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## Even skilled workforce needs more skills

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WHILE IT is encouraging to see the Commonwealth's skilled workforce noted as a competitive advantage ("[Study: Mass.'s high costs erode workforce](#)," Business, Oct. 30), an economic policy focused solely on keeping skilled workers here fails to address the breadth of our challenge. Certainly, controlling the escalating housing costs that chase skilled workers away is critical, but any effective strategy to maintain the workforce that drives our economy must also build the skills of the workers who are staying here.

Even in our high-skill economy, one-third of our workforce lack the education and skills to get a job that pays a self-sufficiency wage. Investing in effective job training, adult education, and community college programs that are linked to industry and the jobs employers need to fill is essential to maintaining our advantage.

Education Commissioner David Driscoll, as quoted in Scot Lehigh's Oct. 31 column "Candor on our school system," got it right when he said of secondary education, "It has to be completely overhauled. I think we almost have to start with a blank piece of paper." The same is true of the workforce system. The next governor should make this a cornerstone of his or her economic development policy.

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