

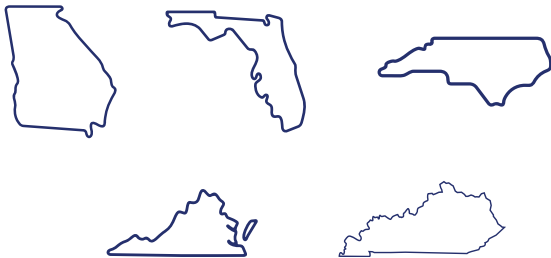


2024 Middle School (Grades 5-8) FFA Advisor Needs Assessment: *Key Findings*

In spring 2024, the National FFA Organization surveyed a national sample of 218 FFA advisors and agriculture teachers of fifth- to eighth-grade agriculture programs. Questions on the survey inquired about how their program operates, student engagement, general support, barriers, challenges, and the resources educators use and are looking for. The following summary highlights some key results.

The survey received a **national sample**.

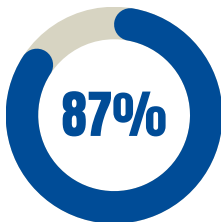
The survey intentionally sought responses from teachers across the nation. The highest number of survey responses came from **Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia** and **Kentucky**.



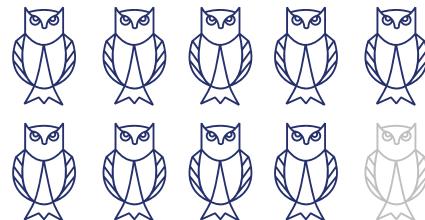
234

When asked to indicate approximately **how many students** are in their fifth- to eighth-grade agriculture programs, respondents reported an average of 234 students. Responses reflected a wide range, from six to 900 students.

The **structure** of middle school (grades 5-8) agriculture programs varies nationwide.



Almost 90% of respondents (N=182) reported that their agriculture class is offered as an **elective**, while 13% said it is a **required course**.



9 in 10 respondents reported that their agriculture program uses the **three-component model**.* Nine percent reported that their chapter operates differently from the standard practice due to being newly chartered or facing limitations due to teacher or school capacity.

*Classroom/laboratory instruction, Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program, FFA.

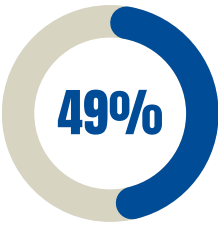


Work-Based Learning, Future Careers and Long-Term Goal Setting of FFA Members

Engagement of fifth- to eighth-grade members in FFA



About **1 in 3** middle school students are **actively engaged** in their FFA chapter or chapter activities (34%), according to respondents. Responses ranged from 1% to 100%.



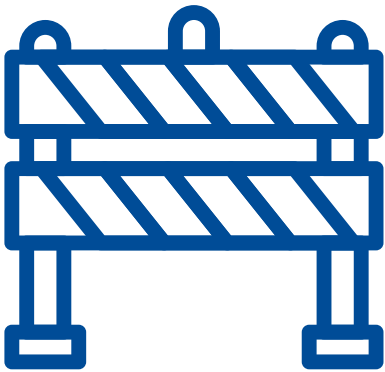
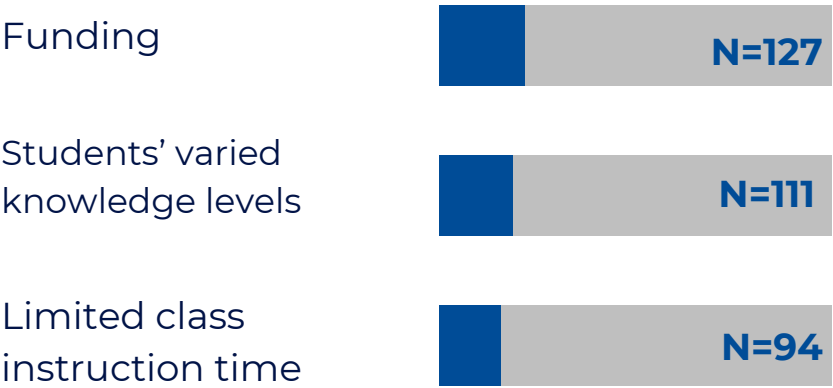
Almost half of the respondents (N=101) said they have a **mentor relationship** with a student in their district or school, but it is not through a formal mentorship program.



Teachers were asked to indicate if their fifth- to eighth-grade students participated in a list of various FFA events/contests and at which levels they had done so. Participation in FFA events or contests varied depending on the event or contest and the level at which it was held. **The most commonly reported participation was at the chapter** (officer positions and FFA degrees) **or regional level** (LDEs, CDEs and leadership conferences/camps).

Current Barriers Faced by Middle School FFA Advisors

Funding was the most reported **barrier** faced in middle school programs.



Respondents were asked to identify one barrier to having a successful middle school agriculture program that National FFA could assist with. Responses varied, though some recurring comments mentioned a **lack of national opportunities, difficulty transitioning from middle school to high school, and a lack of resources for middle school students in general.**



Work-Based Learning, Future Careers and Long-Term Goal Setting of FFA Members

Current Resource Needs of Middle School FFA Advisors



Teachers identified the top five **topics covered** in their programs:

1. Animal Science
2. History of FFA
3. Career Exploration
4. Horticulture
5. Agricultural Literacy

The top five areas with the **greatest need for resources** are:

1. Developing SAE opportunities for students
2. Preparing for career and leadership development events
3. Filling out FFA grants
4. Training chapter FFA officers
5. Managing a local FFA chapter



The top three career pathways for which respondents **want to see educational resources** from National FFA are:

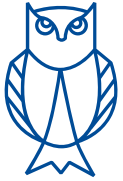
1. Animal Systems
2. Plant Systems
3. Food Products and Processing Systems





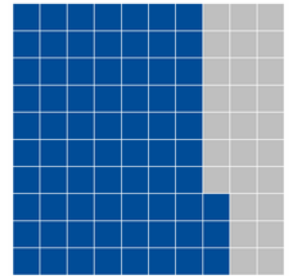
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Motivation and Behavior of Middle School Agriculture Teachers and Students



Middle school (grades 5-8) agriculture teachers and FFA advisors reported an average **motivation level of 8.1** on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being unmotivated and 10 motivated.

73% of respondents reported that students in their classroom, school or district have been **misbehaving** a little or a lot more compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.



Greatest Challenges Navigating Middle School Classrooms

Respondents were asked, overall, what their biggest challenge has been in navigating their middle school classroom within the last four years. They could select multiple options from a given list. The three biggest challenges chosen by the highest percentage of respondents were **a lack of student motivation** (78%, N=153), **a lack of resources in the classroom** (38%, N=74) and **a lack of support from students' parents/guardians** (24%, N=48).



The National FFA Organization strives to understand the needs of agriculture teachers and FFA advisors of all grade levels. This was the first FFA middle school (grades 5-8) needs assessment conducted due to the increase in middle school chapters and the growing importance of providing fifth-to-eighth graders early exposure to agriculture and FFA.

Questions? Email evaluation@ffa.org