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Secretary Gassman makes Governor's case for Youth Apprenticeship *Meets students in special Briggs & Stratton manufacturing program*

Jefferson – In a visit today to Briggs & Stratton, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman met students enrolled in a special Youth Apprenticeship program and said Governor Doyle's budget would allow many more apprenticeship opportunities for Wisconsin's future workers.

"Youth Apprenticeship is a great program that lets high school students explore career options and helps us ensure a skilled workforce for tomorrow," Secretary Gassman said. "For many students, it opens doors to good jobs and career ladders. Eight out of ten get job offers when they complete the program and graduate. If they go onto college or technical school, they are more focused and do much better than students who didn't take advantage of the program."

In the budget he offered Tuesday, the Governor said he would increase funding for Youth Apprenticeship. In the second year of the biennium, funding would double to \$2.2 million a year, allowing 4,000 students opportunities each school year to combine work and classroom instruction as they prepare for the future. More employers could participate than the nearly 1,300 now hiring apprentices.

"Youth Apprenticeship is a very successful program, popular with students and employers, and it has been that way since Wisconsin began the program in 1991," Secretary Gassman said. "Governor Doyle sees this as among the best investments we can make, benefiting students, employers, all of us, as we grow the economy, create quality jobs and help young workers get a good start."

Secretary Gassman met with apprentices in the manufacturing production technician program and graduates of the alternative education program for at-risk high school students. She described the program as having a high success rate with graduates working at Briggs & Stratton.

The program is offered by the Jefferson County School-to-Career Consortium that includes six school districts and received a Youth Apprenticeship grant of \$47,125 last year. The six districts are: Fort Atkinson, Jefferson, Johnson Creek, Lake Mills, Waterloo and Watertown.

For more information about the Youth Apprenticeship program, visit the department's website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dws/programs/ya/default.htm>.