

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

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

CONTACT: Chris Marschman, Communications Specialist, 608-261-6705

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

In Oshkosh & Menasha, Labor Secretary urges ninth graders act before September 30 deadline

OSHKOSH – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today urged ninth graders at Oshkosh North High School to sign the Wisconsin Covenant before the September 30th deadline and reserve a place 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 the Oshkosh North ninth grade class of more than 300. "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."

Secretary Gassman explained the Wisconsin Covenant 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."

Following her stop at Oshkosh North, Secretary Gassman met with nearly 150 ninth graders at Menasha High School and urged them to sign the Wisconsin Covenant before the September 30th deadline. At both stops, she noted that only 12.3 percent of Wisconsin residents entering the UW System are from families earning less than \$30,000 a year. Under the current budget, the state is on course to triple financial aid since 2003 when Governor Doyle took office.

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.

Earlier this year, 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.