
 YouthNet

THE BERMUDA VITAL SIGNS® ARE ALIGNED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS




Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all