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Career academies can boost state's business

By Joseph H. Haraburda

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Career-themed education, like Linked Learning, does more than boost graduation rates ("Linking courses to careers," Insight, July 25). It also strengthens businesses and the economy by improving our entry-level workforce.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 60 percent of all new jobs in the 21st century will require skills that only 20 percent of the current workforce has. Schools must get creative when it comes to delivering relevant curriculum and career-technical training. By integrating the two and adding in work-based learning components, such as internships and mentorships provided by employers from the state's largest industry sectors, schools can provide an educational experience that will prepare students for both college and career.

Nationally, students who have participated in career academies go on to work 12 percent more hours and earn 11 percent more money than students not in these programs. As California looks for ways to reduce the dropout rate and strengthen the economy, the Legislature should consider expanding Linked Learning. Reforming our education model is good for students and will help California businesses thrive.

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