



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie: 12 Schools to Share \$100,000 for New Garden/Farm Program

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State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing that 12 schools in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties will share \$100,000 to start or expand school gardens as part of the Senator's new "Seeds of Success" agricultural education program.

"School garden programs not only help students learn how to grow their own food, they help grow young minds too. Students are able to apply lessons from throughout their

curriculum, from learning about soils, biology and nutrition to better understanding the management and economics of a farm or agriculture business. Along the way, a few just might be inspired to continue their studies to become farmers, or successful agriculture entrepreneurs,” Senator Ritchie, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, said.

"I started 'Seeds of Success' to help students enjoy learning, apply hands-on experience to real-life problems and become better prepared for the opportunities and challenges they may face after high school."

Schools selected for the program, four from each county Senator Ritchie represents, either have already established school garden programs and will expand them, or are planning to start new programs using the funding.

Senator Ritchie made the announcement regarding funding during a visit to the Edwards-Knox Central School District School. The program at Edwards-Knox will allow students taking agriculture courses to be involved in the following:

- Planting and harvesting of fresh food crops;
- Planning, designing and maintenance of a composter;
- Constructing several grow racks and raised garden beds; and
- Designing and maintenance of a farm fish tank.

“Our district has a long history of providing its students with an extensive agricultural-based curriculum,” said Edwards-Knox Central School District Superintendent Ron Burke. “While we have always stressed the importance of agriculture with our students, this funding from

Senator Ritchie will ensure we can get back to truly educating them about farming, fresh foods and why agriculture is such a critical part of our community.”

“Agriculture is a big part of our community and Ag Education is a highly valued program here at South Jeff,” South Jefferson Central School District Superintendent Mary Beth Denny said. “The more we do to involve our students in activities related to farming, farm fresh foods and agriculture in general, the more likely it is our students will support local agriculture throughout their lives. This “Seeds of Success” funding can help spark interest in careers in agriculture. I want to thank Senator Ritchie for helping make this happen.”

“In order for our communities as a whole to be successful, we have to continue to promote agriculture. By not only teaching our students about farming, but giving them first-hand experience through Senator Ritchie’s ‘Seeds of Success’, they are getting a lesson that will last a lifetime, whether they are a farm-fresh customer, or decide to take up a career in agriculture,” Fulton City School District Superintendent Brian Pulvino added.

Through “Seeds of Success,” schools will have the opportunity not only to plant and harvest fresh foods, but also to have the fruits and vegetables they grow be part of school lunches, as well as donate them to local food pantries. A number of districts will be involving technology classes in the building of garden structures, like grow racks and raised garden beds, and others will expand farming-focused course offerings.

The list of school districts receiving “Seeds of Success” funding is as follows:

**Jefferson County**

South Jefferson Central School District

Carthage Central School District

Sackets Harbor Central School District

Belleville Henderson Central School District

**Oswego County**

Central Square Central School District

Hannibal Central School District

Fulton City School District

Oswego City School District

**St. Lawrence County**

Edwards Knox Central School District

Gouverneur Central School District

Heuvelton Central School District

Morristown Central School District

*(Senator Ritchie is pictured at Edwards-Knox Central School with students from the high school's agricultural mechanics class)*