The Wisconsin Credit Union League
One League, One Focus - Your Success!

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FOR THE RECORD

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Credit unions run 109 in-school branches, young people save over $2 million in accounts

Wisconsin credit unions have achieved another milestone in their efforts to instill a savings habit among youth; there are now at least 109 fully functioning credit union branches inside Wisconsin schools. Collectively, they have helped young people save a whopping $2 million.

Wisconsin is a national leader in implementing youth branches – a concept which has earned for credit unions a Governor's Award for Financial Literacy and has been heralded as a best practice for financial literacy education. Wisconsin is now second only to Michigan for having the largest total number of student-run credit union branches.

Notably, **youth-branches aren't moneymakers**. In fact, most break even while others pose a cost to operate. But because schools have limited staff time and tight budgets, more have come to rely on credit union partners to help teach state standards for personal financial literacy. In-school credit unions typically offer free financial education, either through the branch or cooperatively with teachers of math, social studies, economics, business or other classes.

The branches are an example of how credit unions return the benefit of their not-for-profit status to the communities where their members live. Credit unions exist to serve their member owners, not make profits.

What's a youth-run credit union?

It's a full-fledged credit union that's managed by and for students. It might be set up in a special office or classroom or fashioned from office cubicles in a school gymnasium or cafeteria. All student-run branches have adult supervision and are state-regulated.

They typically operate only a limited number of hours, such as during a lunch period. They provide financial transactions to students, predominantly deposits and withdrawals from savings accounts. The money the students save comes from allowances, part-time jobs, or entrepreneurial or investing exercises performed in class.

What in-school credit unions accomplish

The fully-functioning financial institutions:

- **Save taxpayers millions of dollars** by improving financial education at no cost to schools.
- **Cultivate among youth a lifelong habit of saving** money.
- **Teach responsible use of financial products** before students fall into a "credit card" trap.
- **Develop job-related skills** like organization, service, cash handling and teamwork.
- **Offer families convenient access to their funds** with less runaround.

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