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Shrinking middle class
David F. Larson, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Glenbard Township High School District 87

While we value the role that technology plays in our lives, current trends show that the increase in computers and automation has resulted in fewer middle class jobs.

David Autor, author of The Great Divide, shares how labor saving technological changes, while increasing productivity, have displaced workers. Autor illustrates how computers excel at routine tasks: organizing, storing, retrieving information and executing exactly defined physical movements in production processes. This computerization or automation has reduced the demand for employees who perform routine tasks. Employers have replaced expensive labor with increasingly inexpensive and capable computers. These changes are dismantling the jobs that, for decades, have made up our middle class.

The good news is there is a growing demand for workers who can perform "non-routine" tasks that complement these automated activities. These abstract tasks, or non-routine work, require problem-solving, intuition, collaboration and creativity. Along with technical "know how," this new work requires a mixture of interpersonal interaction, adaptability, reasoning and independent thinking.

Our local public schools recognize these fundamental economic shifts and are proactively structuring an engaging and rigorous learning environment where graduates will be equipped with skills and aptitudes needed for these new middle class jobs.

This learning environment includes:
- Providing daily learning experiences where students are challenged to think, develop in-depth understandings and apply their academic learning.
- Preparing for new national assessments that require students to analyze, reason and problem solve in extended free response formats.
- Partnering with technical skills centers to offer students courses in career pathways that focus on a platform of skills, not single applications.
- Embedding the use of technology to enable students to gather, evaluate and use information.
- Having students demonstrate creativity and innovation by using technology to develop products and processes.
- Developing high levels of oral and written communication skills so students can leverage digital media to communicate and work collaboratively

Throughout history, the American public school system has adapted and met the challenges of preparing graduates for the challenges of each generation. As a leading nation, we will continue to ensure our graduates are skilled, versatile and future ready.