

Local Program Start-up Guide

1. Clarify specifically what you want and why you want it.
 - a. Complete introspection/reflection exercise for why you want to start agricultural education program.
2. Developing Community Support
 - a. Identify 4-6 key people from the list below to form the core group to assist with planning in implementation of project
 - b. Support group could come from multiple groups of interest
 - i. Ag community
 - ii. Commodity support organizations
 - iii. Others
 1. State agencies in ag and natural resources
 2. community leaders & elected officials with vested interests
 3. Former agricultural education students/FFA members
3. Analyze the local political climate

This is offered not to determine whether or not a program should be pursued but to identify possible difficulties that you may need to address as you craft and deliver your message

 - a. School system
 - b. community
 - c. State
4. Clarify the state-specific process/procedure to be followed to start a program
 - a. Contact appropriate agricultural education state staff
 - b. Utilize state staff directory to determine contact person
 - c. Determine state specific process for starting a new agricultural education program
5. Build your timeline for success – Remember that this is a process that may take a great deal of time. From your initial discussions to the time an Agricultural Education program opens may be up to two years. Be patient with this process.
6. How to involve key-people.
 - a. Kingmakers
 - b. How to involve Kingmakers & gain support
 - c. Identify other key people to accept roles and help develop action plan
7. What local opportunities can agricultural education address?
 - a. Student retention
 - b. Life skills
 - c. Relevant curriculum
 - d. Entrepreneurship
 - e. Rigor/relevance/relationships
 - f. Emphasize how agricultural education serves a diverse student population

8. Meet with local school officials
 - a. Have core committee meet informally with school officials to discuss starting an agricultural education program
 - b. Work with state agricultural education staff to determine appropriate official to contact
 - c. In most cases contact person is building principal
 - d. Utilize understanding of local political climate when making contact
 - e. Collect/create resources to present to school officials to support creation of agricultural education program
 - f. Where can school officials go to experience agricultural education?
9. Develop a community campaign – Develop your message
 - a. Develop and create message for multiple delivery methods
 - b. Message Delivery / audience
10. Conduct a student interest assessment
 - a. Explain to the administration the need to offer a non-biased survey of all students to explore student interest in a wide range of areas.
 - b. Example survey
 - c. Volunteer to assist with conducting survey and analyzing data
 - d. Analyze data
11. Identify the type of curriculum wanted/required
12. Present program proposal to school board for approval
 - a. Schedule a proposal at a school board meeting (realize that some school board agendas are set up to a month in advance)
 - b. Prepare agricultural education program start-up proposal from previous information gathered
 - c. This needs to be a concise powerful message with a clear connection to local need, student interest, and feasibility of the plan