

DEAN'S PRIORITY:

HIGHER EDUCATION & JOB TRAINING

"Today more than ever, getting a good job depends on obtaining necessary skills and training after high school. Every Minnesotan should have the opportunity to earn an affordable college degree, apprenticeship, or job training certificate that prepares them for jobs of the future. This isn't just good for individuals, it's good for businesses, it's good for our communities — and it helps grow Minnesota's economy."

- Dean Phillips

DEAN'S PLAN

Minnesota's renowned public education system and varied post-secondary options make our state an ideal place to earn a living, raise a family and start a business. It's time we build on that legacy by enhancing our system of higher education and training for the jobs of the future. We need to educate and train more Minnesotans in the skills our businesses are demanding, and we need to make higher education more affordable and efficient. Here's Dean's plan:

Ensure a range of high-quality education options after high school.

Almost two-thirds of new jobs will require some education and training after high school, but a traditional four-year college degree is not necessary for everyone. Many "new collar" jobs pay well and don't require a BA, and increasingly, many Americans will require continuing education throughout their working lives. That's why Dean supports federal pilot funding for innovative ideas like apprenticeships, three-year degrees that combine high school and college, competency-based education, and "last mile" training so that states and localities can explore options that are best for their communities.

Make college more affordable for more families.

For those seeking four-year degrees, Dean supports expanding federal student aid (including student loans and Pell Grants, which have not kept up with inflation) and allowing refinancing of existing debt at lower interest rates. It's unfair that college debt is generally subject to higher interest rates than automobile and other consumer loans. He is also an advocate for loan-forgiveness programs for those entering high-impact but low-paying fields.

Help students and families make informed choices.

Our federal student-aid system is needlessly complex. Education and training after high school are one of the best investments an individual and family can make — if they choose the right course of study and program. Many 21st-century jobs did not exist a few years ago, and others — like manufacturing jobs — are radically different than in years past. Dean will work to make career and financial-aid counseling available to Minnesotans of all ages, starting in middle school, to help all of us find and pursue the best education and career path.

Ensure higher education teaches in-demand knowledge and skills.

Obtaining higher education and training after high school is costly -- in time and dollars. Dean will support policies that foster partnerships between higher education institutions and employers to create smooth pathways to good first jobs in growing sectors of our economy. And he will explore the possibility of giving schools and other training providers more "skin in the game" by tying a portion of their federal funding to their students' employment outcomes.