

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES
Township of Union Public Schools
M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M

TO: Gerald Benaquista

C: Marissa McKenzie, Dr. Jose Rodrigues, Yolanda Koon, Kim Conti, Bernadette Watson,
Diane Cappiello

FROM: Stefannie Buthorn 

RE: Board Agenda

DATE: August 18, 2026

Approve Community Based Instruction Site (CBI) (*Community-Based Instruction (CBI) is an educational approach that teaches functional skills to students with disabilities in real-life community settings rather than just the classroom. It focuses on providing hands-on learning experiences in natural environments like grocery stores, public transportation, and other community venues, helping students develop practical skills for greater independence*) and Work Based Learning (WBL) (*formerly Structured Learning Experiences*) (*Work Based Learning sites are off-campus locations where students gain hands-on experience in real-world work environments, typically in partnership with community businesses*)/School Enterprises (*student-run or school-managed businesses located on campus that provide similar work-based skill development within a school setting*) for the 2026-2027 school year as follows:

- A. *School Enterprise* - Farmers' Field to Market: Student- Run Agricultural School Enterprise (Proposed)
- B. *WBL/CBI* - UHS- IT Department
- C. *WBL/CBI* - UHS- Gardens/Greenhouse

Farmers' Field to Market: Student-Run Agricultural School Enterprise Proposal

Overview

Farmers' Field to Market is a student-run agricultural enterprise designed to provide hands-on learning experiences in STEM, food science, sustainability, and entrepreneurship. Students from our self-contained programs along with Unified members will actively participate in every stage of the food production cycle—from growing herbs and vegetables in the classroom to processing, packaging, and preparing products for market.

This program integrates academic content with real-world vocational skills, preparing students for future careers in agriculture, food systems, business, and STEM-related fields.

Program Description

Students will cultivate a variety of herbs and vegetables in a controlled classroom environment using hydroponic systems, container gardening, and traditional soil-based growing methods. Crops may include basil, mint, parsley, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and other fast-growing produce suited for indoor agriculture.

Once harvested, students will process and preserve their crops using food science techniques, including dehydration and freeze-drying. These preserved products will then be packaged, labeled, and prepared for sale through a student-managed market system.

Student Learning Objectives

Through participation in Farmers' Field to Market, students will:

- Develop knowledge of plant biology, growth cycles, and sustainable agriculture practices
 - Apply STEM concepts including environmental science, chemistry, and engineering in food production systems
 - Gain hands-on experience with food preservation, processing, and safety procedures
 - Learn business fundamentals including marketing, budgeting, product development, and customer engagement
 - Build collaboration, problem-solving, and workforce readiness skills
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Enterprise Model

The program functions as a small-scale agricultural business operated entirely by students under teacher supervision. Students will:

1. Plan and maintain indoor growing systems
 2. Monitor plant health and track growth data
 3. Harvest and process crops into value-added products
 4. Design branding, packaging, and marketing materials
 5. Manage pricing, inventory, and sales activities
 6. Reinvest proceeds into sustaining and expanding the program
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Career and Workforce Connections

This enterprise prepares students for careers in:

- Agricultural science and sustainable farming
 - Food technology and food safety
 - Entrepreneurship and small business management
 - Environmental science and STEM-related industries
 - Supply chain and food distribution systems
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Program Impact

Farmers' Field to Market provides students with authentic, project-based learning that connects classroom instruction to real-world applications. By managing a full agricultural production cycle, students gain meaningful experience that builds both academic understanding and practical career skills.

This program also promotes sustainability, healthy food awareness, and community engagement through locally produced student-grown products.