



# Edwardsville School District 7 awarded Monsanto Agriculture Education Grant

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**EDWARDSVILLE** - On July 31, **Edwardsville School District 7** was notified that it had been selected to receive a \$10,000 grant for its *Growing Technology for Data Collection* proposal through America's Farmers Grow Rural Education, sponsored by **the Monsanto Fund**.



The Monsanto Fund supports rural education and its role in growing the next generation of farmers. The organization recognizes that schools are an integral part of that process.

A school district must be nominated by area farmers in order to apply for this grant. Farmers in this area nominated District 7 to apply for this grant to show their appreciation for the quality of District 7's agriculture program.

After the District's application was submitted, it was reviewed first by math and science teachers from ineligible school districts, then by the **America's Farmers Grow Rural Education Advisory Council**, a group of 29 prominent farmers from across the country.

Superintendent Lynda Andre is thankful for the support of those who nominated the District to apply for the grant. "District 7 encompasses 185 square miles, with a large rural area. The support we receive from the rural community is much appreciated. It has given us the opportunity to fill a need for our agriculture program," Andre said.

This \$10,000 grant will enable District 7 to add Wi-Fi access in its greenhouse and purchase 10 Microsoft Surface Pro 3 Tablets that will provide students at **Edwardsville High School** the opportunity to take their science and agricultural experiments to the next level.

District 7 provides many opportunities for students to participate in science-based courses. The Edwardsville High School science department offers 19 different course options, while agricultural course offerings have been expanded to include eight options for students. Course projections for the 2015-16 school year have over 2,200 students enrolled in at least one of these course offerings.

At the greenhouse, the Wi-Fi and tablets will be used to participate in propagation labs, fertilizer trials, pH trials, and understanding of Integrated Pest Management. In the classroom, students will work in groups to solve problems, and analyze data on the web, all while displaying the results live on the classroom interactive white board. Vernier probes will also be attached to the tablets to assist with data collection and manipulation.

Teacher trainings are already taking place with the use of the **Microsoft Surface Pro 3 tablets**. The District's lead agriculture teacher and science department chair have been training and experimenting on the device over the last year. Additional trainings occurred during the summer. The District's technology department will ensure that the staff has the necessary training needed to fully implement the use of the Wi-Fi and tablets for instruction.

District 7 developed the Agriculture program and the FFA during the 2004-2005 school year. During this time, the District offered one class called Introduction to Agriculture. Since this course was introduced, the District has expanded the program to eight classes at the high school and an exploratory class, Agricultural Science, which is offered to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at both middle school buildings.

**John Davin**, Edwardsville High School Agricultural teacher, will manage the project. Davin has played a vital role in the growth and success of the agriculture program and continually looks for ways to expand and increase the success of the agricultural science program. He has established himself as a teacher-leader, specifically in the area of agricultural education.

As teachers and students become more familiar with the capabilities of the tablet, the District anticipates further exploration of applications that can be used across agriculture and science courses.