

A COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE FOR
TEXAS AGRICULTURE SCIENCE TEACHERS

AGRICULTURE TEACHERS **HANDBOOK**



AGRICULTURE
TEACHERS
ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

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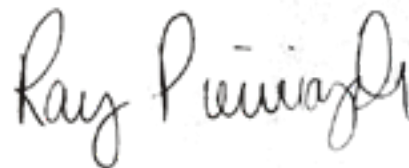
WELCOME TO AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS

According to the data from the 2022-23 school year the Texas Education Agency reported that, school-based agricultural education (SBAE) is an essential educational program that engages more than 265,597 Texas students who are taught by over 2600 qualified instructors in more than 1100 programs.

Agricultural education will help prepare these students for successful careers and a bounty of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems. The complete agricultural education program helps students through a variety of ways including contextual, inquiry-based instruction and learning through an interactive classroom and laboratory; experiential, service and/or work-based learning through implementation of a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program; and premier leadership, personal growth and career success through engagement in FFA activities.

Agricultural education programs in Texas are keen to the needs of their local communities and what the local agriculture industry needs. Our programs prepare students to be college and career ready and to participate as leaders and managers in our growing agricultural global economy. Agriculture affects everyone and it is the responsibility of the local agriculture instructor to not only teach students, but also inform the administration, community, parents and other school personnel about the need to fulfill the agricultural education mission.

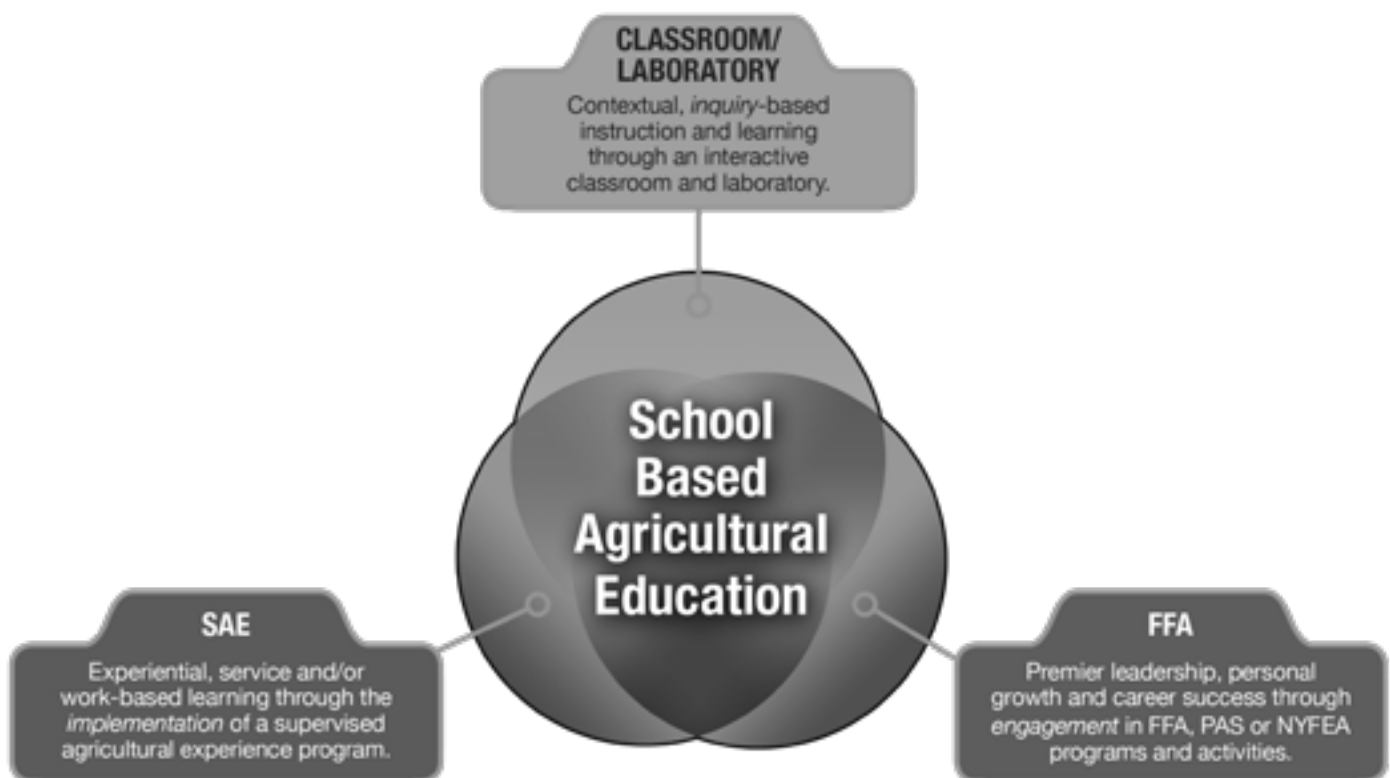
We hope this manual will be looked at as a guide for all agriculture teachers and FFA advisors in Texas, especially those who are new to the profession, coming to our profession from another career or starting a new agricultural education program. This guidebook was adapted from a variety of other sources such as the Kansas Agricultural Education Handbook and was put together by Texas FFA Association, Texas FFA Foundation, Texas Education Agency, and the Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas. This document is a guide for any agricultural education instructor and FFA advisor working in Texas.



ATAT Executive Director

OVERVIEW OF AN AGRICULTURE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in global agriculture, food and natural resources systems. Through agricultural education, students are provided opportunities for leadership development, personal growth and career success. Agricultural education instruction is delivered through three major components:



Texas agricultural education programs have the option to offer courses through eight different programs of study. An approved program must have at least one pathway, but may have multiple programs of study in:

- Agribusiness
- Animal Science
- Applied Agriculture Engineering
- Environmental and Natural Systems
- Food Science and Technology

Plant Science The classroom component provides contextual, inquiry-based instruction and learning through interactive classroom and laboratory experiences.

The SAE is the work-based learning component that provides students with experiential learning opportunities in the form of research, service and/or work experiences. The work-based learning component is tied directly to a student's career objectives and is made up of several activities. Foundational SAEs are taught as part of the classroom instruction, while Immersion SAEs can take place outside of school hours and off the school campus. More detailed SAE information is contained in this manual and provided through trainings and workshops. Extra compensation should be included in an agriculture educator's salary for the monitoring of SAEs throughout the calendar year. This is normally done through an extended contract of 30 day

An Agriculture Education Program must have a state-chartered FFA chapter as part of the agricultural education program. Premier leadership, personal growth and career success are achieved through student engagement in FFA activities and programs, many of which should be offered as part of the classroom instruction. Some FFA activities and programs require travel, overnight stays and extended advisor time. Agriculture educators should be compensated for this extended time working with students through some form of an extended contract or extra-duty contract

JOB DESCRIPTION OF AN AGRICULTURE TEACHER

Instructional Program

The teacher will conduct an instructional program according to the State Board of Education rules as they relate to the full scope of the program being conducted. The basic curriculum and TEKS for each course shall be adhered to and:

- Lesson plans prepared, in conformity with school policy, for all courses offered;
- Instructional materials and instructional methods used to make teaching and learning effective
- Ability to adapt to a variety of learning environments, be willing to constantly learn new materials and techniques and be in touch with the local community and regional agriculture industry.
- Basic skills and abilities of students developed in the school laboratory facilities like greenhouses, school farms, gardens, agricultural mechanics labs/shops, food science kitchens, biotechnology labs, animal care facilities and many more.

Professional Improvement

Staying abreast of current and future topics in agricultural education is vital to the success of an agriculture

educator.

- Continue professional growth by holding membership in professional organizations.
- Regularly attend and participate in district and area in-service meeting.
- Attend summer workshops that are designed to provide professional skills and information.
- Attend State Professional Improvement Conference for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Teachers.
- Dress and conduct themselves in accord with professional standards.

Professional Ethics

- Maintain professional and personal ethics in dealing with students, parents, community leaders, etc. You are a person of influence in the community.
- Maintain a professional online profile

Public and Professional Relations

- Assume a responsible role in public and professional relations by actively participating in civic, professional, agricultural and other community organizations.

- Also keep the public informed as a part of the public relations program.

FFA/Leadership Development

- The FFA is an integral part of the instructional program. All Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources departments are expected to have an active FFA chapter. It is the duty of the teacher to serve as advisor for the local chapter.
- It is necessary that the teacher spend time in planning and conducting leadership, citizenship, and cooperative activities for students at the district, area, state, and national levels.

SAE Supervision

Supervised Agricultural experience programs are important component of the agricultural education program. SAEs allow students to examine their career interests and develop skills in those areas in a structured environment. The agriculture education instructor works with the student, parents and community members to provide an experience for a student to explore and grow in any area of career interest.

SAE For All is a national design that allows teachers to utilize off-the-shelf resources to assist in providing SAEs for every student. Foundational SAEs align with school Individual Plans of Study and with state work-based learning initiatives that are taught as

a part of every agricultural education course. Management of SAE's will include, but not limited to:

- Assisting students in selecting a program that fits their interests and abilities;
- Maintain records; all students in Agriculture Science and FFA should maintain records. The preferred method should be an online system approved by the FFA Board of Directors;
- Locating training stations for students placed in a Work Based Learning experience, if the program is offered;
- Coordinating instructional program with training experiences at the training station if the Work Based Learning program is offered;
- Making supervisory visits
- Supervising the school laboratory (farm, feeding center, greenhouse, meats laboratory, etc.) used for students supervised agricultural experience.

Adult Community Involvement

- Plan and conduct an organized program of instruction and/or community involvement with adults. This may include, but not limited to alumni, young farmers, and booster clubs.

Records and Reports

Prepare and submit FFA rosters, entries, registrations, etc. required by the local, district, area, state, and office promptly, and keep an accurate file copy of all records and reports.

Maintain Facilities and Equipment

- Maintain facilities and equipment through the following activities;
- Proper arrangement of classroom, shop, and laboratory;
- Planning for and maintaining visual aids and references;
- Ordering new equipment and supplies;
- Coordinating the maintenance and repair of tools and equipment;
- Establish and monitor school procedures for keeping classroom, shop, laboratory, office, and grounds neat and attractive at all times;
- Shop and laboratory safety is taught and observed at all times. Safety items are available for student use and safety features have been installed and in working order on equipment; and
- An annual inventory is taken of all tools, equipment, and supplies; and a copy given to the appropriate administrators.

Program Guidance

- The teacher has a definite responsibility for providing information to students about career pathways as a guide to achieving necessary skills for continued education and

employment. This may be done in cooperation with the guidance counselor.

Cooperative Activities

- As a member of the local school faculty, the agricultural science teacher is expected to cooperate fully with local administrators and keep them informed about the program. The teacher is also expected to work closely with local and county agricultural organizations/agencies.
- Off- Campus Supervision of Students
- Supervise students at all off-campus activities such as conventions, contests, workshops, field trips, etc., associated with the agriculture, food, and natural resources program and the FFA.

**I AM AN
AGRICULTURAL
EDUCATOR BY
CHOICE, NOT BY
CHANCE**

Off- Campus Supervision of Students

- Supervise students at all off-campus activities such as conventions, contests, workshops, field trips, etc., associated with

the agriculture, food, and natural resources program and the FFA.

Summer Programs

- Teachers on an extended contract should maintain a summer program that includes FFA activities, teacher in-service, program development and educational activities. Teachers should work with their administration to develop and carry out these programs.

Evaluation of Program

- Evaluation of the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources program shall be done on an

organized and annual basis. This can be accomplished by:

- Developing program goals and objectives that are challenging and reasonably obtainable;
- Evaluating outcomes of instruction;
- Working with an advisory committee and others in determining improvements needed;
- Making changes and adjustments when needed; and
- Using the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Program Evaluation form.



ACRONYMS OF AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

AET: Agricultural Experience Tracker.

A Portfolio system used by teachers and students to record SAE visits and extended contract hours, manage the POA, create reports for program supporters and grade SAE programs.

AFNR: Agriculture Food and Natural Resources standards and resources.

CDE: Career Development Event.

CDEs test the abilities of individuals and teams in 24 major areas of agricultural instruction. The events are designed to help prepare students for careers in agriculture.

CTE: Career and Technical Education.

CTE prepares secondary, postsecondary and adult students with technical, academic and employability skills for success in the workplace and in further education.

LDE: Leadership Development Event.

LDEs are competitive events designed to help students develop skills in leadership and prepare students for careers in agriculture.

POA: Program of Activities.

POAs organize chapter activities throughout the year in three major categories: Growing Leaders, Building Communities, Strengthening Agriculture.

SAE: Supervised Agricultural Experience

SAEs are student-led, work-based learning experiences all agricultural education students should participate in within a set of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Technical Standards.

SDE: Speaking Development Events

FFA offers this activity for members to demonstrate their agricultural knowledge and speaking skills through a competitive event. In Texas we offer 8 different events.

WBL: Work Based Learning

AGRICULTURE EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

ACTE: Association for Career and Technical Education

ACT: Agricultural Consortium of Texas, or Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow

AAAE: American Association for Agricultural Education

AERO: Agriculture Education Related Organization

ATAT: Agriculture Science Teacher Association of Texas

CTSO: Career and Technical Student Organization

FFA: FFA is an intracurricular student organization that prepares members for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

HBCU: Historically Black College and University

LEAD: Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Development. Connects teachers and students to sponsors, key Texas decision and policymakers, and other stakeholders, empowering them with practical knowledge. For LEAD Experiences, see page 53.

MANRRS: Minority in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences

NAAE: National Association of Agricultural Educators.
NAAE advocates for agricultural education, provides professional development for agriculture educators and recruits and retains agriculture educators.

NASAE: National Association of Supervisors of Agricultural Education

NFRBMEA: National Farm & Ranch Business Management Education Association

PAS: National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization

EDUCATIONAL ACRONYMS FOR AG TEACHERS

AAR: Academic Achievement Record

A transcript of academic achievement of students who have completed a minimum, recommended, advanced (distinguished) or foundation high school program. School districts are required to maintain these records.

ACT: American College Test

An assessment taken by students as a precursor to college/university admission.

ADA (Average Daily Attendance)

The number of students attending school on an average day. School districts receive funding based on ADA calculations.

AED: Automated External Defibrillators

A computerized medical device that can check a person's heart rhythm and determine if it requires a shock. The AED uses voice prompts, lights and text messages to tell the rescuer the steps to take.

AEIS: Academic Excellence Indicator System)

A system that pulls together a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas every year. This information is put into the annual AEIS reports, which are released each fall.

AP: Advanced Placement

A program that enables high school students to complete college-level courses for college placement and/or credit.

ARD: Admission, Review, and Dismissal

An ARD committee makes an initial assessment about a student's eligibility for special education services and continues to make most of the major decisions about that student's individualized educational program. If an ARD committee is formed for your child, you will be a member of that committee.

ASF: Available School Fund

A fund primarily made up of revenue generated by the state's fuel tax and by the Permanent School Fund. Each Texas school district is entitled to receive payments from the ASF.

BIP: Behavioral Intervention Plan

CLEP: College-Level Examination Program

A program, administered by the College Board, that gives students the opportunity to receive college credit for what they already know by earning qualifying scores on any of 34 examinations

DAP: Distinguished Achievement Program

A program that requires that, in addition to specific course requirements, students successfully complete any combination of four advanced measures that focus on demonstrated student performance at the college level or work equivalent to that done by professionals in the arts, sciences, business, industry or in community service.

EEO: Equal Educational Opportunity

An act that prohibits specific discriminatory conduct, including segregating students on the basis of race, color or national origin, and discrimination against faculty and staff. The Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974 also requires school districts to take action to overcome students' language barriers that impede equal participation in educational programs.

ELA: English Language Arts

Part of the Common Core curriculum in the NC Standard Course of Study, ELA refers to reading, literature, reading, writing and speaking and listening.

EOC: End-of-Course

End-of-Course tests designed to assess the competencies defined by the Standard Course of Study for three mandated courses: NC Math I, English II and Biology. Tests are taken during the last two weeks of school for students on a traditional calendar and the last week of the course for students on a block schedule.

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Parents have a right of access to their children's education records. When a student turns 18 or enters college, the rights under FERPA transfer to the student.

FRL: Free and Reduced Priced Lunch

Children qualify, based upon parent or guardian financial status, to receive either free or reduced priced lunch through a federal governmental program.

FSP: Foundation School Program

The state program that establishes the amount of state and local funding due to school districts under the Texas school finance law.

FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

This term refers to a full-time employee. When calculating the number of staff members employed by a district, for example, two half-time employees would equal one full-time equivalent employee.

GED: General Educational Development

A high school equivalency program. Individuals who pass the exam earn a high school equivalency

IB:International Baccalaureate

A nonprofit educational foundation that offers three programs for students aged 3 to 19 to help develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

A law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

IEP: Individualized Education Program

The IEP is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, at least annually, by a team of professionals knowledgeable about the student and the parent. The plan describes the strengths of the child and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child, and when, where, and how often services will be provided. The IEP is required by federal law for all exceptional children and must include specific information about how the student will be served and what goals he or she should be meeting.

LEA: Local Educational Agencies

A public school district, open-enrollment charter school or regional education service center

LEP: Limited English Proficient

In the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, the term, 'English learner' replaces the term 'Limited English Proficient' used in section 9101 of the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

A document expressing mutual accord on an issue between two or more parties

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

A program passed in 2001 that supports standards-based education reform. The act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students in certain grades, if those states are to receive federal funding for schools. The act does not assert a national achievement standard; standards are set by each individual state.

OCR: Office for Civil Rights

A USDE agency that works to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation through enforcement of civil rights.

OEYP: Optional Extended Year Program

A program that provides extended-day, extended-week or extended-year grants for students at risk of not being promoted to the next grade or at risk of not graduating from high school. OEYP works to increase academic skills and reduce student grade level retention.

OER: Open Educational Resources

Teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others.

PBIS: Positive Behavior Intervention and Support

An evidence-based, tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. Positive Behavior Intervention and Support programs are a way to impact school learning environments by establishing and reinforcing clear behavioral expectations to support high student performance and to reduce behavioral problems. PBIS site schools work to integrate their Safe Schools Plans, character education efforts and strategies, and discipline efforts to make the schools caring and safe communities for learning.

PD: Professional Development

The term refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement such as continuous courses, workshops, activities and learning objectives aimed at helping professional educators and staff members improve their skills in their fields.

PEIMS: Public Education Information Management System

An application that encompasses all data requested and received by TEA about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information

PGA: Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant Application

A federal grant administered by the Division of Formula Funding per the Perkins Act of 2006: PL 109-270. All districts are eligible to apply for these funds to support Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

PIA: Public Information Act

A Texas state law that gives the public access to government records. All government information, with certain exceptions, is presumed to be available to the public.

PLC: Professional Learning Communities

PLCs are defined by collaborative inquiry, shared decision-making and joint planning of instruction among teachers. Teachers are provided structured time to work together in planning instruction, observing each other's classrooms, and sharing feedback.

PSAT

Pre-Scholastic Assessment Test. Normally taken by high school juniors as a practice test for the SAT. Some schools use the PSAT as a diagnostic tool to identify areas where students may need additional assistance or placement in more rigorous courses.

PSF: Permanent School Fund

A fund created with a \$2 million appropriation by the Texas Legislature in 1854 expressly for the benefit of the public schools of Texas. The Constitution of 1876 stipulated that certain lands and all proceeds from the sale of these lands should also constitute the PSF.

RFP: Request for Proposals

A competitive solicitation method used for highly technical or specialized services. It is generally used when there is no direct legal authority to acquire services exceeding \$25,000.

RTI: Response to Intervention

The practice of meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all students through high-quality instruction and scientific research-based tiered interventions, frequent monitoring of student progress, and application of student response data.

SAT: Scholastic Aptitude Test

The SAT is often taken by high school juniors and seniors as a precursor to college/university admission. It assesses a student's verbal, mathematical and writing skills.

SBEC: State Board for Educator Certification

A state board that provides certification testing for educators, investigates allegations of educator misconduct, assists colleges, universities and alternative programs in developing and implementing teacher certification training programs, and ensures the quality of these programs

SBOE: State Board of Education

A state board comprising 15 elected members from districts throughout the state that establishes policy and provides leadership for the Texas public school system. The board sets curriculum standards, determines passing scores for state-mandated assessment tests, and oversees the investment of the Permanent School Fund.

SCE: State Compensatory Education

Programs and/or services designed to supplement the regular education program for students identified as at risk of dropping out of school

STAAR: State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

A series of state-mandated standardized tests given to Texas public school students in grades 3-8 and those enrolled in five specific high school courses. First given in spring 2012, STAAR is based on the state's curriculum standards called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

STEM curriculum emphasizes connections within and between the fields of mathematics and science; integrates technology; introduces and engages students in the engineering design process; cultivates creativity; and develops skills that drive innovation.

TAAS: Texas Assessment of Academic Skills

The student assessment system from 1990-2002. It was replaced by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

TAC: Texas Administrative Code

A compilation of all state agency rules in Texas. These rules are collected and published by the Office of the Secretary of State. There are 16 titles in the TAC. Each title represents a subject category, and related agencies are assigned to the appropriate title. State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education Rules are codified in the TAC under Title 19, Education, Part 2, Texas Education Agency. State Board for Educator Certification Rules are codified in the TAC under Title 19, Education, Part 7, State Board for Educator Certification.

TAKS: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Criterion-referenced achievement tests designed to measure the extent to which a student has learned and is able to apply the defined knowledge and skills at each tested grade level. The TAKS program was launched in 2003 and was replaced by the STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) program beginning in 2012.

TEA: Texas Education Agency

The Texas agency that provides leadership, guidance, and resources to help schools meet the educational needs of all students. Located in Austin, Texas, TEA is the administrative unit for primary and secondary public education. Under the leadership of the commissioner of education, the agency manages the textbook adoption process, oversees development of the statewide curriculum, administers the statewide assessment program, administers a data collection system on public school students, staff and finances, rates school districts under the statewide accountability system, operates research and information programs, monitors for compliance with federal guidelines and serves as a fiscal agent for the distribution of state and federal funds.

TEKS: Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

State educational standards for what students should know and be able to do from prekindergarten through high school

TELPAS: Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System

An assessment for the progress limited English proficient (LEP) students make in learning the English language

THEA: Texas Higher Education Assessment

A test that assesses the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshman-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges or universities

THECB: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

A board created by the Texas Legislature in 1965 to "provide leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system to achieve excellence for the college education of Texas students." The Coordinating Board meets quarterly in Austin.

Title I

Title I is the largest federal education funding program for schools. Its aim is to help students who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. School funding is based on the number of low-income children, generally those eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. Title I used to be known as Chapter I.

Title III

Title III is the section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that provides funding and addresses English language acquisition and standards and accountability requirements for English learners.

Title IX

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 bans sex discrimination in schools receiving federal funds, whether it is in academics or athletics.

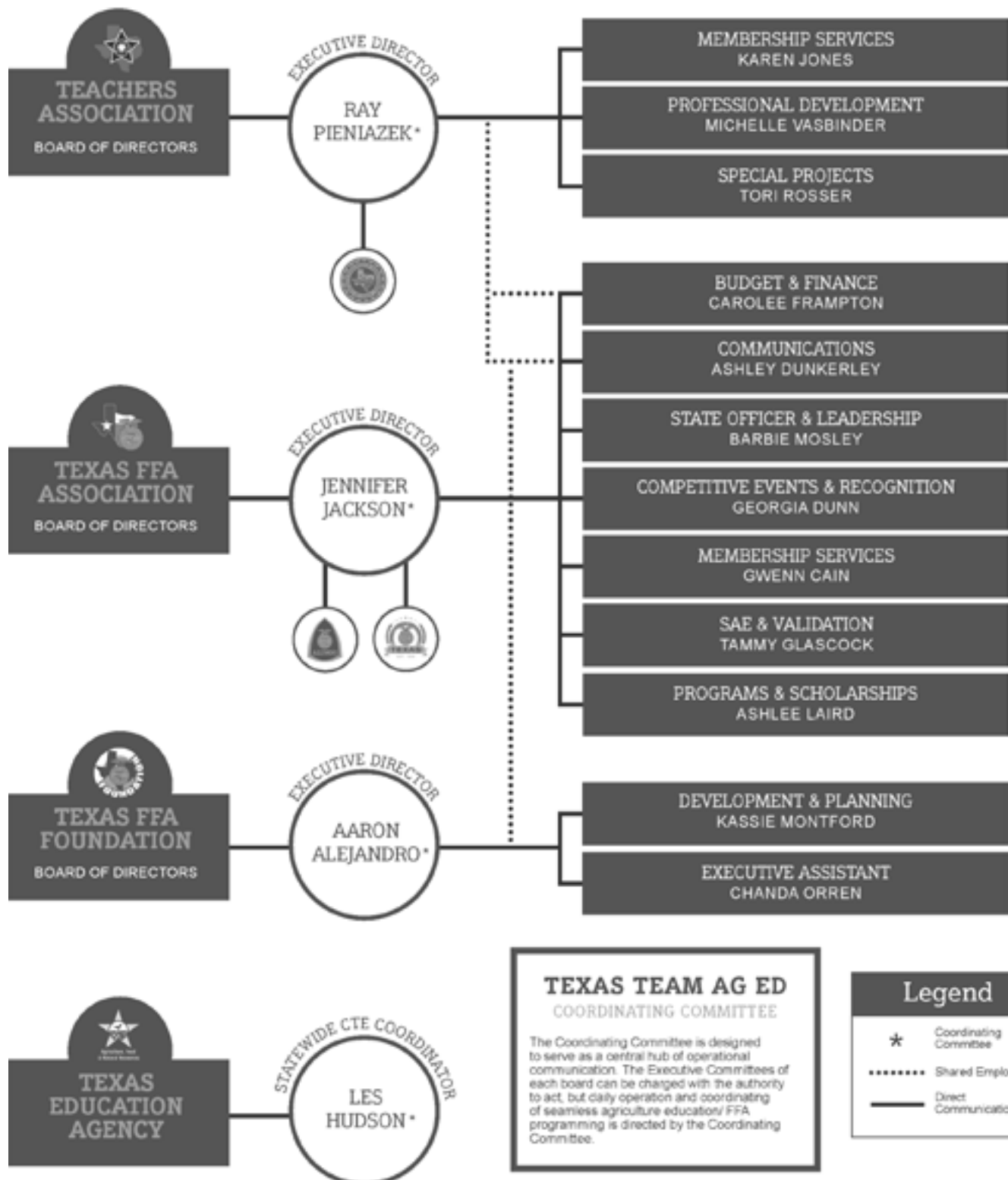
TxVSN: Texas Virtual School Network

A network that provides Texas public school students access to online courses that align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

UIL: University Interscholastic League

A league created by The University of Texas at Austin to provide educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests. UIL organizes and supervises contests that assist in preparing students for citizenship.

WHO IS TEAM AG ED?



WHERE TO STAY CURRENT

AET:



ATAT:



Texas FFA:



Texas FFA Foundation:



TEA/CTE:



NAAE:



Agriculture Teacher's Resource:



Ag Ed Calendar:



MEMBER BENEFITS OF ATAT

Network and Recognition

- Special Agriculture Teachers Association events at the annual Professional Development Conference
- Quarterly Growing Our Future Magazine
- Agriculture Teachers Association website to stay up to date
- Annual Agriculture Teachers Association Awards and recognition
- Use of the Agricultural Education Ford Texas FFA Leadership Center

Professional Development

- Agriculture Teachers Association Professional Development Conference
- Monthly Professional Development opportunities
- Professional New Teacher Mentoring Program (Link Page)
- Access to ATAT Curriculum Website

Liability

- Legal assistance for active members
- Membership Online
- \$1 million Professional Liability Insurance Policy

Advocacy

- Lobbyist working for agriculture science teachers' interests in Austin
- Legislative updates concerning agriculture science

Personal

- Access to the VATAT Credit Union
- Agriculture Science Teachers Crisis Fund (need short explanation)
- Agriculture Science Teachers Association Scholarships for members' children
- Kenneth Hughes life insurance plan (need short explanation)
- FFA discount at Wyndham Hotels nationwide

TEACHER TALKS

Ag Teacher Talks are hosted virtually by ATAT monthly. The purpose of these talks are to have monthly opportunity for discussions, professional development, and idea sharing amongst our members. Each Ag Teacher Talk is recorded and posted along with a summary of the talk and links to the resources discussed.

Available Teacher Talks



Suggest a Teacher Talk



LEGAL FAQs FOR ATAT MEMBERS

I need legal help. Can I call the lawyer directly?

You will need to speak to the Executive Director first to determine if legal assistance is needed.

Once it is determined a lawyer would be the best option for the situation, the Executive Director will gather information including contact information such as a cell phone and personal email to send to the lawyer who will in turn reach out to the member in need of assistance.

I want to resign during my contract year. What are the circumstances under which I can? What are the consequences of doing so?

If you are resigning during your contract year, then you may take the chance of the school district placing a hold on your certificate.

According to Texas Education code, you may resign under the following situations:

- By giving a written notice of resignation no later than the 45th day before the first day of instruction
- Consent from the board of trustees

If you want to resign during a contract year, the following reasons may be considered good cause to resign:

- A serious health condition of the educator or a family member of the educator.
- Relocation to a new city as a result of a change in employer of the educators spouse or partner
- A significant change in the educators family's need that require the educator to relocate or devote more time than allowed by current employment
- A move within the education system that is considered a move up or advancement. Example teacher to counselor, administrator, etc.

It is always a good idea to have conversations with your supervisor prior to making any decisions which might affect your contract.

If you need to resign, give as much notice as possible, assist in the location of and/or training of the replacement, and consider leaving lesson plans for the meanwhile.

Understand they can deny you leaving until a suitable replacement

is found. They can also put a flag on your teaching certificate if you leave anyway for what would be deemed as contract abandonment.

I received a writeup from my supervisor. What do I do, and do I have to sign it?

The document will more than likely state something you do not agree with. It is just an acknowledgement you have received it. When you sign it, you may state that you do not agree with it and will be providing a rebuttal or response to it. Failure to sign it may indicate insubordination and provide more problems for you.

You usually have 10 days to respond in writing. It is best to acknowledge it and state you will do a better job at fulfilling what is being asked of you. If you do not agree, provide facts to support your disagreement with it. Do not give opinions, only provide what is factual and that you can back up with evidence like emails and written correspondence.

The Executive Director can assist you with the response and/or provide you with assistance from the association's legal support.

My contract is not being renewed. I want to stay where I am, what can I do?

The first question to ask is what type of contract do you have - Probationary or term/extended. If you have a probationary contract, which is usually what you are on

at a new school for at least three years, you may not have that much recourse to fight the situation. Districts may simply say you are not the right person for their program. In place of being non-renewed, you should always take the option of resigning. If you are nonrenewed you must state that on your application. If you feel that you have not been offered a new contract wrongfully, please contact the Executive Director for assistance.

If you are on a term contract and they decide to non-renew you, you may request assistance from the Executive Director to work to see about getting a contract renewal. The district will usually need documentation at a level that supports their nonrenewal for persistent violations of district policy or the Texas Educator Code of Ethics.

Call us if you want assistance with your contract.

I was called in to the principal's office and told I was placed on Administrative Leave. What should I do?

You must follow exactly what the administrator tells you to do. You may or may not be able to get your personal belongings at the time of being placed on administrative leave. You may ask to do this and that is acceptable.

You will be on leave until they have completed their investigation of the circumstances under which you are being placed on leave.

Follow the instructions your supervisor will give you in regard to contact with other staff, teaching partners, parents, and students. It is best to not answer any phone calls, email or text messages that might be asking about your situation.

Please contact the Executive Director as soon as you are placed on administrative leave so we can get you legal assistance, if needed.

Your leave will most likely be more than one day, and probably even a week or more depending on the circumstances.

I have paid my dues and I am wondering what the million dollar liability insurance covers?

There are two levels of coverage in our insurance:

Coverage A -Protection of your assets if named in a lawsuit due to an event arising in the course and scope of your employment.

Coverage B - Reimbursement of attorney fees related to cases involving any of the following:

- Supervision, tenure, salary, leave of absence or dismissal
- Allegations of improper discipline of a student
- Allegations of improper contact

with a student

- Allegations of sexual harassment
- Allegations of violation of civil rights
- Certification on licensure

If you are involved in a lawsuit, our attorneys can represent you:

- Under Coverage A - pays up to 1,000,000 per insured per occurrence plus the cost of defense, investigation and legal fees.
- Under Coverage B - up to \$5,000 per insured

If you have a legal issue, contact the Executive Director.

TEACHING AG IS MORE THAN A CAREER, IT IS A WAY OF LIFE.

How important is documentation in assisting with any issue that I have with my school?

It cannot be emphasized too much that written documentation is ultra important in discussing any issue with you. The more you can get answers to questions in writing the better off you are. Anytime you have a question try to get it in writing. If you have a verbal conversation

with someone, follow up with an email stating what was discussed and send it to them so it is on record what has been discussed with them. Emails, handwritten notes, texts are all examples of documents that can be considered important.

If I do not agree with a write up from my administrator or I think I have a problem with district policy, what is my first step?

Our lawyer will say you need to exhaust all avenues through your local policy before it becomes a legal issue in most cases. Many times a Level 1 grievance may solve the issue. Your district policy can be found on your school district site, refer to it as to what are the steps in the grievance policy. If you need assistance in writing the grievance, the executive director and possibly the lawyer can assist you.



QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN INTERVIEWING FOR A JOB

When applying for a job, you are not the only one interviewing; you should be interviewing them as your potential employer as well. It is important to ask about things you value, that are important to you, and that will affect your success in that program. Below are some questions to consider.

- What are the administration's expectations of the ag department?
- What is the district's vision for the agricultural education program?
- What are the community's expectations for the agricultural education program?
 - Is there an advisory committee?
 - Who are the key individuals who support the program?
- Where does the district want this program to be in 5 years?
- What is the length of the contract being offered?
 - Is it by months or days?
 - How are vacation days allotted?
 - Can weekends be accounted for as a contract day?
- How many travel days are allowed?
 - Am I or the department allotted a set number of days to be gone for school-related activities?
- What are the summer hours expected by the school district of the agricultural science teachers?
- Is there a stipend available and what is its designated purpose?
 - What is expected to receive it?
 - How will it be documented in my income- as salary or travel?
 - Is it to compensate for the extra hours spent after school?

- What is the current enrollment in agricultural science classes?
 - How many students are needed to make a class?
 - If numbers are small will they blend multiple sections in one?
 - How many students are allowed in a shop-type class?
- What are the district's expectations on industry-based certifications?
- What is the budget breakdown for the ag department?
- Why is there a current vacancy?
- What struggles has this program faced in the past?
 - How would you like to see those addressed?





CLASSROOM

AGRICULTURE FACILITY SUPPLY LIST

Below is a list of supplies that agriculture teachers have identified as necessities for a program offering courses in Ag Power, Animal Science, Carpentry/Construction, Electricity, Emerging Technology, Food Science, Plant Science and Welding. Necessary equipment will vary based on the courses being taught.

Classroom

- Life on the Farm game
- Sieve kit
- Incubator
- Egg candling light
- Insect mounting supplies
- Insect collecting net
- Water sampling kit
- AET subscription
- Computers/iPads/Chromebooks
- Digital projector
- Smart Board
- Color printer
- Student tables
- Sink
- iCEV
- Testing software (Quia)
- Course resources/texts
- Course Competency Profiles (KSDE)
- Storage space/plastic totes
- Refrigerator
- Dehydrator
- Small oven
- Mixing bowls, measuring cups, whisks, large spoons
- Pans, pots for making cheese, etc.

FFA Supplies

- Collection of FFA jackets, ties, scarves, black shoes, pants, white shirts, etc
- FFA manuals
- FFA handbooks
- Officer station symbols
- Roberts Rules of Order guide

Lab Supplies

- *Safety supplies
- Secure lab supply cabinet
- Goggles/safety glasses
- Rubber/ neoprene gloves
- Rubber/vinyl aprons
- Lab coats
- Beakers
- Test tube rack
- Test tubes
- Pipettes
- Graduated cylinders
- Scalpels/dissection supplies
- Thermometers
- Digital scale
- Soil sampler
- Soil nutrient test kit
- Hot plate
- Microscopes
- Digital probes/meters
- Stereoscope w/camera

Greenhouse/Horticulture

- *Safety equipment
- Siphon proportioner or injector
- Assortment of gardening tools: trowels, shovels, pruners, loppers
- Floral design equipment - wire cutters, floral shears, oasis, foam rings, ribbon
- Potting supplies
- Plant ID tags
- Soil mixing bins
- Germination mat
- Hoses, nozzles, soft spray nozzle

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FACILITY GUIDELINES

This publication offers ideas, suggestions, and recommendations of industry professionals, school administrators, architects, safety consultants, agricultural science and technology teachers, and curriculum specialists. The purpose of this document is to provide the planning committee with information that might otherwise be overlooked. It cannot account for the local needs of every school district. As a result, planning activities should not be limited to suggestions found in this document. Instead, utilize this publication as a reference to begin the planning phase of the expansion program.

There are no state standards for an agricultural science and technology department. There is no law or code that specifically dictates agricultural science and technology facility standards. Publication of this document is not to imply that school districts must comply with information provided. There are state statutes or codes that do mandate such areas as classroom size. Where sections discuss mandates, this publication identifies state statutes or codes that are law. They are identified within the document and the school district must meet those specified requirements.

FOR MORE ON FACILITY GUIDELINES:



AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE TEACHER CONTRACT GUIDELINES

Teaching contracts are agreements that bind both the local board of education and the educator signing the contract. A district may employ career and technology personnel on 10, 11, or 12 month contract in accordance with local policy. The recommended contractual year (12 months) is July 1-June 30.

Extended teaching contracts exist to allow teachers time in the summer to accomplish tasks that may require more time than allotted in a standard school year.

Agriculture teachers have been known to enter an extended contract to:

- Supervise/sponsor FFA activities on weekends
- Visit student SAE programs over the summer months.
- Supervise students at State Convention, Summer Leadership Camps or WLC.
- Work with FFA officer/leadership teams to plan for the up-coming year.
- Manage community or school facilities/gardens/farms.
- Perform tasks deemed appropriate by the local school board.

Best Practices:

- Carefully review all teaching contracts before entering an agreement with the school board.
- If appropriate, negotiate an extension to the standard teaching contract being signed.
- Use the work days in the extended contract to appropriately complete the tasks agreed upon with the school board.
- Prepare a written summer plan and make it available to administrators to verify the teacher's plans to conduct a continuing summer program of agriculture, food, and natural resources.

SCAN HERE FOR CONTRACT RESOURCES:



DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE SUMMER PLAN

Summer activities help set agricultural education apart from many other programs in the school. Imagine our profession without the ability to supervise students at FFA Convention, Degree Check, FFA leadership development opportunities, or to miss the chance to attend workshops at the VATAT Professional Development Conference. Ultimately, the summer activities provide more and improved opportunities for ourselves and our students.

According to a recent survey, 90% of teachers who responded reported having contracts longer than what is normally considered a ten-month contract. The ability of a school district to offer these “extended” contracts is a local decision arrived at by your school administration and board. There is no requirement to keep these contract lengths the same from one year to the next.

Agriculture teachers are overworked and underpaid. Never in our history has more been expected of teachers in general, and specifically agriculture teachers. If most ag teachers counted their weekends, nights, holidays, and school days, they would far exceed the number of days listed on their contract. It would not be a bad idea to keep some type written record of this. In most school districts, even with this written record, don’t expect to take off most of the summer. Many districts look at those extra days during the school year in the context of the “other duties as assigned” clause in your contract. You are expected to account for the days you are on contract during the summer.

One of the best ways to keep these extra days in your contract is to create, and file with the proper people, a copy of your summer plan. There is a sample on the VATAT website. It is simply a week by week plan for the time between the last and first day of in-service. You may list a wide variety of activities designed to improve your program. Depending on your situation, many of these activities will be away from school. The least effective use of your summer days is if your school requires you to be in your department from 8 am to 4 pm. File a copy with your Principal, school secretary, or

maybe even your Superintendent. They may need to know where you are on any given day, so provide them with your cell number.

You will find that as the trust factor develops with your administration, they will be less likely to question you on your whereabouts or the necessity for the extra days on contract. Check in with your administrators during the summer just to let them know you are on the job and keep them updated on your activities. Even with our many summer activities, it is still a good time to relax, catch your breath, and do some strategic thinking about your program. Having a good summer plan on file will pay dividends that will make your program better.



INDUSTRY BASED CERTIFICATIONS

Industry-based certifications are a valuable component of strong student pathways. You should become familiar with what certifications are offered within the program of study you teach and find which ones will serve your students and community the best.

TEC §39.053 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to account for high school students who earn an industry-based certification as one indicator within the student achievement domain of the state's public school accountability system. The purpose of the IBC list is to identify certifications that prepare students for success in the workforce, military, or postsecondary education.

TEA/CTE:



AFNR CERTIFICATIONS:



SOCIAL MEDIA FOR AG TEACHERS

BY RAY PIENIAZEK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. Apply a “good judgment” test for everything you post, including items you like or mark as favorites.
2. If you manage an FFA account and have a personal account, know which account you are posting to and commenting from. Make sure you toggle between them when posting personal items. 3
- . Make sure what you are posting on behalf of your FFA chapter or school district has been approved by your administration. Follow all district guidelines related to posting.
4. Only post student’s pictures on your FFA or personal accounts with permission. Follow the guidance of what your school district social media policy is.
5. Everything posted on a website or social media channel will become a permanent electronic record. It is highly likely someone will or has already screenshotted something you posted if they do not like it.
6. Be careful of having parents and students as friends on your personal social media accounts. Your district may limit social media communication with your students - make sure you follow those guidelines.
7. Show respect, proper decorum, and honesty toward all in your posts.
8. Follow standards of ethical behavior regarding the use of copyrighted material. Include proper attribution for previously published material.
9. Review the materials you are posting, reposting, or sharing. Evaluate if it is from a valid source and is accurate.
10. Post items which promote a positive image of agriculture, public education, FFA, the organizations you are a member of.
11. Pay close attention to what is in the background of your photos. Does it portray your students and your school in a positive manner.
12. If students violate school rules on the trip, you are duty-bound to report those actions to the school immediately or upon return to the school. You should get the number of a school official to report to if an emergency happen

PROGRAMS OF STUDY AND CERTIFICATIONS

BY RAY PIENIAZEK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Division of College, Career, and Military Preparation has engaged members of the workforce, secondary education, and higher education to advise on the development of programs of study, including coherent sequences of courses, industry-based certifications, and work-based learning to ensure students are prepared for in-demand, high-skill, high-wage careers in Texas.

Highlights of Programs of Study Initiative:

- Include occupations that meet labor market criteria to include projected job growth, annual job openings, and the state median wage
- Ensure course sequences provide district and campus flexibility in program offerings
- Lead to postsecondary education and training opportunities
- Expand opportunities for students to engage in STEM related occupations
- Include one-page resources to assist in scheduling as well as career planning conversations with students
- Allow districts to request regional programs of study supported by regional workforce data
- Align programs of study to endorsements

Benefits of Programs of Study Initiative

- Align education to the diverse needs of the Texas' economy to increase opportunities for students
 - Improve data collection and reporting of CTE concentrators for districts
 - Inform future TEKS revisions through gap analysis between course standards and job skills
 - Ensure alignment of teacher certifications to the updated programs of study
-

Programs of Study Implementation Considerations

- Course sequences within each program of study will be used for federal reporting of CTE concentrators and CTE completers:
 - New federal definition for a CTE concentrator, as outlined in Perkins V, is the completion of two courses (for two or more credits) within a program of study.
 - Proposed definition for a CTE completer to be the completion of three or more courses for four or more credits including one level 3 or level 4 course.
 - Perkins funds can be used to support statewide or approved regional programs of study.
 - Current CTE courses not included in the updated programs of study will remain available for districts to offer and can be supported with State CTE funds.
-

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
PATHWAYS, SCAN HERE:**



TRAVELING WITH STUDENTS

BY RAY PIENIAZEK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1. You should always check with your school what the correct documentation is needed to travel with students. All schools are different as to the proper forms and procedures to follow.
2. You should always have emergency contact information on each student you travel with, so you can contact them if an issue arises. Knowing which parent or guardian is the right one to contact is also very important.
3. You should have a parent permission form for the student to travel with you during the year or for each one. It would be best to verify with the district what is acceptable for a permission slip.
4. A good practice would be to provide an itinerary for the parents of the students who are traveling with you. Provide leave time, what vehicles you are traveling in, where you are staying overnight, and the return time.
5. Please be aware that parents may have apps on the student's phone that may indicate where they are and even how fast the vehicle is traveling when they track them. One of these apps is called Life360.
6. When staying at hotels, request that all rooms be on the same floor and near each other. If they are on separate floors, be sure and have an adult chaperone on each floor. You should always have a curfew for your students to be in their room. They should not leave the room unless they are with an adult. Check each room to ensure that the boys and the girls don't have adjoining rooms. Never allow boys and girls to occupy the same room unless you are in the room or the door is open.
7. In most situations, if students leave your sight they should always be with at least one other student or a group of students.
8. Always check your school district's policy on students staying in the same room as the teacher. It is best that students always have their own rooms, even if it is just one student in that room.

9. Some agriculture teachers take the students' phones away at night, and some even remove the telephones from their room. If you do this, make sure your administration is okay with it and that the parents know you are doing this.
10. Always submit your list of names traveling with you to a school official before departure. If someone does not show up and it is a school day, make sure the attendance clerk knows that they are not with you.
11. If you drop your students off and leave while they are in a contest, make sure this is an acceptable practice in your district. Is the expectation you stay where they are, or is it okay to leave the site? Also, do your best to promptly return to them after the competition so they do not feel abandoned.
12. If students violate school rules on the trip, you are duty-bound to report those actions to the school immediately or upon return to the school. You should get the number of a school official to report to if an emergency happens



HANDLING STUDENT ACTIVITY

MONEY & FUNDRAISERS

The most important item to know is what the school regulations are related to collecting and depositing money. Every school has different procedures you must follow.

Many schools require fundraisers to be approved by the administration. If this is the case, do it as soon as you can. You should turn the paperwork in for approval right after your group has made the decision on what to sell. Some schools will need a list of every item and the profit on every item.

If you collect money from any item a student is paying for, it is an excellent practice to write a receipt. Some districts require this, so double check local procedures. Documenting what you are collecting money for, how it was paid, who collected it, and when it was collected is all important information to record.

When collecting money from students for fundraisers, note their name on every applicable check along with the account number the check will be deposited into. If there are any issues with a check, such as insufficient funds, this will help you track down the source. Similarly, document the cash turned in by each student. Have a sheet for each student to track

when they turn money in, which payments are by check, and how much cash is turned in broken down in denomination. Consider giving students a copy of their sheet so they know who paid what amount.

Fundraisers are now offering apps where all payments can be done by card, and the student does not have to collect any money. This is a great option so you do not have to handle money, but make sure your school is acceptable with this procedure. Some districts offer the option to make purchases through the bookkeeping department online by credit cards. Anytime you can take the handling of money out of your hands, the safer you can do your job.

Check, check and double check your numbers before placing an order. Have a plan if you think some items will sell after you receive your order, and to account for items that may get damaged or are not sellable after they arrive. If you do order extra, make sure you work to sell them and account for that in your records.

The more hands that are involved in the distribution of fundraisers, the more chances of problems. Give clear directions to everyone on the

checkout process to pick up items. Check, check and double check which items are leaving. Have the student or parent picking up the items sign that they received and actually picked up the items.

If you have to collect money, set clear deadlines for the sellers to turn in money. Do not wait long periods of time to collect it. Have the students turn in money before school so they do not carry it with them all day and you do not have to deal with it during class.

If you give away items for any reason, document who you gave them to so you can account for every item you ordered.

If you need to pay a fundraiser company, do it quickly. They also have bills to pay and it shows you are a good partner to them.

If you are collecting money for taxable items, you must collect the tax. You can either upcharge the item and then back tax out when you turn money in, or add the tax after and account for it in the deposit. Be sure you know what the school wants you to collect taxes on. Your school should be able to provide you with a list of taxable items. FFA Jackets may be considered by your district for tax purposes, depending on if they interpret them as uniforms.

This link may be useful to you:



Donations to your club may have to be approved by the district. Notify your administrators when a donation has occurred. Your school may have a policy where if a donation is around a certain amount, usually over \$5000, it must be approved by the school board.

Be aware that student activity money can only be spent by the members of the club raising it. Your board policy will state that the students are the ones who must approve the uses of your activity fund. Therefore, it is a great practice to have the officers or the full membership approve the expenditures when student money is being spent on meetings, banquets, community service, or supplies. This is found in the local policy labeled CFC in board policies.

Budgets

It is important to note every district's procedure is different. You must find out the process and know who the person responsible for your budgets is. You will also need to know who processes and approves your purchase orders. Ask if your district has a purchasing

manual with the policies in it for your review.

It is important to note you should never purchase anything from your own money and expect to be reimbursed for it. There may be a situation where you need to call and get emergency approval to do so, but do not count on it.

Work to know what your budget will be for the upcoming year. Know what money is in each account, such as supplies, travel, or capital equipment. Supplies are often listed as consumables. Capital equipment would include items which have a longer life span and will be placed on inventory.

If you are making capital purchases, know and understand the policies relating to getting bids for the equipment. Most schools will require you to get bids for items over \$1,000, but this amount could vary depending on your local policies.

When planning purchases for the year, make sure you account for all your program needs through the end of the year. Most schools' last day to get purchase orders done is April 1. Be aware of that date so you have all of your needs processed to get through the end of the year. Ask questions to make sure you know the correct deadline.

When an item is purchased, turn in the receipt or invoice for the items that were purchased or delivered.

Documentation for your purchase will keep you out of trouble.

Some districts will allow an open purchase order where you will be able to purchase items up to a certain amount. This allows you to get supplies such as metal, nails, lumber, welding supplies, flowers, or animal food whenever you need them without getting a specific purchase order item by item. This saves you time by not having to submit a purchase order for every purchase you make.

Always do your best to choose appropriately priced items that you truly need. You may be asked for a wish list from time to time. That is when you put the pie in the sky equipment that you would love to have to enhance your program.

Most agricultural science teachers are good at spending money. Do your best to spend what you are given so that in the future, they know that you have needs for your programs. If not, they may limit you in future years.

If you have students build items in the shop to sell, make sure you can use district funds for the items. If you have them build items for you personally, it is best to have every receipt documenting that you have paid for the supplies to build the item. If you cannot produce these receipts, it may lead to you being accused of theft of school property. It is wise to engage your administration when you are building anything to sell or to keep.

SURVIVAL TIPS

- Become familiar with school policies and procedures.
- Post a monthly calendar where parents, students and teachers can see it.
- Include school activities, CDEs, LDEs and FFA activities.
- Include important dates and due dates for assignments or paperwork.
- Avoid planning so many FFA events that students become uninterested or overwhelmed.
- Strategically plan FFA events. Do not do something just to have an event.
- Meet with and talk to school administration regularly, even if it is just in passing.
- Get to know all school support staff including cooks, secretaries, administrators and custodians. It may be helpful to save their phone numbers.
- Obtain example pathway applications from other agriculture teachers in the district.
- Find another agriculture teacher mentor within the FFA district.
- Utilize a school mentor to navigate the school system. They can help with questions about grades, cash, transportation, purchase orders, etc.
- Create a template email for parents and other teachers when students will be traveling for FFA events.
- Create and keep a notebook that has all the passwords needed for various accounts, communication documentation, and other frequently referenced material as a “go-to.”
- Health is important, take care of yourself.
- Take it one day at a time.
- Do not be afraid to say no.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

BY LYNITA FOSTER, MADISONVILLE

As ag teachers, a lot of people watch our actions. While it may be impossible to please everyone all the time, taking steps to build positive relationships can help you succeed. Here are a few things I have learned:

Business Owners – There are people in your community who want to support the youth, but they shouldn't see you only when you want a donation. Invite them to chapter events, have your officers visit their business to simply tell them thank you, and invite them to visit the ag building to see what is going on. Shop local and be their customer. When you do need a donation, give them plenty of notice and don't assume because they donated before they can donate again.

County Agents / 4-H Leaders – FFA and 4-H have many of the same goals. Working in tandem with the Texas AgriLife Extension office in your community can help lighten everyone's load. Cooperate on checking projects and hauling to livestock shows, and utilize each other's strengths to help the students gain the best knowledge possible.

Associations – This is a tremendous way to get to know people who care about agricultural education. Do your share of volunteer work for a cause which directly benefits the students you teach. In this role, help all students, not just members of your own chapter. Running a county fair takes work and investing your sweat and time alongside others will be noticed.

Parents – Parents are sending you the best kids they have. They want them to be successful. As a teacher, try to make sure opportunities are presented to all students, not just a select few. When decisions are made for who will be officers or team members, have a policy established ahead of time and stick to it. Communicate with the parents often, as they are trusting you with their most valuable resource.

Administration - Before sending us out into the world to become ag teachers, Dr. Herb Schumann gave us some parting advice; "Remember, your principal is your boss." Keeping your principal in the know is extremely important. They are your immediate supervisor. When you have a question, follow the chain of command. Invite your administrators to the ag building for lunch. Actively work at communicating with them daily. The ag department has a lot

of moving parts between trips, finances, and materials required. If you help your principal do their job well, they will be more likely to do the same for you.

Family / Self – Time is an extremely limited resource. No matter how much you accomplish as an ag teacher, there is more that could be done. Consciously blocking out time for your family and yourself is a must. This is where we get rejuvenated and restored. These are the relationships that will last long after retirement.

Students – Most of us became teachers to positively influence young people. While I would like to say I inspired every student that came through my classroom, it would be untrue. There are some I couldn't seem to reach. I do hope however, that every student can say they were treated as a valued individual. We are in the business of building people. As your students see you making an effort in all your relationships, you are modeling a skill they will need throughout their lives.

Bob Kerrey said, "Kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and most underrated agent of human change." Investing in relationships will not only help you succeed in your ag teaching career, but will bring you friends and joyous memories for years to come.



EFFECTIVELY PROMOTING AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

When promoting your program, it is important to identify your target audience. Are you looking to promote your program to current members, prospective students, parents, school board members, or the community? You must recognize your audience and modify the message. The best spokesmen for your program are always your current students. If they are engaged and happy to be a part of your program, they will tell their friends and younger siblings.

Most schools offer some time to recruit middle school students and it is important to use the successful students to help in this. The band usually puts on some type concert for the younger students and the athletic department usually invites elementary students to pep rallies.

Ag programs could take a lesson from this. When you talk about promoting your department to the rest of the school community, you are really talking about the other teachers, your administrators and school board. Too many times agriculture teachers think of themselves as a separate entity unrelated to the rest of the school. It is always good to have allies in your district rather than enemies.

Support the other teachers in their activities and events. Make it a point to express that you want the agriculture program to be a part of the larger whole in education. It is impossible to have an outstanding agriculture program in a failing campus.

Your administrators have a different job than you. You are most concerned with your program and they must be concerned with all programs under their control. Understand that they may have to make decisions not altogether with your approval. There may have to be times of compromise. They are charged with supervising you and have 10 a large role in your success or failure. Strive to never be part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Make it a point to have open communication with these folks, including sharing with them your calendar of events, summer plans, and anything else they might need to know.

It is common for school board meetings to have student recognition time. It is important for you to have your students represented, hopefully two or three times per year. You might highlight FFA events such as LDEs or CDEs, stock shows, or

you could recognize those students who have earned a certificate in class, or participated in an essay or speech contest. They don't have to be winners at the area or state level, just kids who have exceeded expectations. Most of those board members are not aware of the difference in level of competition, just that the kids recognized have done well.

Promoting your program to the community is going to be different in different places. Some small towns may have a local radio station or newspaper that is hungry for content from you. Texas FFA provides press release templates for various events.

They are easily customizable and can be submitted your local media outlet.

Social media may also provide a forum. You are looking to be positive, as it relates to the program and your job. No one ever gets anywhere by bad-mouthing their job or their employer.

There are no perfect jobs out there, and realize that you may never be appreciated in the way you deserve. There are teachers who criticize the teaching profession in front of their students. If you don't value your profession, no one else will ever take it seriously.





SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCES

SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Supervised Agricultural Experiences are:

- Career exploration and planning systems for all students.
- Student-led, teacher-supervised paths to college and career readiness.
- Tools for measuring student progress toward college and career readiness.
- Methods for authentically enhancing the high school experience.
- Small business incubators for young entrepreneurs.
- Paths to connect students to STEM careers and mentors.
- Critical of a comprehensive Career and Technical Education program.

Foundational SAEs:

- Foundational SAEs are conducted by all students as part of classroom instruction in all agriculture courses. There are five components of a Foundational SAE: Career Exploration and Planning, Employability Skills for College and Career Readiness, Personal Financial Management and Planning, Workplace Safety and Agricultural Literacy.
- The Foundational SAE is ongoing throughout the student's enrollment in agricultural education and will continue alongside other SAEs. Foundational SAEs should be project-based and lead to the understanding and development of each of the five components.

Immersion SAEs:

- Placement/Internship SAEs involve the student being employed by a business of their choosing and performing the tasks deemed necessary by them and the employer. The student is evaluated by the employer and must have opportunity for development and advancement of skills and abilities.

Ownership/Entrepreneurship:

- Ownership/Entrepreneurship SAEs involve the student owning/operating a business that provides goods and/or services. The student controls all aspects and makes all decisions for the program. A business plan must be included.

Research:

- Research SAEs involve student(s) investigating materials, processes and information to gain new knowledge or validate previous research

projects. The research must be applicable to AFNR Technical Standards. Documentation and a plan for the project must be included.

School-Based Enterprise:

- School-Based Enterprise SAEs involve a group of students engaged in an entrepreneurship SAE that takes place in a school setting. A business plan must be included. Students manage the business through leadership roles.

Service Learning:

- Service Learning SAEs involve one or more students planning, conducting and evaluating a project that provides service to the school, public entities or the community. A service-learning plan must be included.



SAE

IMPLEMENTATION

SAEs are:

- Essential to the professional development of all students.
- A graded component of a complete agricultural education program.
- Should be integrated into classroom instruction.

Best Practices:

- Embed foundational SAEs into instruction.
- Use the SAE For All Student Guide to introduce students to the concept of SAEs.
- Encourage students to select two of the five components for them to complete throughout the remainder of the semester.
- Grade the projects over the course of the semester.
- Based on the agricultural literacy objective, students should be capable of choosing an immersion SAE.

Instructors may:

- Increase the number of activities in a foundational SAE.
- Require a portfolio or presentation.
- Determine the weighted grade value of SAE.
- Make immersion SAEs a graded part of the agricultural education course work.
- Once students decide on an immersion SAE, the instructor should encourage them to maintain accurate records, document all necessary information and provide photos of their experiences.
- Grade the student based on their involvement in their SAE and completion of required tasks.

FOR MORE ON SAE FOR ALL:



SAE VISITS

The role of the teacher in an SAE program is to:

- Supervise the development of the project.
- Provide feedback.
- Assist the student in navigating The AET and keeping accurate records.

Best Practices:

- Organize an SAE visit schedule.
- Decide on the dates that SAE visits will be take place. Once these dates have been finalized, give students the opportunity to sign up for visits on the dates and times they are available.
- Provide enough dates to visit all students who have an SAE that takes place off school grounds.

Visit the SAE programs.

- Confirm dates and times with each student before driving to the site.
- Take notes, pictures, ask questions, and give feedback. Document your visit.
- Take other students on the visits. This can be a good way to give students ideas about what they could do for their own SAE. Do not visit students home without a parent or guardian present.
- Require students to take pictures and give presentations on their SAE.

Some SAEs will make it difficult to conduct visits. If a student is unable to participate in an SAE visit, have them give a presentation that provides information on what they do. Include demonstrations with various pieces of equipment or methods used to accomplish a task. This will be a useful way to review Research and Service Learning SAE programs.

Allow for classroom time to mentor students and provide feedback and instruction related to their SAEs. Select one day each week or set up a consultation schedule to have time to visit with each student about their SAE.

RECORD BOOK KEEPING TIPS TO TEACH YOUR STUDENTS

BY TAMMY GLASSCOCK, TEXAS FFA SAE COORDINATOR

- Make use of The AET Mobile App. It is great for students who are on the go.
- Utilize The AET's Student Tutorial Guide and videos to better understand the record book keeping system.
- Stay up to date and do not get behind. Set aside time each week to make entries and update your records and activities.
- Keep all of your receipts. Keeping receipts will ensure your financial records are accurate, which will allow you to determine your profit/loss margins.
- Become familiar with financial terms such as assets, capital, current, non-current, depreciation, etc. Not only will it make it easier to keep your record book, it will be useful knowledge later in life with your personal record keeping and taxes.
- Have friends, siblings, parents, or teachers take pictures of you engaged in your SAE. Always remember to use the landscape mode when using your phone to take a picture.
- Reference record books of former members with similar SAE programs. Remember these are for reference only, do not plagiarize.
- Utilize a calendar to make notes of events, activities, purchases, income, etc. They make great references for completing your record books.
- Keep your resume updated with all your FFA activities, courses/classes, community service and other school activities. Remember, current resumes are also needed to apply for jobs and complete scholarship applications.
- Utilize The AET journal to record administration of medications, vet visits, weights, daily gains, exercise, hours worked, pay raises, SAE visits from your teacher, accomplishments resulting a newly developed skill or learning experience, etc. The journal notes will aid in completing reports or essays.

MANAGING LIVESTOCK SHOW **VALIDATIONS & ENTRIES**

Deadlines. Deadlines. Deadlines. Today's livestock show programs have grown from a supplementary activity to the "driver of the bus" in many programs. To this generation of students, showing animals has become a family industry of sorts. In a past year, there was a family in Texas that validated 38 pigs for one child. This is just one example of how important the activity is to some.

In some cases, the teacher may feel like they are just a middleman, whose only purpose is to sign the validation and entry forms. In some cases, local politics determines what kind of stock show program exists in each school. These discussions are best discussed with your local administration.

A new teacher must familiarize themselves with the various deadlines associated with county and state shows. Validations come first. In fact, major show steer validation occurs in June. All of the rest of the major show validations occur in the fall. There is a local committee that carries out validation in each county. The species chairman will publicize when orders for validation tags occur. This is usually more than a month before the actual validation. Some teachers order a few extra tags to account for animals purchased late; unused tags can be transferred between counties. Your county show may have a separate validation or may use the state validation in their show. Read all the respective show rules to understand what you are dealing with.

FFA

TEXAS FFA

FFA is a dynamic student-led leadership development organization for students of agricultural education. The FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education,

FFA Motto

Learning to do, Doing to learn, Earning to live, Living to serve.

Strategic Priorities

- Ensure a sound financial future
- Effective Communication
- Agricultural knowledge and advocacy
- Leadership and personal skill development
- Academic excellence and College and Career readiness

Local FFA Chapters

The Texas FFA Association issues and revokes charters in accordance to the mandates of the state association's constitution, bylaws and board-adopted policies, provides support services to local chapters and administers events which support the agricultural education instructional programs. Direct oversight of local programs is the domain of local boards of trustees and administrators. Each chapter has requirements mandated by the state Commissioner of Education CTE Statewide Coordinator for Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources constitution and bylaws to remain in good standing with the state association. Pursuant to National FFA Organization policy, the state association has stewardship of the FFA emblem and trademarks, and the state association is duty bound to act when these are used inappropriately. There are currently 1095 chapters in Texas.

TEXAS FFA PROGRAMS

FFA events celebrate the accomplishments of members, teachers, and the agriculture industry. During FFA events, members convene, receive recognition for their hard work, and draw inspiration from the ideas and enthusiasm of their fellow members, teachers, and mentors.

Day at the Capitol

The Texas FFA is excited to announce two opportunities to attend Day at the Capitol in Austin this year! Members, this is your unique opportunity to walk the Capitol hallways, visit with your legislators, and see where history has been made since 1889.

FFA Week

Each year, Texas FFA chapters around the country celebrate National FFA Week. It's a time to share what FFA is and the impact it has on members every day. Whether it's in person, on the phone or via social media, be sure to share your FFA stories during #FFAweek!

Career Week

The goal of Texas FFA's Career Week is to provide quality resources for teachers to utilize to provide a valuable career unit experience that will showcase the extensive career opportunities within the agricultural industry. Teachers will be provided a comprehensive weeklong plan that can be easily implemented into the classroom.

Excellence Conferences

Single day leadership conferences for Sophomore, Junior, and Senior FFA members.

State Leadership Conference

State Leadership Conference is the Texas FFA State Officer-administered leadership conference for area officers, hosted in the month of June. Area officers are immersed in a four-day leadership training in which they are given the concepts and the skill sets to effectively serve as an area officer. From facilitation to the committee process, State Leadership Conference has been a long-standing pillar of Texas FFA leadership development.



FOUNDATION

TEXAS FFA FOUNDATION

Established in 1987, the Texas FFA Foundation is the development arm of the Texas Team Ag Ed. Leadership for the foundation's activities is provided by a board of directors, and managerial leadership is administered by an executive director and staff.

Mission

The Texas FFA Foundation seeks to strengthen agricultural education and the Texas FFA program, so each student can develop their potential for personal growth, career success and leadership in a global marketplace.

Vision

Through a coordinated effort to engage all internal and external stakeholders, the Texas FFA Foundation will work to advance agricultural education and the FFA program. Building on the proven success of agricultural education and the FFA program, our mission will be distinguished by the continued development, funding and implementation, of cutting-edge learning opportunities focusing on critical thinking, technical and practical skills, teamwork, leadership, and communication skills, strong work ethic and academic achievement. Progressively, the Texas FFA Foundation will work with affiliate organizations to more clearly define the public's understanding of the personal and economic value of agricultural education and the FFA.

The Texas FFA Foundation understands the critical role of agricultural science teachers. We will promote our teachers as a valuable resource, dedicated to teaching, and service to the profession and their communities. As a necessary step in enhancing the range and depth of our teacher's capabilities, the Foundation will work to develop effective programs and alliances with corporate sponsors, private foundations, community, education professionals and governmental leaders to maximize learning opportunities for teachers, students, and communities. To ensure a dynamic future for agricultural education and the FFA program, the Texas FFA Foundation will seek financial resources sufficient to sustain these programs in perpetuity.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the activities and practices of the Foundation. The strategies and objectives in this plan are established and pursued in the context of these tenets.

- Support – the Foundation serves as a reliable and long-term source of financial support for agricultural education and the FFA program.
- Leadership – the Foundation plans, initiates and leads efforts that benefit Texas agricultural education and the FFA program.
- Advocacy – the Foundation advocates for agricultural education and the FFA program by promoting their value proposition among key business, industry and government leaders.
- Stewardship – the Foundation will be good stewards of its resources and responsibilities by using sound management, investment strategies, business processes and a professional network of expertise to ensure “best practices.”

TEXAS FFA FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

Living to Serve

The Living to Serve platform empowers students and teachers with leadership development opportunities.

Our efforts are connecting all of our stakeholders, building strong relationships, and empowering participants for personal and professional excellence.

LEAD Series - Connects our teachers and students to sponsors, key Texas decision/policymakers, and other stakeholders, empowering them with practical, timely, and practical knowledge that can be taken back to students and communities and shared with their peers. The visits, camaraderie, and opportunity to grow enhanced professional networks and leadership skills – pushing participants towards continued career success.

- **LEAD Experience**

The LEAD Experience empowers teachers with a better understanding of the Texas FFA Foundation and encourages them to pursue their passion for excellence by showing them the appreciation they deserve. During the weeklong LEAD Experience held in June, teachers travel over 1,000 miles to visit approximately 15 locations and hear from more than 50 presenters.

- **Legislative LEAD**

All Texas agricultural science teachers are offered this expense free experience - with no cap on attendance. The educational experience at the State Capitol empowers teachers to better understand and engage with their elected officials in legislative, government, and academic discussions.

- **Texas FFA Members LEAD**

Similar to the Teacher's Legislative LEAD program, students connect with policymakers, legislative staff, trade organizations, and industry leaders in agriculture. The Texas FFA Members Legislative LEAD is held in February during the Day at The Capital activities. The program allows our members to gain exposure to high-caliber mentors and develop leadership skills. A next-level leadership development program empowers students today while exposing them to career opportunities and advocacy.

- **LEAD Career Expo**

The Texas FFA Foundation brings together trade associations, organizations, and companies along with hundreds of Texas FFA members for leadership training. The LEAD Career Expo allows students to engage and research workforce resources, interview skills/tips, and potential employment and internship opportunities within our elite agriculture professions.

- **Mini LEAD Retreats**

To provide encouragement and revitalization for teachers, the Texas FFA Foundation hosts Mini LEAD retreats focusing on three principles: rejuvenate, refresh, and refocus. The goal of each event is to help restore teacher mindsets and remind them of their passion and purpose in agriculture education and youth development.

Ambassador Program

Our Texas FFA Foundation Ambassadors are a unique group of students selected to share their incredible stories of agriculture, leadership, and service through the Texas FFA. During the Texas FFA Convention, the Foundation Ambassadors serve as the hosts to our special guests, sponsors, and dignitaries. Texas FFA Convention and ATAT Professional Development Conference Support

The Texas FFA Foundation provides key development efforts which support both the convention and conference. We are developing professional networks, building sponsor relations, identifying community assets, and assisting with fundraising efforts. Our development strategies are developing and delivering year-round support.



The Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas was established to promote and advance agriculture education in Texas and provide legislative representation to safeguard agriculture education programs.

Now known as ATAT, the Association informs agriculture teachers about the latest agricultural education practices, encourages higher standards of teaching agriculture and provides agriculture education a unified voice in the state legislature.

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW TEACHER
SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT SPONSOR:

