Low dropout rate helps us all

To the editor:

If we want to maintain our status as a world power, we must seek solutions to reduce the high school dropout rate. As the generations change, we should redefine how we educate our youths. We need to better prepare our young people, especially low-achieving students, to secure employment upon graduation from high school.

In our community, we have many families that struggle financially. They may not be able to supply their children the bare essentials – food, clothing or a home. As a result, the child will seek ways to survive. Many turn to the streets and get involved in drug trafficking in an effort to support themselves and their family. However, this usually leads to violence and then may lead to incarceration.

Why should anyone care? Besides wanting to see our youths succeed in life, there are financial risks involved if we do not solve this issue. When kids drop out of school, we lose productive workers and the revenues they would have generated. Also, we are paying more and more for incarceration and social services. We all have a stake and must take responsibility to fix this issue.

What to do? We should have career counselors in our high schools. They would work with economically disadvantaged kids and prepare them for employment. Their specific duties would involve assisting with resume writing, interviewing skills and business etiquette.

Also, they would provide employment information and help students secure and maintain employment. In addition, they would coordinate summer and semester internships.

Upon satisfying specific criteria, students may earn high school credit for their internship.

The counselors would collaborate with local unions and industry to ensure that the curriculum provides adequate preparation. This may lead to a restructuring of the education curriculum that serves low-achieving students.

If our low-achieving students better connect what is learned in the classroom and skills needed in the workforce, they may become great contributors to our community. From this, we will all benefit.

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