

Education provides us a better understanding of the world around us; it is a key building block to a healthy community reaching its full potential.

The COMPASS NOW Report identified these key education issues:

- School Readiness
- Job Skills Training

Emerging issues in the region are:

- Risks to Youth
- Higher Education Costs

Education Highlights

- 85% of survey respondents rated their K-12 schools either good or excellent. The same percentage rated the quality of higher education as good or excellent.
- School readiness is more than having an expected level of knowledge in language and math. A child's family and community must be able to provide an environment that encourages positive growth throughout the child's entire education. Children without enough nutritious food or who do not have a supportive home life are less ready to learn.
- In 2009, between 12-25% of children in the Great Rivers Region under age 19 lived in poverty (income below \$21,756 for a family of two adults and two children). The state average for the same year was 17%.
- Schooling after high school is much lower in our rural areas. Focus group participants said the greatest barrier to higher education is rising tuition costs.
- Youth face several risks and how they manage them has a profound impact on their health and future. In recent youth surveys, between 35-47% of high school students responded that they had sex; 19-30% had ever used marijuana, and about 13% had seriously considered suicide in the past year.
- Increasingly, employers require a more educated workforce. This trend will continue as industries demand specific skills to compete effectively in a global and technology-based economy.



education