

**Department of Workforce Development
Secretary's Office**
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-3131
Fax: (608) 266-1784
Email: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us
Website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>



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Contact: Rose Lynch, Director of Communications, 608-266-6753

Secretary Gassman makes Governor's case for Youth Apprenticeship *Visits DeForest, meets Wisconsin's future workers, praises successful program*

DeForest – In a visit today to DeForest High School, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman met students enrolled in Youth Apprenticeship and praised the school's successful program as an example of what Governor Doyle wants to achieve by doubling Youth Apprenticeship opportunities statewide.

"Youth Apprenticeship is a great program that lets high school students explore career options and helps us ensure a skilled workforce for tomorrow," Secretary Gassman said. "For many students, it opens doors to good jobs and career ladders. Eight out of ten get job offers when they complete the program and graduate. If they go on to college or technical school, they are more focused and do much better than students who didn't take advantage of the program."

In the budget he offered Tuesday, the Governor said he would increase funding for Youth Apprenticeship. By the end of the biennium, funding will double to \$2.2 million per year, allowing 4,000 students opportunities each school year to combine work and classroom instruction as they prepare for the future. More employers also could participate. Currently, about 1,300 hire students as apprentices.

"Youth Apprenticeship is a very successful program, popular with students and employers, and it has been that way since Wisconsin began the program in 1991," Secretary Gassman said. "Governor Doyle sees this as among the best investments we can make, benefiting students, employers, all of us, as we grow the economy, create quality jobs and help young workers get a good start."

Secretary Gassman met with 11 students in the Youth Apprenticeship program at DeForest High School, along with their business mentors. The students: Heather Banuelos; Eric Esser; Rebecca Hudson; Brooke Gusman; Amanda Kaufman; Sara Kvale; Dana Larson; Derek Preston; Mark Schiess; Josh Wilkinson; and, Jayme Wopinski, are in youth apprenticeship programs in architecture, automotive technology, biotechnology, health and information technology. Secretary Gassman thanked employers University of Wisconsin; Architect Dorschner/Associates Inc.; CUNA Mutual Group; DeForest School District; Waunakee Manor Health Care Center; St. Mary's Healthcare Center; Meriter Hospital; Bell Ford, Inc.; and, Polk Diesel & Machine, Inc. for their support of the DeForest apprenticeship program.

DeForest is one of 16 districts in a Dane County partnership that received a \$62,639 Youth Apprenticeship Grant from the Department of Workforce Development for the current school year.

For more information about the Youth Apprenticeship program, visit the department's website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dws/programs/ya/default.htm>.