

Talent Development, Attraction and Retention Headline Lt. Gov. Kleefisch's Visit to New Berlin Schools

New Berlin, Wis. – Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch visited the School District of New Berlin on Thursday to learn about the district's college and career readiness initiative and how it supports the state's interest in talent development, attraction, and retention.

The district has been a leader in the implementation of Education for Employment legislation and Academic and Career Planning.

"Workforce development is the primary economic development issue in Wisconsin," Superintendent Joe Garza said. "K12 has a significant role to play. Students come to us in kindergarten, and we are responsible for the creation and implementation of a development plan that spans more than a decade and is personalized to each and every one of our approximately 4,500 students."

In recent years, the district has implemented programming that provides career awareness, exploration and preparation to all students. The district has also developed and expanded pathways in manufacturing, engineering, construction, healthcare, teaching, computing, entrepreneurship, and more.

"Academic and Career Planning must be student-driven and adult-supported in order to achieve the level of relevance and engagement needed," Garza added. "Students decide what they want to learn about and when they are ready to engage in college-level coursework through our 2- and 4-year partners. Those who want to participate in experiential learning programs, earn an industry credential and/or pursue technical training through one of our partners have the opportunity to do that as well."

Superintendent Garza presented his perspective on the importance of the need for K12, higher education institutes, business/industry, workforce development and economic development to collaborate around shared objectives.

"The School District of New Berlin really gets what it takes to move the state of Wisconsin in the direction we need it to go," Lt. Gov. Kleefisch said. "We have more than a skills gap. We have a geography gap. In addition to talent development efforts like those happening in the School District of New Berlin, we need to find new ways to keep our talent in Wisconsin. There are so many great opportunities here. But it takes a collaborative effort from all key stakeholders to have a collective impact."

During the visit, a panel of students from select programs provided their perspective on how the changes in the SDNB have impacted them personally and how their experiences might affect their postsecondary plans. Kleefisch then toured some of the more specialized program areas at New Berlin Eisenhower Middle/High School.

"The students we heard from effectively demonstrate what college and career ready looks and sounds like," Kleefisch added. "The School District of New Berlin provides an exemplar for the state of Wisconsin."

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