



Contact: U. City Schools' Communications Department
7700 Olive Blvd., University City, MO 63130

communications@ucityschools.org
(314) 290-4016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University City High School Launches First FFA Chapter in St. Louis County

On Tuesday, January 20, University City High School proudly celebrated the launch of its Future Farmers of America (FFA) Chapter, the first of its kind in St. Louis County. This milestone reflects the District's growing commitment to agricultural education that brings sustainability and hands-on learning into an urban setting.

Student officers from the Missouri FFA joined the celebration to officially charter the chapter, opening the door for UCHS students to grow as leaders, develop real-world skills, and explore meaningful career pathways connected to agriculture, sustainability, and environmental stewardship. Dr. Pamela Lester, UCHS Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor, shared her excitement about the program, saying it "opens up a world of opportunities for our students, as it is a premier leadership organization."

Superintendent Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D., PHR, reflected on the significance of the moment, noting, "The launch of UCHS' FFA Chapter provides students with hands-on experiences in agriculture and leadership while showing that careers in this field are accessible to everyone. By integrating sustainability and agriculture into our school community, we are expanding opportunities and empowering students to explore paths they may not have considered before."

The FFA Chapter builds on the agriculture course introduced at UCHS during the 2023–24 school year, the first of its kind in the St. Louis area. That work continued this past summer with the installation of a shipping container converted into a hydroponic farm, giving students meaningful, hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture and food systems. UCHS is now the first high school in the region to use the Fresh Harvest 365 Smart Farm System and the first in St. Louis City and County with a state-approved career and technical education program in agriculture.

The launch of UCHS' FFA Chapter marks an exciting new chapter in the District's commitment to student growth, leadership, innovation, and sustainability. The future is bright, and it is growing right here in University City.

