



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northwoods Legislators Organize Fab Lab Tour

Madison, WI - On Thursday, February 2nd, State Representatives Rob Swearingen, Mary Felzkowski and Jeff Mursau will be hosting a Fab Lab tour in the 34th Assembly District for rural and urban legislators and Wisconsin school superintendents. The group will be traveling throughout the Northwoods to discuss issues pertaining to rural and urban education while touring Fab Labs in the Three Lakes, Northland Pines and Florence school districts.

Fab Labs are centers where students can learn about and participate in the fabrication of different materials and items. From being able to design an item to then creating it with a 3D printer, Fab Labs are quickly becoming a popular addition to school curriculums because of what students can learn about engineering and material processing.

"This is a great opportunity to show urban legislators and other school district officials across the state the strengths of rural schools as well as some of the unique challenges that they face," stated Rep. Swearingen. *"It is clear that Fab Labs have enhanced learning opportunities and prepared students for the next phase of their education or careers beyond the high school level. I am proud to say that the 34th Assembly District is home to more Fab Labs than any other district in the state."*

"Fab Labs use innovative teaching techniques that truly help students with a broad spectrum of learning abilities," stated Rep. Felzkowski (Czaja). *"I am very excited to continue our work with educational professionals, superintendents and legislators from around the state to move Wisconsin's education system forward."*

"In an effort to address our skilled worker shortage, it's important to have strong partnerships between our schools and the business community," stated Rep. Mursau. *"Fab Labs offer a tremendous opportunity for our area students to gain employable skills before they leave high school."*

School officials in the area are eager for the opportunity to display the benefits that Fab Labs provide to their students and local communities on a daily basis.

"On behalf of the Three Lakes district, we are delighted to host this visit by Wisconsin legislators and school district administrators as we showcase how our students are doing amazing things through inquiry-based learning in our Fab Lab," stated Three Lake Fab Lab Director, Steve Yahr. *"Our students and Fab Lab have become a catalyst for developing new energy and possibilities with Three Lakes businesses. We look forward to developing new relationships and opportunities for everyone in northern Wisconsin."*

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"The Northland Pines School District is grateful for the opportunity to create our Fab Lab. This would not be possible without the support from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the Vilas County Economic Development Corporation, along with a continued collaborative effort on behalf of Representative Swearingen and Representative Felzkowski," stated Northland Pines School District Administrator, Mike Richie. ***"Our students thoroughly enjoy working in our Fab Lab and the sky is the limit as to what they can create. I am excited every time I go into the room and see our students actively engaged with this great technology! This just goes to prove rural schools gives students great opportunities."***

"Rural Wisconsin schools are providing career and technical education offerings, such as the Fab Lab, along with other many other offerings that are preparing all students to be college and career ready," stated Florence County School District Administrator, Ben Niehaus. ***"We appreciate the efforts of Representative Swearingen, Representative Felzkowski and Representative Mursau to showcase the accomplishments of our schools in northern Wisconsin by inviting elected officials from throughout the state on this tour, so we can all work together in finding solutions to our unique, rural challenges. Rural Wisconsin can, and will, contribute to Wisconsin's continued success in both education and commerce."***

The growth of Fab Labs have been made possible by the state's Fabrication Laboratories Grant Program. Under the program, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) provides grants of up to \$25,000 to eligible Wisconsin public school districts or up to \$50,000 to groupings of two or more public school districts. These grants allow school districts to purchase equipment, construct the Fab Labs and prepare students for jobs in the 21st Century.

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