



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

Telling our Story

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Submitted photos
A collage of the award-winning display at the Philadelphia Flower Show organized by the W.B. Saul High School horticulture class.

Project Wins Gold Medal at Philadelphia Flower Show

This year’s Philadelphia Flower Show exhibit allowed The W.B. Saul High School horticulture class to highlight a location that has historical meaning. The Valley Green Inn/Wissahickon Creek is the school’s educational stomping grounds. Walking up to the class exhibit at the Flower Show was designed to make visitors feel like they are standing right in front of the Valley Green Inn. The goal was to capture the natural beauty of the location. The students have worked every day and have spent

time after school and on the weekends. With the help of more than 70 students and 15 staff members, the exhibit came out better than anyone could have imagined it would be. Competing against other colleges and one high school, the students were able to win a Gold Medal Education award as well as an Environmental Award at the Flower Show. *Editor’s note: To view the class’ Flower Show website go to <http://saul2016flowershow.weebly.com/>.*



Members of the horticulture class.

Beyond the Blue Jacket

FROM THE OFFICER’S STATION

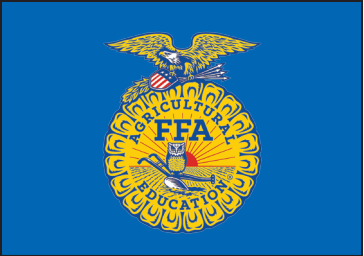
One of the iconic symbols of the FFA and agricultural education is the blue corduroy jacket worn by members of the National FFA Organization for the past 80 years. While this uniform is perhaps the most recognizable image of agricultural education, there is so much more that happens behind and beyond the blue jacket that defines a high-quality agricultural education program.

FFA cannot exist without a formal, school-based agricultural education program within a local education agency. This formal program must feature three components:

- A strategically planned classroom and laboratory instruction by a certified ag teacher.
- A high quality supervised agricultural experience that takes place outside of the classroom/ laboratory.
- The leadership, personal growth, and career success fostered by membership in the FFA.

The mission of Pennsylvania Association of Agriculture Educators is to support formal agricultural education through professional development for ag teachers. This is done through the promotion of agricultural education as a premier vector for workforce development and career and technical education in the state.

Agricultural education programs in about 150 schools in Pennsylvania foster career success in more than 12,000 students through preparation for high-demand agriculture, food, and natural resource-based occupations in Pennsylvania. However, the Pennsylvania Department



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of Agriculture predicts 75,000 agriculture, food, and natural resources-related job openings in the next 10 years.

The problem is that the majority of students in Pennsylvania’s 500 public school districts do not have access to a formal school-based agricultural education program in their home school.

Therefore, not only is PAEE interested in supporting agricultural education programs, but we have a vested interest in promoting agricultural education by informing the public about what a formal, school-based agricultural education program looks like and how our programs foster career success in students prepared to fulfill the needs of Pennsylvania’s agricultural workforce. PAEE desires to create an enthusiasm for agricultural education by showcasing how leading agricultural education programs produce career and college-ready graduates in the agriculture, food, and natural resources industries. Therefore, we hope that you will create or reinvigorate a commitment to vocalizing your support of agricultural education in your community and throughout the state to strengthen the workforce that supports the No. 1 industry in Pennsylvania, which is agriculture.

To find out more about PAEE and how you can help to support agricultural education in your school and community, please visit <http://www.paffa.org/PAEE> or contact me at dbittner@mwsd.cc.

Editor’s note: David L. Bittner is the PAEE president.

Philadelphia FFA Member Sings the Creed

W. B. Saul High School junior Victoria Thornton has aspirations in studying animal science after high school. She also has aspirations in becoming a professional singer.

During her sophomore year, Thornton wanted to get involved in an FFA club, so she joined the FFA Multimedia Club after school. There, she assisted in creating lyrics to help change the sound of the FFA Creed. This change developed into Thornton’s supervised agricultural experience project in ag communications by filming a music video of the FFA Creed called “I Believe.”

Thornton not only wrote the lyrics, but also was the lead singer of the video. The purpose of creating “I Believe” was to provide a unique sound that will attract students to FFA activities. Thornton’s efforts allowed her to apply for the Pennsylvania FFA Proficiency Award area in ag communications, where she placed as a state finalist at the Pennsylvania Farm Show during the Pennsylvania FFA Mid Winter Convention. Thornton will be able to continue her involvement with the multimedia club by helping to create and produce more recruitment videos for W.B. Saul High School.