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## **DWD Secretary Newson: Racine School-to-Work Program Successfully Prepares Next Generation of Workers**

*Youth apprenticeship program in Racine proves to be effective model with 98% completion rate*

RACINE – During a visit today to Racine Park High School, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson cited the Racine Youth Apprenticeship consortium as a successful model that prepares students for post-secondary education and sets them on the path toward future careers.

“The Racine youth apprenticeship program is an example of state government working hand-in-hand with school districts and community organizations to ensure students have the skills that are in demand when they complete their studies and begin a career,” Secretary Newson said. “The work being done at Racine Park High School is reflective of the critical partnership between DWD and school districts to prepare Wisconsin’s next generation of workers for opportunities in manufacturing and other areas of our growing economy.”

The youth apprenticeship program enables students to be matched with a private-sector employer to gain work experience and to take courses at their high school or local technical college that prepare them for an occupation in areas such as manufacturing. The program in Racine operates through a consortium that includes the Racine Unified School District, Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce, and other partners. It boasts a 98 percent completion rate among the students who were eligible to complete the program for the most recent school year.

“We’re proud to host a successful youth apprenticeship program in the Racine Unified School District,” added Dr. Ann Laing, Superintendent of the Racine Unified School District. “RUSD students are able to access this program in high schools in our district and work collaboratively with local employers, forming one of the many very important programs offered by the school district to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workplace.”

Wisconsin’s youth apprenticeship program has operated for over 20 years and is operated by DWD in conjunction with local school districts, chambers of commerce, and other community organizations.

During his visit to Racine Park High School, Secretary Newson commended the school district for the success of its youth apprenticeship program. The program is being studied by Governor Walker’s College and Workforce Readiness Council, which formed earlier this year under the Governor’s Wisconsin Working initiative. The Council is examining the district’s youth apprenticeship model as it seeks ways to develop a pipeline to prepare students for high-wage, high-growth employment opportunities.