

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

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CONTACT: Dick Jones, Agency Liaison, 608-267-4780

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

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

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today urged eighth graders at Cherokee Middle School in Madison to sign the Wisconsin Covenant before the school year ends and ensure a place for them in college by meeting the Wisconsin Covenant's requirements.

"Governor Doyle wants all of you to know that a college or technical school education is within your grasp," Secretary Gassman told Cherokee Middle School eighth graders. "College isn't just for children of wealthy parents. You too can go on to college, if you sign the pledge now, work hard in high school and meet the Wisconsin Covenant's requirements. Now is the time to start thinking about the grades you need, the classes you need to take, and type of student you want to be throughout your high school years."

Secretary Gassman explained the Wisconsin Covenant, distributed pledge forms, and encouraged students to sign the form after discussing it with their parents. Students signing the Wisconsin Covenant pledge to stay in school, take college prep courses, set an example as good citizens, and graduate with at least a B average.

"If you do these four things, the state of Wisconsin will see that you have a place in one of the state's public or private schools of higher education and a financial aid package based on your family's financial need," Secretary Gassman said. "Governor Doyle wants you to go as far as you can. We want you to succeed, because you are the workers of tomorrow. We need electricians, plumbers, teachers, scientists, nurses, doctors and more to keep our economy going."

Secretary Gassman spoke to the eighth grade class of Language Arts Teacher Donna Fogell. More than 17,000 students throughout the state signed the Wisconsin Covenant last year, the first year of the initiative that Governor Doyle and First Lady Jessica Doyle have championed. Before becoming First Lady, Jessica Doyle was the Learning Coordinator at Cherokee Middle School.

Last month, the Wisconsin Covenant Foundation achieved tax-exempt status as a private, non-profit 501.c (3) public charity. The foundation was established last fall with a \$40 million gift from the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation. In addition to enacting the Wisconsin Covenant, the state budget Governor Doyle signed last fall also puts the state on track to triple financial aid since 2003.

As students enter college, they may receive a mix of loans, grants, and work study opportunities based on their family's financial needs. A copy of the Wisconsin Covenant pledge 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.