Factsheet: Educators

Investments in education and workforce training may not be paying off
- National education spending outstrips that of almost any other advanced industrial nation, but our students’ performance falls short
- 15-year-olds in the US rank 25th in reading and 35th in math out of 72 countries on an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) assessment
- Nationally, two-thirds of 8th graders scored below proficient on reading and math, while 63% of 12th graders score below proficient on reading and 3/4 score below proficient on math
- Each year the US spends $1.1 trillion on on-the-job workforce education and training, in an effort to close persistent gaps in skills and knowledge

Quality early childhood education provides a critical foundation for success in life and work
- Strategies to close the skills gap tend to focus on addressing immediate consequences of underperformance in school and at work
- However, we need a long term strategy for investing in human capital: quality early childhood education lays the foundation for all learning and development later in life
- Childcare is the same as early education, as children are learning quickly and constantly starting from birth; ensuring children are placed in high quality learning environments is critical
- Developmental gaps emerge in the earliest years of life between lower-income children and their more advantaged peers; according to a US Chamber of Commerce Foundation report, “Many children enter school unprepared to succeed, and schooling largely cannot close initial gaps”
- A series of evaluations of quality early childhood programs show that returns to society typically range from 16-18%, through channels such as increased earnings, tax revenues, averted costs of the criminal justice system, reduced grade retention, higher achievements, and reduction in welfare payments

How educators can help overcome barriers to childcare access
- Educators bring a critical perspective: they can speak for the importance of investing in early childhood education, since education at the levels of K-12, college, and workforce development are rendered much less effective without first establishing a solid early foundation for learning
- Educators can help advocate for solutions to childcare by joining public-private coalitions between public, private, and philanthropic entities

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