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## EBR Schools to establish an agricultural curriculum to guide students toward career opportunities at USDA

**BATON ROUGE, LA.** – The East Baton Rouge Parish School System is thrilled to announce the creation of an agriculture curriculum to guide students toward the wonderful career opportunities with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Daniel B. Whitley, a Baton Rouge native and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator, supports this type of initiative and is happy to share his insights to help ensure success. "This is precisely the type of initiative communities need to develop the next generation of leaders in agricultural related fields as well as future leaders in USDA," said Administrator Whitley.

This innovative opportunity will give EBRPSS students access to a variety of programs designed to provide hands-on experience and industry-specific training. Westdale Middle School, which has its own aquaponics lab on campus, will be one of the select schools in the district to offer this opportunity to its students. District leaders are still determining when the curriculum will be implemented.

"Through this opportunity, we will provide our students with unparalleled opportunities to explore careers in agriculture, an industry that is crucial to both our local economy and global food security," said Superintendent LaMont Cole.

A graduate of Tara High School, Southern University and LSU, Whitley expressed the importance of bringing this opportunity to his hometown.

"I am deeply committed to investing in the next generation of agricultural leaders, and this initiative represents a significant step toward that goal. As the global population is on pace to top 10 billion people by the year 2050, the biggest question is how to produce enough food to feed everyone. It is imperative we develop agricultural leaders to work toward the solution," Whitley said.

Whitley will visit Westdale Middle at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 21, to meet with district leadership. A press conference will immediately follow at the school, 5650 Claycut Road, to share more information about this initiative.

