

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Center
on Education
and the Workforce

McCourt School of Public Policy

May 7, 2014

Dear Commissioner Buhler,

It has been the pleasure of The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce to have worked with and been able to provide support to your professional staff in the preparation of their report “66by2020 – Refining the Goal for Higher Paying Jobs in Utah.” Your staff has taken, what I believe to be, the very unique step of associating the state’s education goal with the higher goal of ensuring that the education target includes consideration for citizens of Utah obtaining family sustaining earnings. This has been accomplished by the use of an earnings threshold that is well justified by your staffs’ investigation of Utah specific data provided by the Georgetown Center on Utah earnings by industry and educational attainment level (derived from pooled American Community survey data on Utah). This work has produced a target reallocation of your educational attainment that has high potential of moving Utah’s economy towards high wage, high demand jobs in 2020. The proposed changes to the degree attainment allocation (8% certificates, 14% associate degrees, 31% bachelor’s degrees, and 13% graduate degrees) detailed in this report, which I support, reflects a deep understanding of how upskilling is increasing educational requirements balanced with acknowledgement that industry aligned certificates and associate degrees will play a strong role in the future success of Utah’s education plan. Again, this report – and the robust background technical work – provides a clear roadmap to achieve Utah’s 66by2020 goal balanced with a mix of educational attainment required to move Utah’s economy towards high wage, high demand jobs in 2020.

I appreciate being able to be a part of these efforts and hope they assist USHE and state leaders in making critical policy decision to grow Utah’s economy of the future.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeff Strohl
Director of Research
Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce