

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](mailto:dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us)

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, December 4, 2008

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

## **Secretary Gassman Salutes Eclipse Charter School, Highlights Beloit Partnership in Creating Career Pathways, Meeting Need for Skilled Workers**

### ***State Labor Secretary cites career opportunities in demand industries***

BELOIT – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today saluted Beloit's new alternative school, Eclipse Charter School, as the only Wisconsin high school with an automotive technician program to meet strict national standards and earn master certification, a remarkable achievement typically limited to technical colleges.

"What education, business and community leaders in Beloit have done is set an example for all in creating career pathways for youth to jobs of the future," Secretary Gassman said as she visited the school in renovated space of a former mall. "Eclipse serves as a model as we improve efforts to develop demand driven workforce development programs, create career pathways for current and future workers, and ensure a skilled workforce."

In touring the school that opened in the fall of 2007, Secretary Gassman praised the school district, the Stateline Career and Technical Education Academy (SCTEA), and the Finley Dencker Buick dealership for joining forces to create the innovative school to work program.

The SCTEA is a joint effort among several school districts to provide workforce education in areas such as health, automotive and tourism. Eclipse is the only high school in the state to receive master status from the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation. Twelve schools have met minimum NATEF standards, but none have certification in all eight categories.

"While our national economy is in crisis, we must position Wisconsin for recovery and growth," Secretary Gassman said. "We will need thousands of mid-skilled workers in the coming years, as older workers retire and new jobs are created in emerging industries. Many of these jobs require specialized training that can be provided in settings such as this, the workplace or technical colleges."

"The national economic crisis presents us with major challenges," she said. "Wisconsin is among more than 40 states with severe budget shortfalls. Governor Doyle has said we must strive for greater efficiencies, while protecting such priorities as education. Wisconsin has one of the strongest education systems in the nation, and the investments made under the Governor's leadership will aid in our economic recovery."

A member of Governor Doyle's Cabinet, Secretary Gassman leads DWD in strengthening Wisconsin's workforce. DWD provides training and employment assistance to job seekers, enforces worker's rights, administers the state's Unemployment Insurance, Apprenticeship, and Worker's Compensation programs and works with employers to find appropriate job candidates.