



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Farming for the Future: Ritchie Secures \$50,000 for Agricultural Studies Academy in St. Lawrence County

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| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE**, **ACCESS TO EDUCATION**



State Senator Patty Ritchie has secured \$50,000 that will allow students at the St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES Agricultural Studies Academy to gain hands-on experience for future careers in farming.

“The Agricultural Studies Academy helps local students gain the valuable, hands-on experience they need to be part of our state’s leading industry,” said Senator Ritchie, Chair of

the Senate's Agriculture Committee. "I am pleased to provide this funding, which is already helping students learn how to work with equipment that is used on most farms, and in turn, allow them to hit the ground running when they embark on their future careers in agriculture."

Funding secured by Senator Ritchie helped the school purchase a skid-steer that the school uses every day. It allows students to assist in chores, clean out the barn, feed animals and move wood. It is also building student skills in the areas of agricultural mechanics, natural resources management, and general farm upkeep.

"Senator Ritchie continues to champion our Agricultural Studies Academy program, and agricultural education more broadly throughout St. Lawrence County," said St. Lawrence BOCES District Superintendent Thomas Burns. "We are grateful for Senator Ritchie's support and the educational opportunities it creates for our students."

A unique program established in 2016 through a partnership between BOCES and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of St. Lawrence County, the Agricultural Studies Academy—that is located at the CCE Extension Learning Farm in Canton—allows high school juniors and seniors to learn about agriculture and work toward a career in the field.

In addition to this grant, Senator Ritchie recently secured \$50,000 to help the program purchase a new tractor, as well as successfully advocated for \$200,000 to support the program in the new state budget.