

With the shortage of workers in the workforce and the high cost of a college education, more students are looking to join the workforce directly out of high school. Most high schools, however, offer few classes that prepare students with life skills in order to join the workforce. With the increasing number of students looking for trade jobs outside of high school, it is essential that we provide students with the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to make them successful.

Twelve years ago, I started hiring the students from Whitefish High School who were dropping out of school. We did construction work and also worked on our family ranch. I trained them how to be successful on a job site and paid each student a different wage every day based on how well they performed in four areas of competency: how well they paid attention, safety, attitude, and accountability. For nine years I ran this program independently on weekends and during the summer, and for the past three years, this has become my primary job at Whitefish High School. In my class, I teach students skills in construction, agriculture, and business that are applicable long after high school.

There is a huge need for more programs like this, yet very few instructors are available to teach them. This year I started a Building Trades Teacher Endorsement Program and in this program students will earn a Building Trades Endorsement, Business Agriculture Endorsement and their OSHA safety card. The most important part of this program is that students who want to become teachers are learning real life training to take back to their future classrooms and they are being paid to do it.

In Montana you can earn two teacher's endorsement with 10,000 practical work hours, and never go to college. I currently work with a young man in my program named Jarrod Ramsey. While Jarrod completes his practical work hours, he is also earning over \$20 per hour. Ramsey will make over \$200,000 getting his teaching endorsement, instead of starting life with large student loans.

The best way to help the next generation is to teach them life skills. The only way to do this is to educate instructors. An educator can impact over 3,000 students in their career. I believe that there is no greater impact for Montana than teaching this generation how to work and in order to do this, we must provide educators to teach them.

Top four reasons for supporting Truth, Trades and Technology

1. Help build a stronger work force for your company and community.
2. Gain a quality employee for the next five years that will be training future quality employees.
3. Have a positive impact in your local school district.
4. Give students **HOPE** that are falling through the cracks in public education.