

Letter: Early learning key to better outlook

To the editor

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Success in the technology industry is a key factor in economic recovery, yet New York does not produce enough high school graduates — our future talent pool — with the basic skills needed for these jobs.

According to the Nation's Report Card, 64 percent of our fourth-graders perform below grade level in math. By eighth grade, 70 percent are below grade level in math. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects that by 2018, 63 percent of all jobs in New York will require postsecondary education. We are headed for a cliff.

We can reverse these disturbing statistics. A report from America's Edge, a national organization of business leaders, found that every dollar invested in early-learning programs in New York generates \$1.86 in sales. Children from such programs are less likely to need special education or to be held back a grade, are

44 percent more likely to graduate on time; 74 percent more likely to hold a skilled job by age 21, and earn up to 36 percent more as adults.

When Gov. [Andrew Cuomo](#) submits his proposed budget in January, I urge him to remember his announcement from earlier this year for our state's pre-K program and that he support the investment in QUALITYstarsNY — a rating system that will drive quality improvements in early learning programs.

Early learning is a sound investment for New York.

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