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Secretary Gassman Encourages Waukesha Students to Sign Governor Doyle's Wisconsin Covenant

Labor Secretary Says Program is Vital to Ensuring Skilled Workforce, Healthy Economy

WAUKESHA – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today welcomed students back to school and encouraged 9th graders in Waukesha to sign the Wisconsin Covenant, saying the visionary initiative will help the state avoid shortages of skilled workers and ensure a first-rate workforce vital to Wisconsin's continued economic growth. The Wisconsin Covenant is Governor Jim Doyle's plan to help more youth and their families attain a higher education, whether at a university, private college, or technical college.

"Governor Doyle wants you to know that a college education is within your grasp," Secretary Gassman told 9th graders at Waukesha South High School. "College isn't just for children of wealthy parents. College is a reality for anyone who is willing to work hard and invest in their future. The Wisconsin Covenant says if you sign a pledge and live up to your end of the bargain, there is an opportunity for you to get a college education."

Secretary Gassman explained the Covenant pledge to the students and encouraged them to sign up. The Wisconsin Covenant asks students to sign a pledge committing them to stay in school, maintain a B average, apply for financial aid, stay out of trouble, and be a good citizen. If a student holds up his or her end of the bargain, the Covenant provides they will have a spot at one of the state's UW campuses, technical colleges, or private higher education institutions, and a financial aid package based on their family's financial need.

"The Governor's Wisconsin Covenant program is a crucial investment in our future workforce," Secretary Gassman said. "We not only need more skilled workers as our economy expands and adds jobs, but we also face labor shortages as members of the baby boomers approach retirement. The Wisconsin Covenant, along with other investments the Governor has proposed in education and training, will help us meet that need for skilled workers."

Students entering 9th grade have until today, September 14, to sign up. Students starting 8th grade will begin signing the Covenant later this fall. A copy of the Wisconsin Covenant can be found online at www.wisconsin covenant.wi.gov, where parents, students, and school officials can learn more about the program and the Governor's efforts to support students while they are in high school.