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# Economy of the Future

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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Economy of the Future

10.30.2008 | President

*(This op-ed piece by University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran appeared in the Dayton Daily News on Oct. 29, 2008.)*

High school graduates make more money than dropouts do. College graduates make even more.

According to a recent report issued by Jobs for the Future, the wage advantage of a college degree over a high school diploma has increased "\$1 million over a working life."

In essence, communities with educated citizens have more potential to thrive economically because they have an expanded middle class. Students who attend strong K-12 schools with excellent teachers are more likely than others to graduate from high school and more inclined to decide to go to college. Excellent schools need adequate support.

For many years and in many urban areas, students have been hurt by their schools having inadequate funding, their communities having too few resources. Dayton is no exception. The failure of the school levy in 2007 hurt the young people in our community who are most in need of help to reach their full potential.

Locally, urban schools have made valiant efforts to provide students with the educational opportunities they need. But the schools lack resources.

Yet they have made significant strides to overcome these obstacles. Dayton's Catholic schools are creating collaborative arrangements to leverage essential resources. The Dayton Public Schools are creating a variety of educational options — such as the Dayton Early College Academy, neighborhood schools and single-gender schools — that provide excellent educational opportunities.

These positive signs are welcome to the University of Dayton, Wright State University, Central State University and Sinclair Community College — all working in partnership to improve urban education and make a college education an achievable dream.

They are welcome to local businesses that need educated employees. They are welcome to a community re-creating itself in harsh economic times. They are also essential if Ohio and the Dayton region are going to experience economic rejuvenation.

With the right support, students from both urban and suburban communities will be productive; they will succeed. Without our support, they will find it virtually impossible to experience success.

Equally important, our community will be unable to realize its full potential. We cannot lose the intellectual capital of our young people because we failed to provide sufficient educational support.

I realize the very real financial challenges families in our community face. Now, more than ever, it's important to step up and support all of our schools — urban and suburban — because the economic future of our community depends upon it.

Voters haven't approved an operating levy for Dayton Public Schools since 1992. The proposed levy — less than a third of the size of the one voters rejected in 2007 — will cost the average homeowner \$8 a month. In the past two years, the Dayton Public Schools have cut more than \$30 million from the budget and eliminated hundreds of positions. We cannot afford to cut more teachers.

Because our community must succeed, because of the commitment of the University of Dayton and its Marianist founders to education and to justice, I am strongly committed to efforts throughout the region to improve our schools and am especially committed to supporting the Dayton Public Schools' Issue 52.

— Daniel J. Curran is president of the University of Dayton.