Barnwell County School District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guinyard-Butler Middle School Agriculture Program Expands Opportunities for Students Through FFA Experiences and Community Support

Guinyard-Butler Middle School (GBMS) is celebrating exciting momentum within its agricultural education program, led by Ms. Ashton Myrick, as students begin to experience the leadership and opportunities offered through FFA.

Recently, the program received a generous donation of 10 official FFA jackets from the Barnwell County FFA Alumni. The jackets, presented in February, will remain at the school as a class set for students to wear during FFA activities, competitions, and special events. The donation ensures that more students have the opportunity to wear the iconic blue jacket that represents leadership and pride in agricultural education.



The GBMS FFA officers pose with the Barnwell County FFA Alumni.

GBMS FFA students also recently traveled to Columbia to attend the South Carolina FFA Legislator Appreciation Day at the State House, marking another milestone for the growing program. For many of the students, the trip was their first time wearing official FFA dress and their first major event representing their school as FFA members. While at the State House, students joined hundreds of FFA members from across South Carolina, including those members from Barnwell County Career Center, and had the opportunity to observe the work of the South Carolina General Assembly while learning more about how agriculture and education are supported through state leadership.

Barnwell County School District Superintendent Dr. Crissie Stapleton said the early success of the program reflects both the dedication of the teacher and the support of the community. “FFA

provides students with meaningful experiences that help them grow as leaders while also developing an appreciation for the importance of agriculture in our communities," said Dr. Stapleton. "We are incredibly proud of the new agricultural program at Guinyard-Butler Middle School and grateful to have partners like the Barnwell County FFA Alumni who help make opportunities like this possible for our students."



GBMS FFA students recently had an exciting experience attending the South Carolina Legislator Appreciation Day.

In addition to these experiences, the Guinyard-Butler Middle School agriculture program continues to grow, providing students with hands-on learning opportunities and exposure to a wide range of agricultural career pathways. Students have been actively engaged in plant science, animal science, agricultural technology, and leadership development, building practical skills that connect classroom learning to real-world applications. In March, members of the GBMS FFA chapter competed in their first Career Development Event (CDE), participating in the Tool Identification competition. Competing against both middle and high school teams, students placed 10th in that event, with one student earning a Top 25 individual placement, finishing 23rd overall.

Students are also collaborating across programs within the school. Agriculture classes recently cleaned and organized the special needs greenhouse, which will now be jointly utilized to expand hands-on learning opportunities and foster teamwork. Also in March, a group of students, including several FFA officers, volunteered at a local community garden work day, helping prepare the space for the upcoming planting season. In addition, students have been starting seeds in the school greenhouse, gaining firsthand experience with plant propagation and early growth management.

Through these experiences, students are working toward key program goals, including exploring agricultural career pathways, developing leadership and teamwork through FFA participation, strengthening hands-on skills such as greenhouse management, and building an understanding of agriculture's role in food production, sustainability, and natural resource management. These

opportunities are helping students grow not only in technical knowledge, but also in responsibility, leadership, and community engagement.

The GBMS agriculture program continues to build excitement among students as they learn about the field of agriculture while proudly representing their school and Barnwell County.

For more information regarding BCSD news releases, contact:
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