

Urbana School District 116

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Urbana High School Agriculture Program Receives State Grant *First-year Program Receives \$5,000*

The Illinois State Board of Education has endorsed the fledgling Urbana High School Agricultural Education Program by granting the department \$5,000. Urbana High School is one of seven high schools in the state to launch an agricultural education program this school year. First-year Agriculture Teacher Mike Martin says agricultural education is gaining popularity in suburban/urban school districts. "There has been a growing emphasis in floriculture, landscaping, and environmental science in schools. Agricultural education teaches courses in all three areas. There are lots of things that we plan on offering students that is unique and valuable to them, even as non-farmers," Martin says.

Martin says the high school curriculum will focus on two threads of agricultural education: mechanics and environmental science. "The grant money will be put towards things for student use and get the mechanics club up and running. Next year we will offer Advanced Mechanics and Technology that will be for more in-depth welding practices and an environmental science course," Martin explains.

In the future Martin hopes to have his students plant a native Illinois Ecosystem on the grounds between the high school and the middle school.

"All of my students will have the chance to succeed through education, vocational, and leadership opportunities both inside and outside the classroom," Martin says.

For more information about the Urbana High School Agricultural Education program, please contact Mike Martin at 384-3524.

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