



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

## 11.13.17 Akshar's "Ag in the Classroom" program expands to 10 schools across the Southern Tier

FRED AKSHAR November 13, 2017

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(OWEGO, NY) Senator Fred Akshar joined officials from Cornell Cooperative Extension, Broome-Tioga BOCES and superintendents from Owego Apalachin and Windsor school districts to announce the expansion of the "Ag in the Classroom" program from five to ten schools across the 52nd Senate District.

Ag in the Classroom brings agricultural education into classrooms to connect local students

through Agricultural Educators from Cornell Cooperative Extension. The program is designed to help students gain a greater appreciation for agriculture and its impact on our community and highlight the benefits of pursuing careers in the growing multi-billion dollar industry.

In January, Akshar announced a pilot program through five school districts (Harpurville, Maine-Endwell, Owego Apalachin, Union-Endicott and Windsor) across the 52nd Senate District from January until August of 2017. The program was well received and expanded to five additional schools (Bainbridge-Guilford, Chenango Valley, Deposit, Greene and Tioga Central) for a total of ten school districts participating.

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*Senator Fred Akshar said, “We had high expectations when we first announced our Ag in the Classroom partnership in January, and I'm excited to report that the pilot program was met with overwhelming enthusiasm and support from our kids, parents and teachers alike. I'm so proud to continue this program with a team of dedicated, hardworking partners who share our vision and expand it further into the 52nd Senate District to reach as many of our kids as possible and help educate the next generation on the wide range of career opportunities available through agriculture. ”*

Ag in the Classroom classes and curriculum are administered by Cornell Cooperative Extension. An Agricultural Educator visits each school regularly throughout the school year, providing 14 lessons per month for each school. Each school's curriculum is customized to suit the needs of individual school districts. Classes range from learning about the science and technology of agriculture to touring local farms to growing food at school gardens.

Victoria Giarratano, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County

said, "Through the Cornell Ag in the Classroom program we are exposing the next generation to career pathways in agriculture and food systems and creating a workforce pipeline. There is an industry deficit in ag engineering, nutrient specialists, production and mechanics and these are only among a fraction of career opportunities in agriculture. Through the Ag in the Classroom partnership we are confident that together we are tackling this critical workforce issue and growing our Agri Future."

Broome-Tioga BOCES serves as a key sponsor for the program.

Broome-Tioga BOCES CEO and District Superintendent Allen Buyck said, "We are very excited to see an expansion of this program in our region. The Senator has been a great advocate for providing exposure to opportunities for students to learn more about all of the many aspects of agriculture. We will continue to work with the Senator, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and our school districts to provide the best programs for our students. We are very fortunate to have such collaborative partners in our area."

### **\$350,000 Ag Labs for Owego Apalachin and Windsor School Districts**

In addition to the program's expansion into new schools, two schools will receive \$350,000 each to construct new Agricultural Laboratories to help bring agricultural education to life for local students in innovative and unprecedented ways.

Corey A. Green, Superintendent of Schools for the Owego Apalachin Central School District said, "With Senator Akshar's shared vision and support, at Owego Apalachin we're making bold moves to ensure that our students are well prepared for the world awaiting them, and what better way to help us in that challenge than by bringing the world to them. Our focus is to foster an even stronger relationship with area business leaders so that these connections

can become models for other schools, and other communities, certainly statewide and perhaps even nationwide. Our goals are aggressive. But with partners such as Senator Akshar, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Broome-Tioga BOCES, to name just a few, who recognize how quickly our STEAM Academy has come online, and how our Agriculture in the Classroom focus has captured our students' attention, we all stand together with realistic optimism and unbridled enthusiasm. Things may seem to be happening quickly, from an outsider's perspective. But with crystal-clear vision, we're seeing our goals transition to tangible classroom success."

Dr. Jason A. Andrews, Superintendent of the Windsor Central School District said, "We are thrilled with the addition of an agricultural lab to the District, and so grateful to community partners like Senator Akshar and Cornell Cooperative Extension for bringing this leading-edge technology to our students. This helps us further our mission to give students the 21st-century skills they need to be college- and career-ready. The engagement and enthusiasm we saw from students during the first year of Ag in the Classroom exceeded our expectations. We know students are learning first-hand about the range of careers available in agriculture and the science and technology needed to bring food from the farm to the table."

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*Senator Fred Akshar said, "Windsor and Owego Apalachin have gone above and beyond as partners in helping deliver quality agricultural education. These grants will help provide our kids with a window into how incredibly diverse opportunities in the agriculture industry really are."*