



For immediate release on November 1, 2023

Madison, IN – Madison Consolidated Schools announces partnership with local non-profit Madison Youth Unlimited.

Madison Youth Unlimited (MYU) is committed to improving the quality of life for Madison area youth and their families. The Madison Community Grocery Project (MGGP) is a program of the non-profit with a specific mission to build an equitable and sustainable local food system that grows community through education and access to delicious, nutritious food.

“When discussions began with the school last summer, we were in a different place as a community,” stated MYU board president Laura Arico. “We were searching for a solution to fill the grocery store void in downtown Madison. Now that we know there will be a grocery store available, we’re able to focus more specifically on building our local food system through farmer support and improved access to fresh food. Working together, we have created a student-led initiative that will provide more youth leadership and food access opportunities than we ever anticipated and will fit perfectly within the scope and mission of our work.”

MCS students will design, implement, and manage a fresh food store, known as a “farm stop,” that sells fresh local and regional food. The farm stop movement is growing nationwide as communities turn to local farms as a buffer against global supply chain and price fluctuations. Farm stops sell fresh food from a variety of local and regional growers and can take various forms, from indoor marketplaces that operate on a near-daily basis to mobile markets to weekly box programs.

Nestled under the College & Technical Education (CTE) umbrella at MCHS, work on the *Farm Stop* project will begin later this year. “We have recently formed our student leadership team who will develop all elements of this initiative,” stated John Schutte, CTE Coordinator for the district. “The students who have come forward to lead this project are very excited, have various life experiences and strengths which will be valuable to have at the table, and are able to envision the long-term impact a project like this will have on our community, as well as, embrace and create learning opportunities for students of all ages moving forward.”

The student leaders on this project are Lilly Cox, Ava Armbrecht, Avery Clayton, Anni Kempton, Laken Dickerson, Emma Wynn, Reilly Kuppler, and Sophie Guirguis all Juniors at

Madison Consolidated High School. “I am very excited to work with this group of students and our CTE teachers to create an entrepreneurial experience from the beginning,” shared Schutte. “This particular group of students brings a wealth of knowledge, leadership, and experience from their other course work, extracurricular activities, and some with small business development experience that will be extremely beneficial to the overall planning and success of this unique opportunity for our students. We will be the first in the state to offer this opportunity for our students and community.”

While the details are still coming together on the Farm Stop, more information will be shared later this year as the students complete milestone work on their project launch timeline. The work will eventually include curricular areas of business, marketing, personal finance, economics, culinary, agriculture, engineering, and manufacturing. “Our plan is to build this business from the ground up, creating both hands-on and managerial opportunities for students,” stated Schutte. “In addition to the curriculum cross-over, we anticipate guidance from our Human Resources team as we build our processes, and will lean heavily on our overall Cub Enterprises Guiding Coalition for outside perspective and expertise as we begin to build our foundational systems and supports.”

“As the work came together we (MYU board) were able to see that the school shared our passion and desire for homegrown solutions,” shared Arico. “In fact, when we proposed the idea of a student-led farm stop to MCS, they came back with a bigger vision than we had thought possible. They are committed to guiding and empowering students to take on this community leadership role, making youth leadership a vital part of building a thriving local food system that improves food access across income levels. We are very excited to see how this partnership continues to grow!”

While the project timeline and business plan work have already begun, the real work will come later this year and into the next school year with curriculum developments and additions for the 2024-2025 school year. “We are committed to creating educational and real-world value through a hands-on experience that will provide our students with an advantage as they enter college and careers,” shared Dr. Teresa Brown, Superintendent. “As we sit around this table and have discussions about solving barriers to food access for students and families in our community, it is powerful. For our students to step up and lead initiatives such as this, speaks to their hearts and more to their abilities and desire to be change agents.”

Be on the lookout for more information as this partnership blooms and things take root!