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CONTACT: DWD Communications, 608-266-2722

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DWD Secretary: Milwaukee-Area Career Planning Pilot Helps 1,900 High School Students Explore Potential Pathways

MILWAUKEE – During a visit today to Bradley Tech High School, Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson said 1,900 students in the Milwaukee area explored potential careers with mentors during the school year as part of the DWD-supported My Life! My Plan! program expansion. Secretary Newson also encouraged more students to take advantage of the coaching and career exploration activities that My Life! My Plan! offers.

“My Life! My Plan! helps high school students work with volunteer career mentors from the local business community to plan potential career possibilities,” Secretary Newson said. “On behalf of Governor Walker, we are pleased to have supported the program’s expansion in the Milwaukee region on a pilot basis, and we commend the volunteers and organizations that have collaborated to prepare the next generation of Wisconsin’s workforce.”

Bradley Tech High is one of the sites for the My Life! My Plan! workshop, a half-day event that was originally developed by the Greater Milwaukee Committee to connect students and business mentors. The students work with mentors to explore their career aptitudes and develop plans to reach their career potential after high school. With workshops winding down with the school year, Secretary Newson shared an update on the program’s reach. Key highlights include:

- A total of 82 workshops have taken place during the current program year, including workshops supported by the DWD grant and those supported through additional sources.
- A total of 2,287 students have been served, including 1,888 under the DWD grant.
- Hundreds of volunteers from the business community have served as career coaches.
- Among students who filled out surveys after the My Life! My Plan!, 93% said they feel more confident in their plans after high school, 91% have a better understanding of career pathways, and 86% are better able to plan for classes and activities.

DWD supported the program last year through a \$30,000 grant to the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB), which coordinated the program with the Greater Milwaukee Committee in the Milwaukee region.

“My Life! My Plan! plays a critical role in helping Milwaukee-area youth to prepare for life after high school,” said Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board President and CEO Donald Sykes. “The partnership between the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Department of Workforce Development, and Greater Milwaukee Committee is vital in providing a strong foundation for students to learn about employment prospects in the area and consider classes and post-secondary options that will lead to a good job.”

During the workshop, students complete assessments that align their interests and aptitudes with potential occupations in the Milwaukee area. Students also compare the results of the assessment to growing occupations in the area, including occupations that currently have job openings. The students and mentors complete a workbook that helps them to consider options after high school and develop a plan to determine how they can successfully transition from high school to post-secondary education and into a career.