

## **Students in Agricultural Education and FFA Benefit from HB 96 Funding**

Good Afternoon, My Name is Danielle Haydocy and I am the Agricultural Education Teacher at Crestview High School in Richland Co.

Students in Agricultural Education and the FFA gain invaluable experiences beyond the classroom, made possible through the funding provided by HB 96. These students engage in career and life-building lessons that equip them for future success.

At Crestview, our FFA and Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs are diverse, including raising and showing livestock at the fair, raising hens and exotic birds and incubating the eggs to sell and working for numerous different farms and farming businesses. A highlight for our chapter is our greenhouse share program. Students invest \$50.00 per share for a variety of plants, including baskets, flats, and flower pots.

From early February until the end of May, students collaboratively plant, care for, and nurture small seedlings into beautiful hanging baskets and flats of flowers. Once the plants mature, the students sell them as part of their small business ventures.

This program allows students to double their investment while learning essential skills in sales, small business ownership, marketing, and client relationship building. A notable success story is that of Jessica Smith, who purchased six greenhouse shares this past year. Through effective marketing and sales to community members and family, Jessica profited approximately \$325.00. This initiative occurs outside of regular school hours, with students dedicating time in the mornings, afternoons, and weekends. Many participants do not have farming backgrounds but develop a passion for plant growth and recognize the significance of the greenhouse industry to Ohio's economy.

The 5th Quarter grant funds make the supervision of this project feasible. I oversee students' progress, maintain the greenhouse, and provide support when students are unavailable to water the plants. Additionally, I troubleshoot issues with drip lines, contact electricians when the heating system fails, collaborate with maintenance for water pump problems, assist students in selling surplus plants on weekends, and manage leftover inventory for auction at the end of May.

What may appear to be a simple project requires substantial effort. Planning and ordering plants occurs in October, alongside ordering potting soil and plastic supplies, among other necessary activities. All these efforts aim to benefit my students and ensure the success of the next generation of Ohio entrepreneurs.

The 5th Quarter grant is vital in sustaining projects like our greenhouse shares by compensating teachers for their time. We are committed to developing the next generation of entrepreneurs while teaching students the importance of growing their own food and appreciating the intrinsic value of a beautiful and relaxing garden. I also propose an increase in the HB 96 funding from \$600,000 to \$1.2 million over the next two years to further support these initiatives.

