Prepare Minnesota's Workforce for the Future

1. Build On-Ramps to Good Jobs with Apprenticeships and Workforce Training

As our U.S. Senator, Amy Klobuchar has worked across the aisle to expand pathways to good jobs. She led the bipartisan *Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act*, signed into law last year, to allow families to use 529 savings accounts to pay for skills training, credentialing, and apprenticeships. And she has long championed her bipartisan *American Apprenticeship Act* to provide tuition assistance for workers in registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. She knows these programs work, and as Governor, she will expand them in Minnesota.

Use apprenticeships and new workforce pathways to increase opportunities.

- **Strengthen registered apprenticeships** by adding 10,000 apprenticeship and skills training opportunities, roughly doubling the number of registered apprentices. Build on the success of apprenticeships in the trades – like for electricians and plumbers – by bringing the Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative to additional industries like biotech, health care, advanced manufacturing, and precision agriculture. Connect high school students directly to emerging and high-demand careers in cybersecurity, technology, and nursing, as well as the trades, which is especially important right now in the age of AI.
- **Expand educators, health care, and public safety professional pipelines.** Broaden recruitment of educators, health care, and public safety professionals, including teachers, nurses, doctors, med techs, and police officers, by waiving initial application fees to reduce the financial burden on recent graduates and new professionals. Expand alternative pathways and streamline credentialing so promising workers, including graduates in other fields, can transition more easily into classrooms and clinical settings.

Make it easier to navigate skills training and match with a job.

- **Align workforce and higher education.** Combine skills training, apprenticeships, and workforce programs from various state agencies into one place so Minnesotans can find and access these opportunities. Build on what works instead of adding duplication to give students, job seekers, and employers clear pathways and accountable results.
- **Strengthen career navigation and job matching.** Give workers and employers better tools to connect and pair training with supportive services, especially childcare and housing, that too often keep people from finishing a program or taking a job. Leverage regional Workforce Development Boards to ensure strategies are informed and responsive to the needs of local communities and employers.

Respond to the current and future needs of workers and employers.

- **Launch a Minnesota "Future of Work" initiative** with incentives, credentials, and public–private partnerships that help businesses train their employees in emerging fields such as cybersecurity, tech management, and advanced robotics.
- **Launch a public–private Skilled Workers and Trades Fund.** Create a dedicated, public–private fund for debt-free, short-term training in the trades, health care, education, emergency services, public safety, and other in-demand occupations. Built alongside employers, this fund can prepare our workforce for a changing job landscape as a result of AI.

2. Raise Academic Achievement Across Minnesota

Amy Klobuchar believes in using the best ideas – because Minnesota's kids deserve excellence, and our economy needs a strong workforce. As both a mom and the daughter of a teacher who taught second grade until she was 70-years-old, Amy Klobuchar knows the importance of education and student achievement. As Governor, she will use proven evidence-based approaches to raise student achievement, reduce racial and economic disparities in education, and push real improvement in our schools.

Use proven approaches to raise student achievement.

- **Improve reading and math skills.** Ensure proven, evidence-based curriculum in elementary classrooms, and give teachers and parents the training and materials to deliver reading and math excellence. Instruction must follow what the research shows works to lift student achievement and reduce disparities in education. This is similar to the evidence-based approaches taken in other states, which are using phonics curriculum, high-quality instructional materials, and teacher training to improve reading and math scores. Require parent-teacher meetings for students who are behind in reading and math.
- **Give children the extra help they need to succeed with reading and math tutoring.** When students fall behind in reading or math, they shouldn't be left to struggle. Partner with schools to provide regular, small-group tutoring that helps students build confidence, catch up, and stay on track. Research shows that targeted tutoring is one of the most effective ways to accelerate learning and close opportunity gaps. Establish a Minnesota Summer Reads Initiative to support summer reading programming through public-private partnerships.
- **Advance Minnesota STEM education.** Partner with our world-class tech, manufacturing, and medical employers to expand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, with mentorships, internships, and curriculum aligned to the jobs being created in Minnesota.
- **Make sure our educators have the resources they need to succeed.** Continue to strongly fund our schools and work to make health care more affordable for school personnel.
- **Keep students on task.** Ban cell phones and other personal mobile devices in K–12 classrooms, with narrow exceptions for genuine emergencies and medical needs, which more than 35 states already do. Work with school districts to set evidence-based limits on screen time – the amount of time students spend on tablets and computers – in the classroom.

Use proven approaches to raise student achievement (continued).

- **Boost attendance to ensure kids are learning.** Work with schools, parents, and communities to track real-time daily attendance so that kids are at school and learning. Expect schools to identify attendance concerns early, communicate promptly with families, and intervene before attendance problems become academic problems. Send automated alerts to families as soon as students show early signs of chronic absence.
- **Prevent student homelessness.** Launch a statewide initiative to end homelessness among Minnesota's students and their families, building on the success of Minnesota's bipartisan work to end veteran homelessness. Identify students who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and connect them to help – so students are housed and ready to learn. Read more about Amy Klobuchar's plan to lower housing costs and prevent student homelessness here: AmyKlobuchar.com/housing.

Build clear, early pathways from school to opportunity.

- **Start career exploration and work-based learning earlier.** Partner with businesses to begin career exploration in middle school, and expand high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE), internships, youth apprenticeships, and job-based learning so students see a direct line from school to a good job.
- **Open more doors to advanced curriculum.** Establish statewide expectations that schools automatically offer enrollment in advanced courses for students who demonstrate proficiency for those classes.

3. Open Doors to College and Credential Pathways

A one-to-four-year degree and beyond are pathways that provide options to students and expand our workforce. Amy Klobuchar has advocated for more federal funding for community, technical, and tribal college programs. As Governor, Klobuchar will keep working to expand affordable access to all Minnesota colleges, including community and technical colleges, so costs never keep a Minnesotan from a credential that leads to a good job.

Expand college and credential pathways to the workforce.

- **Create partnerships between local employers, community colleges, and public and private colleges and universities.** Partner community colleges with local employers who are competing in the global economy to design curricula and credentials for high-demand jobs that exist right now, in fields such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, AI, and health care, so training aligns directly with local hiring needs. Work with the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to align programs with regional employers and simplify the transfer from community colleges into four-year degrees.
- **Launch Employer Training Incentives.** Implement a tiered tax credit for small- to medium-sized businesses that supports training, allowing businesses to offset some of the cost for recognized certifications.
- **Expand three-year degrees.** Support accelerated higher education pathways modeled after successful initiatives like the Rochester NXT GEN MED program. By partnering with employers and utilizing year-round learning, students can enter the workforce a year sooner with less debt.

Help high school students start working toward a credential or college.

- **Continue dual enrollment and early college.** Pair high school with college-level coursework aligned with high-demand skills, so students can leave high school with real momentum toward a credential or degree.
- **Automatically notify high school seniors of Direct Admissions.** Notify graduating seniors of the Minnesota public and private colleges that they have qualified for based on their GPA.

References

Elements of this plan are contained in bipartisan legislation introduced in the Minnesota Legislature, including:

- **Build On-Ramps to Good Jobs with Apprenticeships and Workforce Training:** *Sen. Liz Boldon (DFL-Rochester), Sen. Bobby Joe Champion (DFL-Minneapolis), Sen. Gene Dornink (R-Brownsdale), Sen. Zach Duckworth (R-Lakeville), Sen. Grant Hauschild (DFL-Hermantown), Sen. Robert Farnsworth (R-Hibbing), Sen. Rob Kupec (DFL-Moorhead), Sen. Jennifer McEwen (DFL-Duluth), Sen. Zaynab Mohamed (DFL-Minneapolis), Sen. Aric Putnam (DFL-St. Cloud), Sen. Jason Rarick (R-Pine City), Sen. Judy Seeberger (DFL-Afton), Sen. Melissa Wiklund (DFL-Bloomington), Rep. Ben Bakeberg (R-Jordan), Rep. Peggy Bennett (R-Albert Lea), Rep. Kaela Berg (DFL-Burnsville), Rep. Mary Frances Clardy (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), Rep. Josiah Hill (DFL-Stillwater), Rep. Heather Keeler (DFL-Moorhead), Rep. Patricia Mueller (R-Austin), Rep. Danny Nadeau (R-Rogers), Rep. Bjorn Olson (R-Fairmont), Rep. Bernie Perryman (R-St. Augusta), Rep. Dave Pinto (DFL-St. Paul), and Rep. Max Rymer (R-North Branch).*

- **Raise Academic Achievement Across Minnesota:** *Sen. Steve Cwodzinski (DFL-Eden Prairie), Sen. Mary Kunesh (DFL-Fridley), Sen. Alice Mann (DFL-Edina), Sen. Cheryl Youakim (DFL-Hopkins), Rep. Jeff Backer (R-Browns Valley), Rep. Ben Bakeberg (R-Jordan), Rep. Robert Bierman (DFL-Apple Valley), Rep. Heather Edelson (DFL-Edina), Rep. Alex Falconer (DFL-Eden Prairie), Rep. Josiah Hill (DFL-Stillwater), Rep. Pete Johnson (DFL-Duluth), Rep. Heather Keeler (DFL-Moorhead), Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn (DFL-Eden Prairie), Rep. Ron Kresha (R-Little Falls), Rep. Danny Nadeau (R-Rogers), Rep. Kari Rehrauer (DFL-Coon Rapids), Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura (DFL-Mpls), Rep. Zack Stephenson (DFL-Coon Rapids), Rep. Brad Tabke (DFL-Shakopee).*

- **Open the Doors to College and Credential Pathways**: *Sen. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka), Sen. Julia Coleman (R-Waconia), Sen. Omar Fateh (DFL-Minneapolis), Sen. Heather Gustafson (DFL-Vadnais Heights), Sen. Rob Kupec (DFL-Moorhead), Sen. Clare Oumou Verbeten (DFL-Saint Paul), Rep. Mary Frances Clardy (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), Rep. Josiah Hill (DFL-Stillwater), Rep. Sydney Jordan (DFL-Minneapolis), Rep. Kari Rehrauer (DFL-Coon Rapids), Rep. Bianca Virnig (DFL-Eagan), and Rep. Dan Wolgamott (DFL-St. Cloud).*

Other elements of this plan are informed by Senator Klobuchar's legislative record to expand workforce pipelines and support student achievement. This includes her provisions passed into law under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* to expand STEM opportunities, improve teacher retention, and reduce chronic absenteeism, as well as new STEM education funding she supported in the *CHIPS and Science Act*. Her workforce initiatives include the *Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act* – which passed into law and expanded 529 savings plans for skills training and credentialing – as well as provisions from her bipartisan bill to open 529 plans for non-degree certification programs. Additionally, she introduced the *American Apprenticeship Act* to fund state tuition assistance, the *Skills Investment Act* to modernize career savings accounts, the *Apprenticeships to College Act* to secure college credits for apprentices, and the bipartisan *Community College Agriculture Advancement Act* to boost community college resources.

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