

SUPERINTENDENT'S POST, MARCH 2019
By Chuck McCauley | Bartlesville Public Schools

Beginning in August 2019, Bartlesville will begin offering agricultural education courses at the middle schools and high school. The district's 2020 Strategic Plan includes a Community Partnerships component, which led to a districtwide staff survey in the 2017-18 academic year for "Big Dreams" about programs and offerings the district might implement with community partners. Courtney Gagan, an English teacher at Madison Middle School who is the district's 2019 Teacher of the Year, suggested a Future Farmers of America (FFA) program.

The district determined that almost all of the state's districts with Class 6A schools offer agriculture education. District administrators Matt Hancock and Dr. Stephanie Curtis formed a committee to research state and area agriculture education programs and seek community partners to assist with implementation. Committee members toured programs in Owasso, Jenks, and Dewey.



Hancock and Curtis have presented to groups such as Washington County CattleWomen and the Bartlesville Public Schools Foundation's Board of Trustees. Community partners are stepping up to assist. Trevor Dorsey and Regent Bank have contributed \$10,000 to purchase a trailer for a Future Farmers of America program. The Barry W. Lowe & Karen Sue Lowe Education Foundation has contributed \$3,000 to purchase middle school and high school agriculture curricula for 2019-20.

The district has identified a spot at Bartlesville High School for a classroom/shop building for the new program. It is likely that in August 2019 voters will consider a bond issue that will include funding for the construction of that facility at the south end of the parking lot near the Bruin Activity Center indoor practice facility. It would not be an animal barn but would provide classroom and shop space.

The state's CareerTech Agricultural Education Division administers offerings in 362 high schools to prepare students for careers in production agriculture, agribusiness, and other emerging agricultural-related occupations. Programs may include offerings in:

- Agricultural Communications
- Agribusiness and Management
- Agricultural Power, Structures, and Technology
- Animal Science
- Food Products and Processing
- Natural Resources and Environmental Science
- Plant and Soil Science

Hiring an agriculture teacher was identified as one of the district's 2019-2020 Budget Priorities. The district's program will commence by offering an introductory class at each middle school and an Introduction to Agriscience course at the high school in 2019-2020. The instructor will help identify which curricular offerings best suit the needs of Bartlesville students. It is projected that the program might eventually grow to require two agriculture instructors.

Marty Jones has been hired as the initial instructor. An Oklahoma native, Jones earned a BS in Agricultural Education from Oklahoma State University and was named the Outstanding Senior by the OSU Alumni Association and crowned Homecoming King. He has taught agriculture at Elgin and Guthrie high schools. During his five years of teaching agriculture, his students have done well at the national FFA convention, and he has advised FFA degree recipients, trained students who qualified for district and state competition in speech, and spearheaded a variety of other program achievements.

Go, Bruins!

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