

<b>To:</b>	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	October 26, 2023
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	EDTC-CW-17-23
<b>Title:</b>	Agriculture Specialist High Skills Major Program
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Jill Paterson
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Savanna Myers
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Status:</b>	

## Recommendation

1. That report EDTC-CW-17-23 regarding the **Agricultural Specialist High Skills Major Program** be received; and
2. That the **Warden and Clerk** be authorized to sign the agreement to operate the program at **Grey Roots Museum and Archives** for a one year term; and
3. That the agreement be signed prior to **County Council approval** as per **Section 26.6 (b) of the Procedural By-law**.

## Executive Summary

In response to interest from the Agricultural Advisory Committee in 2021, staff have been working closely with representatives from the Bluewater District School Board to develop a pilot program and corresponding agreement to bring the Specialist High Skills Major Program in Agriculture to Grey Roots beginning in January 2024. Both parties have now reached an agreement and staff are seeking Council support to formally sign the agreement.

## Background and Discussion

As per report EDTC-CW-11-23, staff are bringing forward the final agreement for Council consideration. If the pilot is approved and successful, the intent is to develop a long-term partnership.

The Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) proposed a collaboration with Grey Roots to offer a temporary new location for its Specialist High Skills Major program in Agriculture. This program exposes students to a variety of agriculture subjects and skills such as Horticulture, Crop Science, Animal Science and Livestock Production. BWDSB proposed moving the location

of the program to Grey Roots to become more accessible to students, as Owen Sound is a transportation hub for the bus system. Up to 25 students would be able to enroll.

At the March 18, 2021, Agricultural Advisory Committee, members asked staff to determine whether this partnership may be feasible. Staff have been working with the school board over the last 22-months and are now in the process of working through a draft agreement which could see the pilot partnership run from January to June 2024.

The proposal involves:

- Use of the lower level of the barn and chicken coop for animal husbandry
- Use of the schoolhouse for classroom space
- Short term use of the replica Orange Hall for seed propagation
- Construction of a permanent 3-season hoop-greenhouse, relocation of maple syrup shack and installation of pre-built storage shed on the Regional Agriculture Learning and Demonstration Site next door to Grey Roots.

Through this agreement, Grey Roots is simply providing the venue. Staff are not involved in education, planning or delivery. All costs associated with this program will be the responsibility of Bluewater District School Board, as per the agreement.

An application has been submitted to the Niagara Escarpment Commission and a site visit has been completed. Staff have received conditional approval. BWDSB staff hope to access the site as soon as possible, pending agreement signatures and final NEC approval, to complete site preparations ahead of winter weather.

Grey County and BWDSB are entering into a one-year agreement to test the pilot. During this time, both parties will have the opportunity to evaluate the suitability of the program at Grey Roots and whether any amendments to the agreement would be required before extending it beyond the pilot year. Staff will bring back a staff report with a recommendation for the future prior to the expiration of this agreement.

## Financial and Resource Implications

None.

## Relevant Consultation

Internal: Agreements Group, Legal Services, Deputy CAO, CAO, Director of Planning, Financial Analyst

AODA Compliance (describe)

Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (describe)

External: Bluewater District School Board, Niagara Escarpment Commission

## Appendices and Attachments

Bluewater District School Board BWDSB High Skills Major Agriculture at Grey Roots Agreement