

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-3131
Fax: (608) 266-1784
<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>
e-mail: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

CONTACT: Jessica Erickson, Communications Director, 608-266-6753

Secretary Gassman Highlights Governor Doyle's Budget Investment in Youth Apprenticeship

Budget Doubles Funding For Successful Apprenticeship Program for High School Students

KENOSHA – During a visit to Bradford High School in Kenosha today, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman said Governor Jim Doyle's budget investment in the Youth Apprenticeship program will not only help improve skilled employment opportunities for high school students, but also help employers meet their future workforce needs.

The Governor's budget doubles funding for the successful youth apprenticeship program to \$2.2 million by the second year of the biennium, allowing as many as 3,600 juniors and seniors statewide to participate in the program that has created strong partnerships between local schools and businesses.

"Since Youth Apprenticeship began 15 years ago, over 10,000 students have graduated from the program, and many are now mentoring a new generation of apprentices," Secretary Gassman said. "The Governor's investment will open the door to opportunity to more high school students wanting to become apprentices and more employers searching for new talent and future workers as baby boomers approach retirement."

Nearly nine out of 10 Youth Apprenticeship graduates receive job offers from their employers when they graduate from high school. Apprenticeship graduates who go on to college or technical school generally do better than their peers. The program is also very popular with employers; virtually every one of them highly recommends the program.

Secretary Gassman made the comments during a visit to Bradford High School in Kenosha today. There, she met with youth apprentices working at Educator's Credit Union, the second "Credit Union in a School" in the Kenosha Unified School District. With too many teens lacking financial basics – and a new national survey showing few teens know how to budget or pay bills – Secretary Gassman said the financial services youth apprenticeship track is critical to ensuring our youth learn how to save regularly and use credit wisely.

The YA program began in Kenosha in 1996. Last year, the Kenosha partnership received a \$27,000 state grant, and had 33 students and 23 employers participate. They currently offer seven different program areas: auto collision, auto technician, drafting/design architectural design; drafting/design mechanical design, finance, health, and manufacturing/machining.

Last Friday, Governor Doyle signed a state budget that ensures quality education, makes health care more accessible and affordable, creates jobs, and maintains fiscal responsibility. Besides youth apprenticeship funding, the budget also funds the UW's Growth Agenda, invests \$32 million in financial aid, funds public schools, and moves forward on the Wisconsin Covenant.

- 30 -