

Wisconsin has been recognized nationally for our Youth Apprenticeship (YA) Program which provides high school students with academic and work experiences skills. The River Valley School District has many high school students involved, which in turn allows the students to graduate with a high school diploma and a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency in a specific career cluster.

The Wisconsin YA Program was created by the Wisconsin Legislature in 1991. It was the first statewide apprenticeship system in the United States. In other parts of the country, registered apprenticeships often require that an applicant already have a high school diploma or its equivalent, yet we allow the student to develop job skills while still completing graduation requirements.

Along with technical job skills, youth apprentices gain valuable employability skills, interpersonal skills, and a general knowledge of the world of work. Students who successfully complete the program have many options after graduation including: entering the workforce directly after high school, applying for a registered apprenticeship position, enrolling in a postsecondary educational program, or using the skill to move ahead and seek other avenues after graduation. Whatever option they choose, they are better prepared to succeed because of their participation in the program.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), within the Division of Employment and Training, is the statewide overseer of the work. Our River Valley High School program is also administered locally with the assistance of CESA 3 as a regional collaborator to facilitate uniform statewide curriculum guidelines. These guidelines are developed in collaboration with and endorsed by representatives from Wisconsin businesses, industry associations, and trade representatives in each program area.

YA program areas are diverse and represent many industries. Approved program areas include the following:

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Art, A/V Technology and Communications
- Finance
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

So, as a junior or senior in high school enrolls for a youth apprentice experience, our high school Career and Technical Education staff pairs the student with a mentor at a place of employment. They are also simultaneously enrolled in related classroom instruction that both supports meeting their high school graduation requirements and enhances what is being learned in the workplace.

Currently at River Valley High School we have 50 Youth Apprentices in many areas. We are so proud of the hard work of facilitating this incredible life-long learning experience and proud of kids in the workplace. We are thankful for the many area employers that allow this to happen.

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator
River Valley School District