

Department of Workforce Development
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STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development
Scott Walker, Governor
Reginald J. Newson, Secretary

March 8, 2013

Senator Luther Olsen
319 South—State Capitol Bldg
Madison, WI 53707
HAND DELIVERED

Senator Paul Farrow
323 South—State Capitol Bldg
Madison, WI 53707
HAND DELIVERED

Dear Senator Olsen and Senator Farrow:

I write today at the request of Secretary Reggie Newson. He is in receipt of the letter you sent him on January 7, 2013. He is also aware we met on the subject of your letter last month and given our in-person conversation, he asked that I respond on his behalf to you. Thank you for the opportunity to do so.

We have great appreciation for the work you did as chair and vice-chair of the Joint Legislative Council's Special Committee on Improving Educational Opportunities in High School. Like you, we believe high school students need to be given as many options as possible when exploring future occupations. All too often, Wisconsin's high school students have been steered primarily to four-year degrees and as a result, they have been missing a multitude of opportunities throughout the state. Specifically, the state's manufacturing sector is facing a tremendous shortage of workers and unless we engage young people in this area, our state will lose its standing as a manufacturing powerhouse.

We believe that the Labor Market Information System (LMIS) we plan to purchase through the enabling legislation, *AB14/SB23: Wisconsin Fast Forward*, will provide tremendous assistance to students, parents, and educators when making decisions about future employment. The LMIS will provide real-time data that will include occupations and the education components of those occupations; the geographic areas with the most demand for a particular occupation; and whether the sector is growing or shrinking in terms of future prospects. The LMIS will be available at no cost and will be a great tool for serving citizens from all walks of life, including those with barriers to employment.

Our mission at DWD is one we take very seriously. That being, we are working to advance Wisconsin's economy and business climate by empowering and supporting the workforce. That means we are focused not only on today's worker but also on the student coming up through the ranks of our educational system who will be an integral part of the work force of the future. Clearly you share this common focus and thank you for your vote in support of *Wisconsin Fast Forward*. We look forward to applying the LMIS system to better outcomes and opportunities for Wisconsin's young people and of course, we will be reporting those outcomes on a regular basis to the Legislature.

Thank you again for contacting Secretary Newson. I am available at 608/266-2284 if you would like to discuss this letter or any other topic. My door is always open to you.

Sincerely,

GEORGIA E. MAXWELL
Executive Assistant

cc: Reggie Newson, DWD Secretary