



# The Ag Ed Road Show: A Professional Development Experience for Pre-service Agriculture Teachers

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## Introduction

- Early field-based experiences are critical to SBAE teacher preparation, building skills and confidence before student teaching (Rank & Smalley, 2017; Retallick & Miller, 2007).
- Integrated technical-pedagogical activities enhance competency and teaching self-efficacy (Albritton et al., 2023).
- Lab-based EFEs improve preparedness in program delivery and management (Sanders et al., 2023).
- Content-specific, immersive preparation supports teacher confidence and classroom effectiveness (Trickett et al., 2023).
- The **Ag Ed Roadshow** provides Illinois preservice teachers with authentic immersion, professional identity building, and retention support.



## Results to Date

- 221 preservice SBAE teachers participated over nine years; many attend multiple years.
- 152 participants remain in teaching or the pipeline (68.8% retention rate).
- Participants report transformational experiences enhancing professional identity and career preparation.
- State staff note stronger student engagement, early networking, and long-term support relationships.
- Feedback highlights benefits of observing real programs and connecting with practicing teachers.

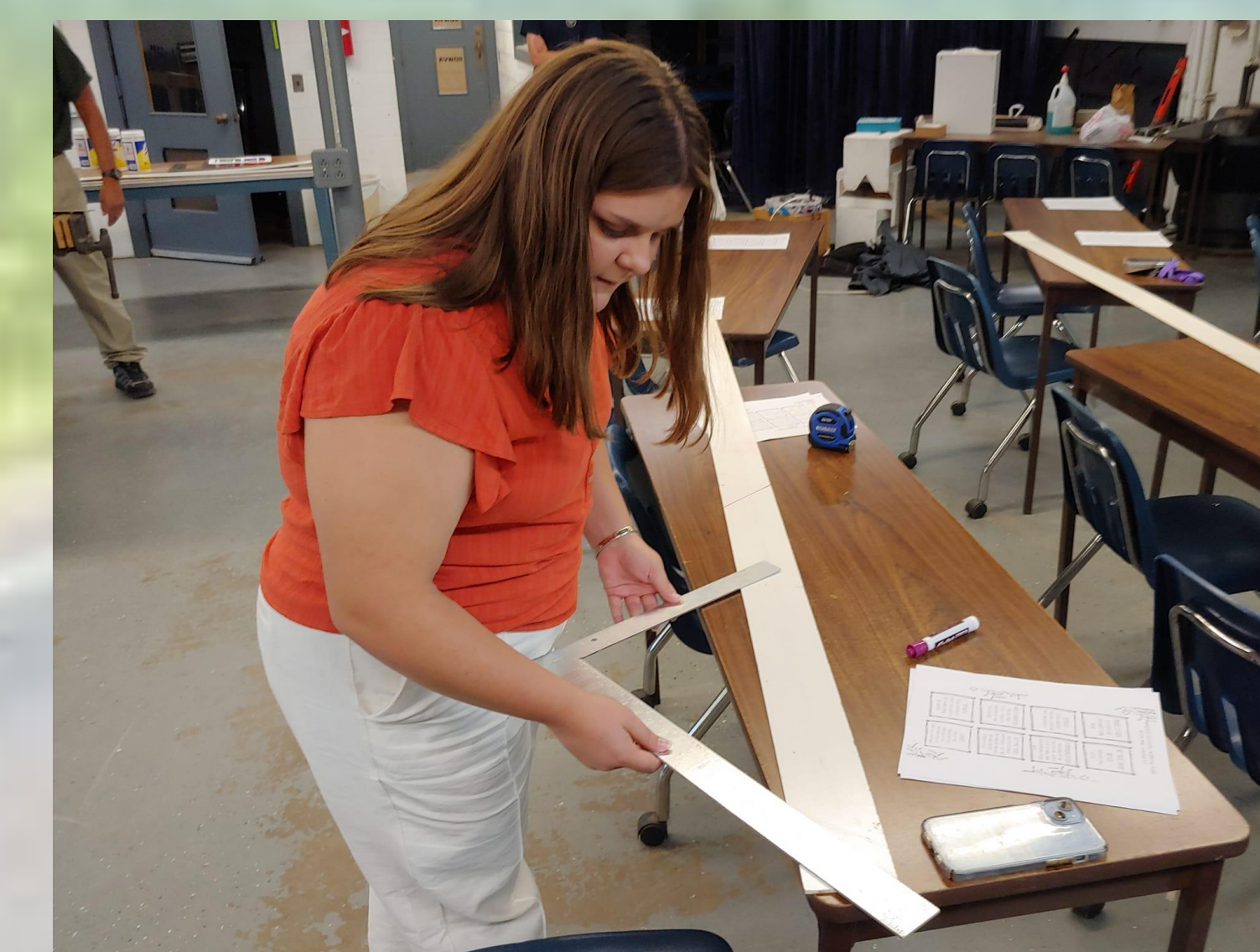
## How it Works

- Two-day annual fall event, collaboratively supported by state staff, universities, community colleges, and industry partners.
- **Day 1:** Networking, industry visits, leadership/team-building activities, and group meals; lodging provided.
- **Day 2:** Visits to exemplary SBAE programs across Illinois—classroom observations, facility tours, and hands-on labs (e.g., wiring, floral design, dissections).
- Host teachers and students lead sessions, offering authentic and replicable experiences.
- Builds networks, practical tools, and a sense of belonging among preservice teachers.



## Advice, Future Plans, & Costs

- Continued implementation supported by **NAAE STAR Program funding** for sustainability.
- Challenges: rising costs and logistics with large groups; addressed through multi-teacher partnerships and breakout sessions.
- Rotation of sites ensures exposure to diverse programs, while centrally located events improve attendance.
- Key advice: involve university ag ed faculty in planning and recruitment to ensure collaboration and strong participation.
- Approximate annual cost: **\$6,000** (lodging, transportation, food, lab supplies).
- Essential resources: reliable funding and strategically selected host schools.



## References

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