

## Teacher Feature – November 2018

### Pat Tax

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*Ms. Tax is a recipient of a 2018-19 CHS Classroom Grant through the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization!*



#### **Where and what level do you currently teach and why did you choose to become an educator?**

I teach at Pierz Healy High School and teach 7-12th grades. I have 6 different preps so I really get a diversity of subject matter. I am a newer teacher--only in my 6th year, but I am in my second career choice as I worked as a public accountant for many years and as a stay-at-home farmer for many too. I decided to go into teaching because our school was seriously considering dropping the Agricultural Education program altogether due to lack of teaching applicants and I just couldn't see that happening.

#### **How has agriculture and the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Program impacted your students and instruction?**

MAITC has helped me so much! I use the Ag Mag lessons to help my high school students connect with our nearby elementary school and teach lessons from them. We also use the AgMags when my FFA students host or assist in hosting community events--their lessons often become our stations.

Agriculture is inherently engaging simply because it affects each of us, different levels of engagement, but each of us nonetheless. Students enjoy the "hands on" learning and sometimes are amazed at the application of lessons that they may have gotten in another delivery, but are understanding it when applied in the agriculture sector.

#### **Describe the grant project that you will put the CHS Classroom grant funds toward.**

We are really excited to continue in our quest to provide a habitat that is educational, attractive and functional. Our courtyard is centrally located in our 7-12th grade high school and is a focal point because of its location. We had students that repurposed the paving bricks that were removed from the front of the building and had them placed in the courtyard and built a planter made from some of the landscape bricks that were also being used. The



custodians were happy because it is a very low maintenance set up and students are pleased also. We are going to research the importance of pollinators and why we want to help them. Then we are going to determine what their needs are--specifically plant needs. We will purchase seed and plants according to our findings. Then, we intend to distribute seeds to our community along with notecards explaining what we as a community can do to help our pollinators. We are also having one of our community members that operates an apiary come in to discuss how he manages his bees and why he does what he does.

**Why do you believe it is important for our students to be agriculturally literate and aware in today's society?**

Our rural community has a lot of disconnect between students and their food supply. I believe that for students to understand and defend their way of life means they have to be literate in so many facets of agriculture. Meanwhile, there is a real crisis going on with the climate and environment that they will have to deal with also. I want my students to grasp that they have the power to individually make choices and to not accept a website or a platform without question but to have the resources to respond with a knowledgeable answer.