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Complex needs of education require funding

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“Technology over time will reduce demand for jobs, particularly at the lower end of a skill set,” Bill Gates explained at a recent meeting of the American Enterprise Institute. “Twenty years from now, labor demand for lots of skill sets will be substantially lower.

“I don’t think people have that in their mental model,” he adds, in what could be considered the understatement of the year.

One of the principal factors that led to our current dominance on the world stage has been our public education system. We are a great nation, in large measure, because our schools have done a superb job of educating generation after generation of those who can compete with anyone on the planet.

Education is the key to our unparalleled economic growth and our unequalled military strength. It is the singular process that keeps us moving forward as a superpower. It is a complicated and challenging pursuit requiring expertise in an ever-expanding range of areas.

The knowledge and skills needed to be successful in the coming decades will be markedly different from those needed in the past. If you are charged with the enormous responsibility of preparing the next generation for success in work and life, it is imperative you have a profound understanding of what those qualities are and how to teach them.

Again, it is absolutely essential we equip our sons and daughters with the sophisticated tools they will no doubt need in order to survive in an interconnected, technologically advanced global society. Unfortunately, this can’t be done as long as we continue to finance education at the current, grossly inadequate level of funding.

Education is an increasingly complex and multifaceted enterprise, requiring immense resources and top billing on our list of societal values. We must be willing to pay whatever it takes.

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