

ELGIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE



NATHANIEL MERAZ, SUPERINTENDENT

CURTIS LORAH
HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

MELISSA HITT
MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

TAMMIE REYNOLDS, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

P.O. Box 369
HWY. 17 & MIGHTY OWL AVE.
ELGIN, OK 73538
(580) 492-3663

ROBERT HUGHES
LOWER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

TODD OSBORN
UPPER ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with my upmost pleasure to recommend the Elgin Agricultural Education program for the Excellence in Action Award. Our agricultural education program was established in 1948 and has impacted thousands of students during that time. The program is focused on developing students for future careers in the agricultural fields by providing a diverse set of learning opportunities. The program is not only state recognized, but also nationally, and it is a great pride to have a program of this caliber in our school district.

As a part of the agricultural education model, our program strives to provide all students with worthwhile experiences in their Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs). By working with each students' interests, the program is able to integrate high-quality work-based learning experiences whether it is helping a student establish their own business, conduct a research experiment, or work at a local business. It is through experiences like this that our students begin to determine what future career paths they are interested or not interested in pursuing. Through their strong connections in the community, including their mentoring program, they have been able to connect students with over 25 different businesses in our area. By doing this, they are uniquely able to align to the community's workforce and employer needs.

Our instructors work hard in the classroom to ensure that they maintain rigorous and relevant college- and career-ready expectations to their students from eighth grade to senior year. When I walk into the agricultural education facility, I am always greeted with students who are engaged in projects and lessons that are not only engaging but require high order and critical thinking skills. Most of the courses offered to upper-level students involve a lab component like the greenhouse and welding shop. Students also participate in independent studies that lead to capstone experiences their senior year. This independent work allows students to choose more specialized topics within the career clusters to explore.

In addition, she has she has organized numerous community service projects such as: activities with the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank, Oklahoma State Fair, Christmas card for troops overseas, gardening with the special needs program, Ronald McDonald House, the local animal shelter, an elementary ag literacy program, and the Poor Boys.

The Elgin Agricultural Education program is a positive part of Elgin High School. It has been a pleasure to watch the successes the instructors have had with the students they work with and serve on a daily basis. It its my extreme pleasure to recommend the Elgin Agricultural Education program for the Excellence in Action Award. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curtis Lorah'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Curtis Lorah
Elgin High School Principal



APACHE FEED COOPERATIVE

Mr. Shane Taliaferro
Owner/Operator
Apache Feed Cooperative
707 G Avenue
Elgin, OK 73538

To Whom It May Concern:

I am excited to write a letter supporting the Elgin Agricultural Education Program. As owner of the Apache Feed Cooperative, I have been an active partner of the program for more than a decade. I am proud to sponsor the Elgin Agricultural Education Program. Their students are great employees and many stay with me for years after graduation. As a former member of the program, I have seen a lot of changes since I was a student, however, I wish I could go back now and learn what some of these students are learning. From horticulture to ag mechanics, Elgin students are learning valuable skills they can use to obtain a job and make a career. I will continue to be a support and sponsor of the program. I believe in what it does of students and I know they will have an advantage over their classmates.

One of my favorite roles is to mentor students in their own business plans. I have enjoyed helping to coach young students in developing budgets, target goals and evaluation procedures. This partnership has made me a better business owner and local community employer. I hope I have been able to make an impact on these student as they have on my life. I wish I had someone to help me as I began my career. This would have saved me a lot of money and time to have a mentor like these kids do.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you to the instructors who make this possible. Mrs. Dale and Mr. Jones have given some of these kids a second chance on life through this program. They are giving kids the opportunity to become entrepreneurs while in high school which is important to our community and state. I am always willing to support a program that puts kids first and does whatever it can to better the students.

Sincerely,

Shane Taliaferro

Leadership Activities



The Elgin FFA chapter has monthly meetings for FFA members, which includes a business meeting followed by an activity. Each business meeting is conducted using Robert's Rules of Order and teaches students about parliamentary procedure.



Over 134 Elgin FFA members have attended and participated in the state level FFA Made for Excellence and Advanced Leadership Development Conferences since 2013.

In 2015, the Elgin FFA chapter was recognized at the National FFA Convention as a Model of Excellence winner through the National Chapter Award category.



Eleven FFA members attended an eighth grade leadership conference in Stillwater, OK in 2016. During the conference, members learned about goal setting and leadership.



Each summer members attend Alumni Camp where they learn goal setting, leadership skills, and network with students from across the state. This leadership camp is one of the most popular events on the calendar and students make lasting memories over the course of the four-day camp.



"I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds..." - E.M. Tiffany

Leadership Activities



Providing leadership experiences for our students is a top priority. I strive to give students the opportunity to learn and practice leadership skills on the local, state, and national level. Locally, we have several committees students can join to get involved in leadership.



Since 2013, Elgin FFA members have visited elementary classes in the school district during National FFA Week to read agricultural books to them and answer questions relating to agriculture and the National FFA Organization.



Over the past four years, we have had four State Officer Candidates. Two students were elected to state office in 2015, and in 2016, one of those students was elected as the Oklahoma State FFA President.

Career Development Events



The Agricultural Communications CDE team placed first at the state contest in 2017.

Elgin FFA members compete in many Career Development Events throughout the year, including Agricultural Communications, Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Public Speaking, Food Science and Technology, Livestock Evaluation, Floriculture, Junior Parliamentary Procedure, Agricultural Education, Employment Skills, Floriculture, Milk Quality, Animal Science Quiz Bowl, Greenhand Quiz, and Agricultural Technology and Farm Systems. The multiple CDE areas allow all students to find a place to apply their knowledge in FFA competitions.



During the fall of 2016, over 38 Elgin FFA students competed in Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the Greenhand Quiz contests.



The state winning Food Science and Technology team after the state contest in April 2014.



In 2016, an Elgin FFA member made it to the top 5 in the state Greenhand Quiz contest.



One of the most popular LDEs in the Elgin FFA chapter is public speaking. In April 2016, 20 members participated in the Lawton PI speech contest, and seven of those students advanced to the district contest.

Community Service Activities



Each year Elgin FFA partners with the Poor Boys Tractor Club in Sept. to teach elementary children about the history and advancements in agricultural technology.



Elgin FFA members raised \$260 through a Penny Wars during National FFA Week in 2017. This money was used to purchase 24 agriculturally related books for our three classes that participate in our monthly PALS program.



Members help a veteran open his "Holidays for Heroes" gift that was provided by the high school wide gift drive, which was coordinated by the Elgin FFA chapter in December 2016.



Every week Elgin FFA members pack and deliver backpacks of food for elementary students who do not have enough to eat on the weekend. The "Feed the Future" program, which is a partnership between Elgin FFA and the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank has served over 400 elementary students during the past four years.

"... I can exert an influence in my home and community, which will stand solid..." - E.M. Tiffany

Community Service Activities



Each September, Elgin FFA members volunteer to work at the Ag-Tropolis exhibit, which is part of the Oklahoma State Fair.



Every month FFA members visit three classes for the PALS program, which focuses on teaching agricultural topics to elementary students using student-created lessons and hands-on activities.



During the 2016 National FFA Week the Elgin FFA chapter collected over 100 items for the local animal shelter.

In 2016, members attended the first 5K Pumpkin Pie Run at the Jahn's Pumpkin Hill to pass out water and cheer on the runners.



Over 20 FFA members participated in the "Clean the Parks" event, which cleaned up Elgin's main areas and roadsides in 2014.

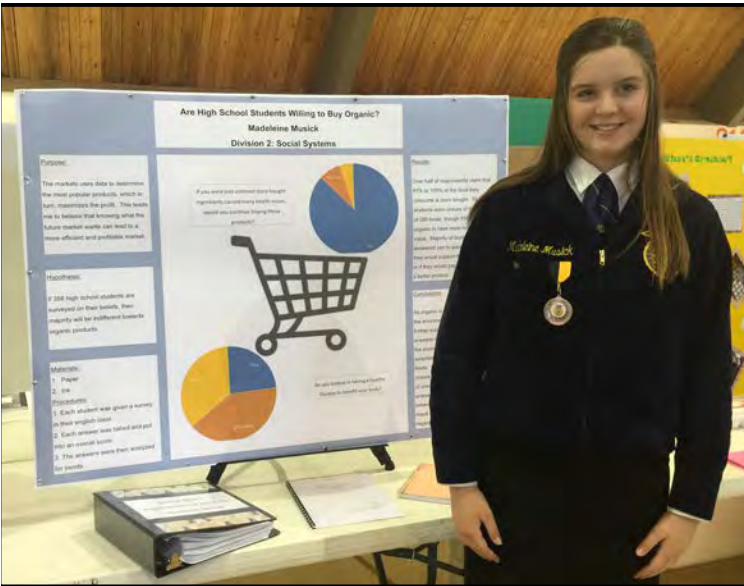


The Garden Buddies program is a project between the FFA and the school's special needs program. Members are paired with SPED students and garden with them twice a week. Many of the tasks in the garden help strengthen the students' motor skills, and members facilitate activities like holding harvested tomatoes and watering the outside garden beds.

SAE Activities



Students in the Elgin Agricultural Education Department are required to have an SAE project. Thus, there is a range of SAE programs that incorporate various career pathways from animal systems to education and leadership. Elgin agriculture students apply their classroom knowledge and skills to their SAE projects and solve problems in real-world situations. Several students have found their passion through their involvement in their SAE program and are pursuing careers and higher education in those areas.



*Learning to do.
Doing to learn.
Earning to live.
Living to serve.*



Classroom/Lab Activities



The Introduction to Horticulture class was established in 2016 when we secured a grant to purchase hydroponic equipment and supplies. Through this course, students participate in hands-on labs on a daily basis. Activities like planting, growing, watering, transplanting and harvesting provide students with opportunities to develop their horticultural skills. Students are also able to participate in field trips and tours of hydroponic businesses both in and out of state. During one trip, a student was inspired to start her own agribusiness as an SAE project.



Premier Leadership · Personal Growth · Career Success

Classroom/Lab Activities



The PALS program is not only a good way for students to practice leadership, communication, and advocating, but it is also a great recruitment tool.



In 2015, students prepared vegetables to be canned as project for the food products and processing lesson. This activity is a part of the Food Science unit in the upper level course, Agriscience II.



Students evaluated the signs of animal health at the Elgin school farm. This activity is a part of the Livestock Unit in the 8th grade course, Agricultural Explorations.



Students conduct experiments to practice the steps of the scientific method. They were presented with materials and asked to develop a hypothesis and design and conduct an experiment. These activities were conducted before the Agriscience Project unit in the 8th grade course, Agricultural Explorations.

