

(2/28/24 District Administrator's Corner Article)

As this month is Career and Technology Education (CTE) Month, we will feature the three CTE areas during February to raise awareness of the role they have in preparing students for college and career success. The River Valley School District is very proud of the diverse courses we offer and the incredible staff in this department.

When students are involved with CTE in high school, it improves graduation rates, engagement, and employability skills for them to enter our community. Approximately two-thirds of all Wisconsin high school students have taken one course in the CTE field. CTE provides our students pathways to new opportunities.

**This week we are highlighting Agriculture Education.**

Consider young women and men that hope to join a career in genetics, herd management, veterinary science, botany, natural resources, conservation, consumer health, biochemistry, or restaurant management— we offer courses to build a strong foundation and expand their knowledge. Courses offered this year included: Agribusiness, Animal Health and Nutrition, Crop and Soil Science, Food Science, Horticulture Science, Introduction to Agriculture, Large Animal Science, Plant Science / Greenhouse Management, Small Animal Science, Wildlife Management, Independent projects in agriculture, work experiences, and Youth Apprenticeships.

It is rare for a district our size to maintain these incredible offerings. These opportunities come with established relationships with local employers and years of experience with our staff member - Shari Graffunder. Shari is resourceful, professional, and creative and has worked very hard to build relevant classroom experiences and Youth Apprenticeship opportunities for our students. Shari has incredible connections with local families, organizations, and businesses, but also across our state and nation.

Shari has been a leader in agricultural education, including both the National Association of Agricultural Educators and the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators. As an NAAE member, she served on the National FFA Awards and Recognition Advisory Council for 2015-2018 and has been a member of the NAAE Policy and Bylaws Committee representing Region III for 2019-2022. In 2015, Shari participated in NAAE's National Agriscience Teacher Ambassador Academy. She served as the WAAE president in 2013-2014, the co-chairperson of the Wisconsin Agriscience Inquiry Institute for 2016, the chairperson of the Wisconsin FFA Center Board of Directors in 2014-2015, and also served on the Wisconsin FFA Center Board of Directors from 2015-2019 as a Section III and IV representative.

Our global, state, and local economy relies heavily on agriculture. The week of February 19-23 was National FFA Week. Gratefully, we have one of the state leaders in Ag Education in our district. We are fortunate. The River Valley School District is proud of our agriculture education offerings and the incredible events (such as the River Valley School Fair) which continue to position us as a leader in our region. Simply stated, it is one of the things we are known for and we are very proud of it!

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator  
River Valley School District