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LOCAL FARMERS ANSWER THE CALL. BAYER FUND AWARDS \$15,000 GRANT TO ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY SCHOOLS TO ENHANCE STEM CURRICULUM

By Working with Farmers, Bayer Fund Invests in Children by Strengthening Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education in Rural Schools

- **Bayer Fund's \$15,000 America's Farmers Grow Rural Education grant will help fund the Isle of Wight County Schools' Land Lab to implement a "Farm to Fork" program, where students in the Agriculture program will grow fresh vegetables for use by school cafeterias throughout the division, beginning with Windsor Elementary School.**
- **School districts from across the country were nominated and selected by a panel of teachers and farmers to receive STEM grants through Grow Rural Education.**
- **Since 2010, Bayer Fund's America's Farmers programs have awarded more than \$57 million to thousands of nonprofits, schools and ag students across rural America.**

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (September 28, 2020) – In early 2020, Bayer Fund's America's Farmers Grow Rural Education partnered with local farmers to nominate rural public school districts and award grants to enhance their science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum. Because area farmers answered the call, through Grow Rural Education, Bayer Fund awarded a \$15,000 grant to Isle of Wight County Schools (IWCS).

A brighter tomorrow for farming communities starts with a commitment from Bayer Fund today, which is why the America's Farmers programs have awarded more than \$57 million to rural America since 2010. Isle of Wight County Schools is one of the many schools across the country that has benefited from Bayer Fund's Grow Rural Education program.

Grow Rural Education grants have helped schools purchase an array of STEM-related materials, such as augmented-reality sandboxes, weather-forecasting and robotics equipment. IWCS will use the Grow Rural Education funds to purchase materials for the construction of a greenhouse at the Land Lab. Agriculture students from Smithfield and Windsor high schools will use the greenhouse to grow vegetables, such as lettuce, collards, and broccoli, that will be used for school lunches across the division.

“Students in the Agriculture program have a unique opportunity to apply STEM concepts to real-world applications on a daily basis,” said Superintendent Dr. Jim Thornton. We would like to thank the local farmers who nominated our district to apply for the Grow Rural Education Grant, as well as Bayer Fund’s Farmer Advisory Council who believed we could make a difference with the funds.”

To qualify for a Grow Rural Education grant, farmers nominate a public school district to compete for a merit-based \$15,000 grant. Local farmers who nominated Isle of Wight County Schools include Mark Carr, Shawn Carr, Richie Carr, and Pam Oliver. School districts that are nominated, then submit a grant application describing their STEM-focused project. Grow Rural Education’s Farmer Advisory Council, consisting of a panel of math and science teachers and approximately 30 farmer leaders from across the country, review the finalist applications and select the winning school districts. IWCS was the only school division in Virginia to receive this grant. This marks the second year that Isle of Wight County Schools was a recipient of the America’s Farmers Grow Rural Education grant. In 2019, the division received \$10,000 to fund a cattle handling facility at the Land Lab to assist agriculture students from Smithfield and Windsor high schools in learning safe animal handling practices.

“Bayer Fund and the farmers we partner with feel incredibly passionate about Grow Rural Education because we’re investing in our children – who are our future – by enhancing STEM learning in rural public school districts,” said Al Mitchell, President, Bayer Fund. “We are always amazed by the incredible support of local farmers, as well as the countless ways Grow Rural Education brings teachers, students and people in the community together to set children up for success.”

To view a complete list of winners or to learn more about the America’s Farmers Grow Rural Education program, visit AmericasFarmers.com or follow along on Facebook at facebook.com/AmericasFarmers. Farmers are also encouraged to participate in Bayer Fund’s [America’s Farmers Grow Communities](https://AmericasFarmers.com/grow-communities) program, which is accepting farmer enrollments through November 1, 2020. Grow Communities protects the programs and institutions that keep farmers and their communities thriving by allowing farmers to enroll for a chance to direct a \$2,500 donation to their favorite local eligible nonprofit organization.

About America’s Farmers

America’s Farmers, sponsored by Bayer Fund, is focused on strengthening rural America through three community outreach programs that partner with farmers to make an impact in communities where farmers live and work. The programs have given more than \$57 million to rural America since 2010 and include:

- America’s Farmers Grow Communities supports rural communities by allowing farmers the opportunity to direct a \$2,500 donation to their favorite local nonprofit organization.

- America's Farmers Grow Rural Education supports rural education by providing \$15,000 merit-based grants to enhance STEM education.
- America's Farmers Grow Ag Leaders supports students pursuing ag-related studies by offering \$1,500 scholarships towards higher education.

To learn more, visit America's Farmers at www.americasfarmers.com.

About Bayer Fund

Bayer Fund is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the communities where Bayer customers and employees live and work by providing funding for food and nutrition, education and community development projects.

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IWCS announced the grant award at the September 10, 2020 School Board meeting. Pictured, left to right: Dr. Jim Thornton, Superintendent; Jeff Mordica, Director of Innovation and Strategic Planning, Jackie Carr, School Board Chair; Daniel Judkins, IWCS Farm Manager, Leah Carroll, Windsor High School School Board Liaison, Julia Perkins, School Board Vice-Chair; Shawn Carr, local farmer; Vicky Hulick, School Board member; Denise Tynes, School Board member; Alvin Wilson, School Board member; Jason Brittle, Agriculture teacher. Not pictured: Kristan Formella, Coordinator of Instruction.