




Business Leaders Report Identifies California's Biggest Skills Gaps

By [Mandira Srivastava](#)
[TMCnet Contributor](#)

May 26, 2011

Business leaders and education administrators identify specific gaps in knowledge or skills in technical areas among the employment seekers of California, ranging from nursing to information technology. This report is presented collectively by Brian Dowd of Granite Construction, Becky Johnson with Siemens ([News](#)  [Alert](#)) Industry and Ryan Loofbourrow of the Downtown Sacramento at Siemens mobility headquarters. According to a press release, this report is released by the national business leader organization, America's Edge, which found significant skills gaps in the Sacramento region and throughout the state.

Pointing the concern over the growing Skills Gap and Building a Skilled Workforce, this report is titled "Can California Compete? Reducing the Skills Gap and Building a Skilled Workforce through Linked Learning." The report states that nearly half (47 percent) of California jobs are in "middle skills" occupations – requiring education beyond a high school diploma but less than a 4-year college degree.

"California's education system is not keeping up with the education needs for today's and tomorrow's careers," said Dowd, Valley Area Manager for Granite Construction. "As an employer seeking a

highly talented workforce, I think it's important that young people understand what it takes to be career-ready. Exposing them to career options early and helping to direct their path is vital to building that workforce."

The report says that only 38 percent of California workers have the skills to fill these positions, creating a nearly 10-percentage-point skills gap. When coupled with a shortage of workers with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills, the business leaders voiced concern about California's competitive viability in a global marketplace.

"America's Edge is calling on the California Legislature to protect this funding," said Loofbourrow. "Through Linked Learning we can strengthen the state's economic recovery, and help ensure that today's students enter the workforce with the skills our businesses need."

Just six years ago, California was 14th in the United States in recent bachelor's degrees awarded in science and engineering. Today the Golden State ranks 45th in the nation.

The business leaders urged lawmakers to preserve funding for these opportunity-creating programs.