

AG ED. GROWING OPPORTUNITY

• *WHS AG PROGRAM GRABS STUDENT INTEREST*

Winner High School's agricultural education program is providing great opportunities for its students.

The school's agricultural curriculum offers a wide array of courses – eight in all – for students to find their passions and explore possible careers through applied sciences in a community offering growth and development for students while they are still at the secondary level and beyond.

WHS ag ed courses include Introduction to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Animal Science, Ag Business and Marketing, Agronomy, Natural Resources, Horticulture and Ag Communications and Journalism.

"Students are able to choose their interests through the Ag coursework offered to a great extent," Ag Ed Instructor Wyatt DeJong said. "Students then get to choose to dive deeper into the areas of their personal interests."

"Many of the students have already taken advantage of the course offerings so far."

DeJong said after the first semester of the 2014-15 school year approximately 20 percent of WHS students successfully earned a half credit of Ag science.



WHS's ag classes are deeply seeded with STEM education principles, which have seen growing integration in all disciplines.

"In Ag, STEM is not added, it already has these principles that must be learned in combination with language arts and in a hands-on delivery method that tends to engage students through all areas of visual, audio, and kinesthetic learning," DeJong said.

Work-based learning is a key focus of the program in addition to STEM infused coursework. Students have an individualized work-based learning plan known as their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project.

DeJong said students have projects ranging from owning their own cattle, horse, pigs, and fish, to renting land to farm or working on a farm for their family or neighbors.

Other projects include students working in the food service industry, community development and health care, conducting their own research in Agriscience or exploring career options through educational field trips and job shadowing.

As WHS's ag program grows, so to do the facilities available.

The district is constructing a 24 by 30 foot greenhouse that should be in full operation by the second semester.

"This will give the Intro to Ag, Food, and Natural Resources and the Horticulture classes time to have hands-on learning about plant growth and also to conduct personal experiments to better understand how plants perform," DeJong said.

