

# Citing severe skilled worker shortages, business leaders push for rigorous academic standards and innovative high school

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If current education and labor market trends continue, New York will face a deficit of 350,000 workers with mid-level skills to fill current jobs. The need is particularly evident in the five-county Capital Region.

Leaders from the Capital Region's education, technology and business communities gathered today at SUNY's College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) to release a new report by America's Edge on closing this "[skills gap](#)." The report highlights the critical need for partnerships between schools and industry to ensure that students have a place in New York's emerging nanotechnology-driven economy.

In outlining the current and anticipated skills gaps in the state's workforce, the report, entitled, "Ensuring the Capital Region's Global Success," recommends that businesses be incentivized to provide internships and other workplace learning opportunities that offer students "real world" relevance to learning. The report also promotes the implementation of rigorous academic standards—the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards—and assessments that provide students with the core knowledge and deeper learning skills that businesses need to compete and succeed in the [global marketplace](#). These standards and assessments will not only better prepare students, but employers can use the scores to find qualified candidates with necessary skill sets.

Included in the report is a quote from Heather Briccetti, President &

CEO of The Business Council of New York State, Inc., that reads, "The skills gap is an issue that warrants immediate attention—our economic competitiveness and national security depend on having a readied STEM workforce. Now more than ever, business and education must partner to ensure that students are being prepared for entrance into college and the innovation economy."

The press event included both business and education leaders urging support for deeper learning, including implementation of college- and career-ready standards and evidence-based high school models that will help students develop the skills now needed in a global economy.

According to Jenn O'Connor, NYS Director of America's Edge, which has over 140 business leader members in the state, "The report recommends that we support partnerships between business and our schools, including incentivizing businesses to provide workplace learning opportunities. We must also promote educational accountability systems and assessments while providing sufficient preparation and support to teachers and administrators."

"This report underscores the leadership of Governor Andrew Cuomo, who has crafted a strategic blueprint that has made New York State the recognized global leader in the fastest-growing industry of the 21st century: nanotechnology," said Dr. Robert Geer, CNSE Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer. "In supporting the Governor's vision, it is vital that educational institutions at all levels work collaboratively with industry to ensure the training and development of a world-class innovation workforce that will keep New York at the forefront of the nanotech revolution."

Mark Eagan, President & CEO of the Albany Regional Chamber, said that, "If current [labor market](#) trends continue, New York will face a deficit of 350,000 mid-level skilled workers."

This is critically important because, as David Rooney, Senior Vice President at the Center for Economic Growth pointed out, "The strength of the economy and the economic future for New York businesses, throughout the state and in the Capital Region, depends upon having a highly skilled workforce."

Unfortunately, according to the retired CEO of MapInfo, John Cavalier, "It's no secret that the nanotech companies coming into the Capital Region will have trouble finding highly skilled workers to fill their job openings." Mr. Cavalier is also a founder of Tech Valley High and a National Advisory Board Member of America's Edge.

The role of education in cultivating that cadre of skilled workers is crucial. Johanna Duncan-Poitier, SUNY Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges and the Education Pipeline, said that "New York is addressing these issues head-on. We are working with our K-12 partners to ensure that the application of the new more rigorous standards are aligned with the expectations of higher education and student success. Similarly, we are ensuring that our college faculty are prepared to teach to the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards."

Provided by College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering

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