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FIRST LADY JESSICA DOYLE VISITS MILWAUKEE TEACHING FELLOW'S CLASSROOM

MILWAUKEE, WI (November 10, 2008) – Wisconsin's First Lady, Jessica Doyle, visited Lincoln Avenue Elementary Monday morning to visit and read with the students in Ms. Maria Ruiz-Martinez's second grade classroom. Ruiz-Martinez is part of the innovative Milwaukee Teaching Fellows program (www.MilwaukeeTeachingFellows.org), which recruits, selects, and trains mid-career professionals, retirees, and recent college graduates to become teachers in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)'s high-need schools.

"The Governor and I applaud Milwaukee Teaching Fellows for their efforts in helping students succeed," said First Lady Jessica Doyle. "Wisconsin's students will continue to benefit from the diverse professional and academic backgrounds that Fellows bring into the classroom."

Ruiz-Martinez entered the Teaching Fellows program after graduating with a double major in Spanish and History. She has previously worked as a tutor for students with disabilities in MPS and served as an assistant teacher at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. Ruiz-Martinez now teaches early elementary students in a bilingual classroom at Lincoln. "Education opened so many doors for me, and now I want to help others open their own... I want to strive for high academic achievement for all students with dedication, passion, and creativity," said Ruiz-Martinez.

During the visit, First Lady Doyle read *Thank You Bear* to the students and encouraged them to read the other books that she donated to the classroom. Mrs. Doyle shared that she was impressed with the students' ability to speak multiple languages – an inspiration to her as she is currently learning words in Spanish.

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Milwaukee Teaching Fellows is currently accepting applications for the 2009 cohort of talented individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of MPS students as teachers. Interested candidates can apply online at www.MilwaukeeTeachingFellows.org.

Milwaukee Teaching Fellows Fast Facts

- The average GPA for the current group of Fellows is 3.26.
- 30% hold advanced degrees (e.g., MBA, MA, JD).
- Milwaukee Teaching Fellows teach full time and receive a regular first-year teacher's salary and benefits.
- Prior to entering the classroom, Fellows participate in an intensive hands-on summer training which includes working in the MPS summer school program.
- Fellows commit to enrolling in a teaching licensure program at Cardinal Stritch University or the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

This initiative is a partnership between Milwaukee Public Schools and The New Teacher Project, a national non-profit organization that works with school districts, states and other educational entities to ensure that high-need students get outstanding teachers. The program is funded in part through a Transition to Teaching grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

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