



NEWS RELEASE

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Students Put Business Skills to the Test in Salad Wars Competition, Fusing Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Agriculture

Encinitas, CA — Sixth graders in the Encinitas Union School District (EUSD) are putting their business skills to the test at the district's Farm Lab, where students create their own organic salad dressing from scratch and formulate an accompanying business pitch to compete in the highly anticipated Salad Wars. Throughout this 5-day entrepreneurial unit, students dive into the world of regenerative agriculture while developing a salad dressing company, providing them with a valuable real-world learning experience. At the end of the week, each class presents its sales pitch to a panel of judges, complete with a dressing tasting, an explanation of the design process and even a catchy parody to promote their product. While only one team takes home the golden fork trophy, all students walk away as confident collaborators and skilled communicators.

"Entrepreneurial DREAMS - Design, Research, Engineering, Art, Math and Science - is a competency-based learning week that sixth graders and their teachers look forward to and love!" says Julie Burton, Farm Lab Administrator. "Through the creation of organic salad dressing companies, students experience the power of intentional collaborations that foster creativity and communication skills, while allowing them to share their work in a real-world context. Additionally, learning about regenerative agriculture deepens sixth graders' understanding of sustainable farming practices, environmental stewardship and the connection between soil health and the quality of our food. Healthy kids; healthy planet!"

As a class team, students take on seven key roles throughout the week—chefs, MCs, event organizers, promotion teams, design specialists, flavor experts and copywriters. Together, they brainstorm company names and themes, design dressing prototypes, experiment with flavor profiles and research the nutritional value of their final products. Students then develop a comprehensive business plan, craft eye-catching logos, write company mission statements, create promotional songs and choreography and harvest fresh lettuce from the farm to present to the judges.

While a portion of the ingredients used to create the salad dressings are grown at Farm Lab, local grocer Jimbo's generously donates all other needed ingredients. This donation gives every student the opportunity to participate in the dressing design process, making the experience more equitable and meaningful for all.

Soil science and the importance of regenerative farming are at the forefront of this learning experience. Students explore the world of soil health by testing various types of soil and learning about its vital role in biodiversity, water retention and nutrient cycling. These lessons come to life during a tour of Farm Lab's certified organic production farm, where students observe regenerative farming practices in action. They also gain valuable insights into how soil health affects the nutritional value of food and how the farm

contributes to carbon sequestration and combating climate change. By the end of the unit, students develop a stronger appreciation for the importance of eating organic and supporting regenerative farms, recognizing the benefits for both their health and the planet's well-being.

Farm Lab's grade six programming, including Salad Wars, is currently highlighted in Dr. Katie Martin's book *Evolving Education: Shifting to a Learner-Centered Paradigm* as a model of best practices in learner-centered instruction. Farm Lab continues to be a leader in providing students with authentic, real-world learning experiences that foster collaboration, critical thinking and a connection to sustainable agricultural practices.

For more information about Farm Lab's educational programs, please visit farmlab.eusd.net.

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ABOUT FARM LAB

Farm Lab is a 10-acre educational property supporting health, wellness, and environmental literacy for Encinitas Union School District (EUSD) students. Home to EUSD's certified organic farm, it plays a key role in the district's farm-to-school program and promotes regenerative agriculture practices. The DREAMS Campus (Design, Research, Engineering, Art, Math, and Science) provides sustainability education to all 4,800 EUSD students, with a focus on hands-on, project-based learning. Farm Lab also features innovative learning spaces designed for real-world, farm-to-table experiences.

ABOUT ENCINITAS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Encinitas Union School District's (EUSD) vision is to ignite the limitless potential of all learners. EUSD works to cultivate values of joy, belonging, integrity, service and innovation for its approximately 4,300 students in Kindergarten through 6th grade. EUSD serves the city of Encinitas and the Rancho La Costa area of South Carlsbad in North San Diego County. All nine EUSD schools have been recognized as California Distinguished Schools and serve a diverse and varied community.