

TRENDS ANALYSIS: WORKFORCE EDUCATION

FALL 2015



What does this measure & why is it important?

This indicator tracks the percentage of the Labour Force (aged 25-54) with a post-secondary certificate/diploma or higher in Basin-Boundary Development Regions (DRs). Data are reported by DR. Data for this indicator were sourced from Statistics Canada's [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\)](#).

Education rates give an indication of the level of skill embodied by the region's workforce. A higher-skilled workforce is a central determinant to economic growth (Ragan & Lipsey, 2011). Those with a higher level of developed skill are in a better position to take advantage of new markets and innovative techniques.

Three DRs are contained in whole or in part by the Basin-Boundary region. The Kootenay DR includes the Regional Districts of Kootenay Boundary, Central Kootenay, and East Kootenay. In our region, the Thompson-Okanagan DR is represented by the areas surrounding Golden and Revelstoke, and the Cariboo DR is represented by the Village of Valemount.

What are the trends & current conditions?

Labour Force Survey data are based on a survey of a sample of an area's residents. Statisticians take the answers from the sample and, based on this information, make estimations of how the whole population would answer the same questions (Wooldridge, 2002). This process, or estimation, can be very accurate under favourable conditions. With smaller sample sizes, however, variability and the likelihood of estimation error increase. Please refer to the RDI's report, *Understanding Labour Force Survey Variability for the Basin-Boundary Region*, for a complete discussion of this issue and resultant recommendations. To compensate for this level of variability, two approaches can be applied: 1) using trend lines to assess the overall trajectory of the data (Figure 1) and 2) using a 3-year moving average to smooth out large swings in the data (Figure 2). This second approach has the advantage of allowing real data trends to stand out while also compensating for year-to-year anomalies in the sample.

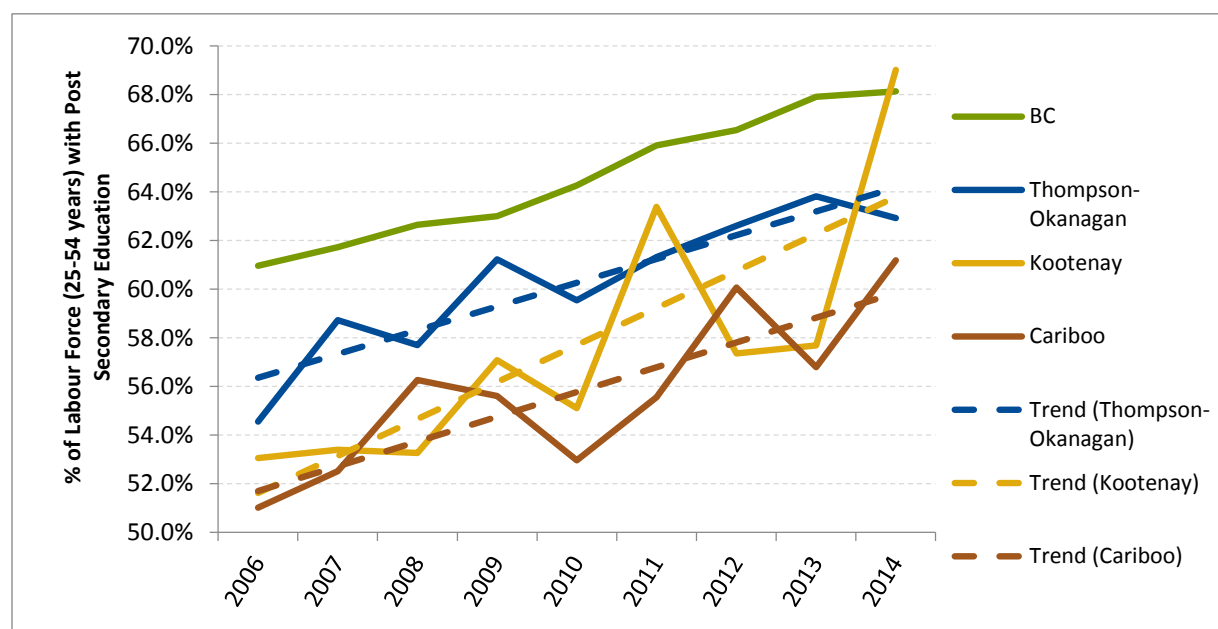


Figure 1: Percent of labour force (aged 25-54) with a post-secondary certificate/diploma or higher, 2006-2014, Basin-Boundary DRs (with linear trendline)
Source: Statistics Canada, 2015

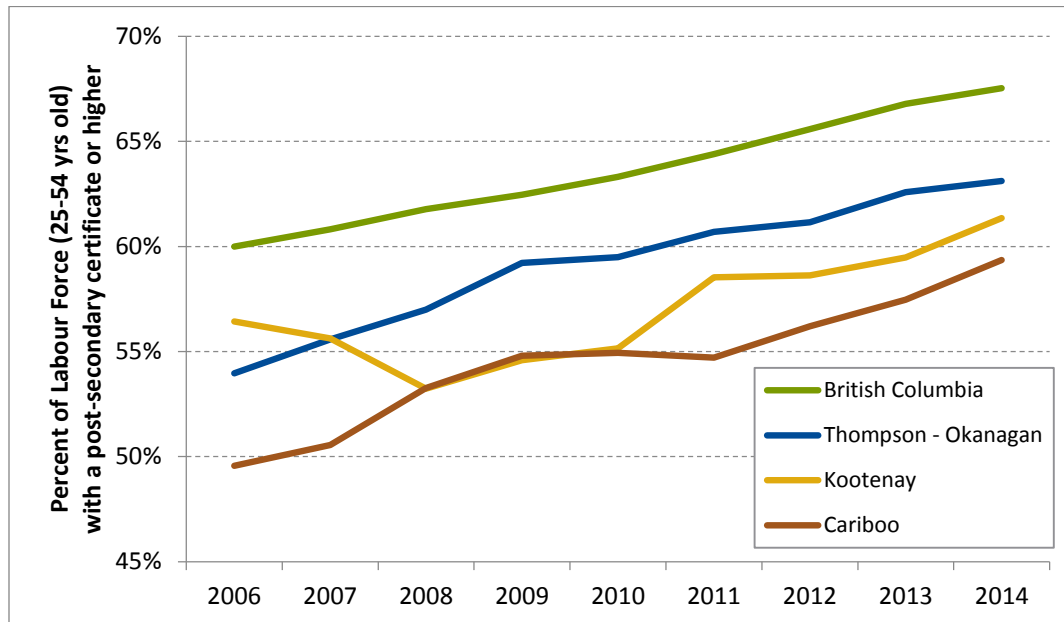


Figure 2: Percent of labour force (aged 25-54) with a post-secondary certificate/diploma or higher, 2006-2014, Basin-Boundary DRs (3-year moving average applied)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2015

Both approaches to trending indicate that workforce education levels are lower in all three Basin-Boundary DRs than the provincial average. The second approach also shows that, while all regions have had a fairly consistent and common growth path, the Kootenay DR experienced a (roughly) three year period of decline from 2006 to 2009. Since 2008, there has been a sustained increase (roughly paralleling the national and provincial directions of movement) in the rate of post-secondary workforce education in our region. This corresponds with the period after the 2009 Great Recession. North America experienced a slow recovery from the Great Recession. Economic uncertainty led to stagnant job markets, which may have resulted in workers seeking retraining or upgrading to access additional employment opportunities.

References

- Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia. (2015). 2014 BC Check-Up: Kootenay Development Region. Retrieved from:
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