



NORTHWEST VOICES

Seattle Times letters to the editor

January 11, 2014 at 7:00 AM

Education: Closing the achievement gap, funding education, an institute of technology

Posted by [Letters Coordinator](#)

How to close the achievement gap

Schools face growing expectations and cannot alone ensure the future success of our state's students, especially struggling students who need additional supports to thrive academically and in all areas of life. The Seattle Times' editorials on education priorities for the 2014 legislative session was correct to include expanded learning opportunities, partnerships, summer learning and culturally responsive instruction as key strategies to close the achievement gap ["Targeting education," Opinion, Jan. 5].

Research shows us that two-thirds of the achievement gap between low- and middle- to high-income kids is attributed to summer learning loss. Providing additional learning time for kids through expanded learning opportunities that happen outside the traditional school day and year increases the likelihood that young people will graduate career and college ready. These opportunities are especially critical for students of color and low-income students. Our education system has yet to ensure that all students receive equitable opportunities to succeed in school.

Providing additional supports not only helps with academic success, but also provides opportunities to develop critical 21st century skills that are vital to building competencies, knowledge and interests for future success. We look forward to pursuing legislation this coming session in support of expanding our state's vision of where and how kids learn.

Mari Offenbecher, chief executive officer School's Out Washington



(Gabriel Campanario / The Seattle Times)

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Regressive tax system stymies quality education

One of the headlines The Seattle Times would like to see in 2014 was "State's world-class education system solves income inequality."

Again, on Jan. 5, The Times' editorialized "Targeting education." Yet, the connection between our "regressive tax system," mentioned by a reader in a headline on Jan. 1, and quality education is never made. How can one of the most progressive states in the U.S. on other social issues have a tax system that does not even adequately meet our constitutional obligation in providing education?

By the way, who is going to educate and fairly pay all those early childhood teachers, whose contribution to quality education is finally being recognized.

Due to our regressive taxes, our state is simply becoming a poster child for the gap between the haves and have-nots.

Rachael Levine, Burien

Use existing programs at state universities as institutes of technology

Sometimes great ideas are reborn. Nick Brossoit's call for a state technology institute is one example ["Want more STEM grads to stay? Start a Washington Institute of Technology," Opinion, Dec. 14]. In 2000, Gov. Gary Locke, UW-Tacoma Chancellor Vicky Carwein and other leaders helped establish the Institute of Technology at the UW-Tacoma to help build a first-rate technical workforce.

The institute has grown from one undergraduate degree program in computer science with 30 students to undergraduate programs in computer science, computer engineering and information technology, and master's programs in computer science, cybersecurity and leadership. Enrollment is currently 660 students, and the 150 degrees awarded this year will add to nearly 900 already earned.

This year, the institute's Center for Web and Data Science received more than \$2.5 million in outside funding to support research and development. Corporate partners are many. In coming years, we anticipate adding degree programs and collaborating on initiatives with our UW colleagues in Seattle and Bothell.

It takes years and many dollars to build a new technical institute. It is far more effective to invest in proven, successful programs at the UW, Washington State University and Western Washington University.

Rob Friedman, Institute of Technology, UW-Tacoma
Ed Lazowska, Computer Science & Engineering, UW-Seattle

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