



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## Senator Gallivan Says Ag in the Classroom is Successful and Continues to Grow

JIM RANNEY November 10, 2015

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) says the popular Ag in the Classroom program launched in Wyoming County several years ago is succeeding in educating students about the role agriculture plays in our local and state economy. Efforts are now underway to expand the program to more schools, including several in Erie County.

“Agriculture is the state’s leading industry and is so important to our way of life in Western New York,” Gallivan said. “The Ag in the Classroom program gives students interested in pursuing a career in agriculture the fundamentals that they need and it gives all students a greater appreciation for the industry and its impact on our community.”

Gallivan secured state funding for the Ag in the Classroom program, which began in Wyoming County in 2013. The program is administered through Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County in partnership with offices in Erie and Livingston counties and is offered to schools in all three counties. Since its inception, the program has grown and has expanded to more than 13 schools, reaching over 18,000 students.

“Through the Ag in the Classroom program we are able to educate students about the agriculture opportunities all around them,” said Shawn Tiede, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County. “Teachers are engaging Ag in the Classroom Educators on a daily basis to deliver over 30 different hands-on lessons to their students. Due to the success of this program agriculture education is now a vibrant part of our student’s education.”

The latest school district to adopt the program is Eden Central. The district is using a \$15,000 grant to begin an Ag in the Classroom program in conjunction with Erie County Cornell Cooperative Extension.

“Eden is a small school in the center of a community with a big heart and our students are continually supported and inspired by members of our community,” said Sandra Anzalone, Superintendent of Schools at Eden Central School District. “The recent award of a \$15,000 grant from Senator Gallivan's office was just the help we needed to further our partnership with Erie County Cornell Cooperative Extension.”

Eden is in the process of renovating the 1996 community-built greenhouse located on the grounds of the high school, which is essential to the Ag in the Classroom program. Plans also include activities for students in grades K-5 through a partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension Erie County 4-H, a Garden Club for students in grades 3-4 who will work with volunteers from our Community Garden Club, the rebirth of a Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter at Eden High School and implementation of other activities created by instructors at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County.

The Ag in the Classroom program helps teachers integrate agriculture into the curriculum from Pre-K through high school. Through traditional lessons and hands-on activities, students learn agricultural techniques and develop a better understanding of how food and fiber is produced, what we eat and how it impacts our lives.

“The Ag in the Classroom Program has been very successful and is seen as a model for school districts across the state. It’s important that we continue the program and expand it where possible,” Gallivan said.

While the Ag in the Classroom Program is being used in several other districts across upstate New York, Gallivan will push for increased funding for the program in hopes that it can be expanded to school districts statewide.