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DWD Secretary Urges Businesses in the Milwaukee Area to Enroll Students in School-to-Work program

Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship program provides valuable work experience for high school youth

MILWAUKEE – During a visit this morning to Alexander Hamilton High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson urged employers across the region to take part in the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship (YA) program. The YA program is a nationally recognized school-to-work program that combines classroom instruction with work experience to provide participating students with skills to succeed in entry-level jobs.

“Wisconsin’s Youth Apprenticeship program is an opportunity for employers seeking to train and hire qualified workers,” said Secretary Newson. “Under Governor Walker’s leadership, DWD is working closely with employers to create a strong environment for private-sector job creation. We encourage businesses to consider options like the Youth Apprenticeship program to prepare students to succeed in the years following high school.”

This spring, DWD and MPS are collaborating on a district-wide pilot to increase the number of participating YA employers. Examples of enhanced outreach efforts include:

- Mailing inserts that are designed to highlight one of three key YA employment sectors: health care, manufacturing, and financial services. The inserts are being sent to employers in the Milwaukee region with information about the YA program’s benefits as well as key local program contacts;
- Presentations about YA before key business organizations in the Milwaukee area; and
- Enhanced student engagement activities by the district, including worksite tours of local businesses, industry guest speakers, and career fairs.

The state’s Youth Apprenticeship program first enrolled students in 1992 and currently enrolls almost 1,900 students at over 1,300 employers. Participating students are paired with employers for work-based training while they complete related classes at local high schools.

Wisconsin’s YA program was profiled in “Pathways to Prosperity,” a report released by the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2011. The program was recognized as an “Exemplar of Employee Engagement” for its success in preparing students either for post-secondary education or the workplace. The report noted that 75% of YA graduates enter post-secondary training and 85% of graduates are employed after leaving high school.

The YA program represents a key strategy under Governor Walker’s comprehensive agenda to develop Wisconsin’s workforce, strengthen the pipeline for skilled workers, and address the skills gap in partnership with employers.

For more information: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/youthapprenticeship/>