

# Auburn Students' Landscape Design Could Put Fayetteville School in Spotlight

Pretend money's no object, they were told—just dream big.

That's exactly what five graduate students in Auburn's College of Agriculture horticulture department did, pulling out all the stops and creating an amazing landscape plan that would transform the bland 17-acre campus of a small K-12 school in Talladega County. Now, Fayetteville School may be one of the most phenomenal school campuses in the nation.

The students' final master plan would fill Fayetteville School's stark grounds with hundreds of low-maintenance trees, wildflowers, and ornamental shrubs and grasses of all colors and textures. The plan includes 20-plus extraordinary, educational feature areas—from wetlands to themed gardens—giving the school's 650 students a giant outdoor classroom.

Early in the 2008–09 school year, the student designers presented their ultimate school landscape plan to Fayetteville School administrators, teachers, and parents, and a thrilled school and community pledged to make the dream plan a reality.

At the end of the first Saturday workday in March 2009, almost 200 volunteers had planted 100 trees, as tall as 12 feet, and 100 shrubs that nurseries from Birmingham to Montgomery either donated or sold at cost. The overnight makeover was so dramatic, support for the project soared.

Thanks to private funding, design team member Ann Fleener, who earned her master's degree in horticulture at Auburn in December 2008, headed to Fayetteville in January as campus landscape coordinator and will remain in that position at least through the 2009–10 school year. In addition to organizing workdays and the installation process, she's seeking funding, soliciting material donations and, as official project cheerleader, building community involvement to ensure the project continues to grow.

The Auburn horticulture team launched the design project in summer 2008 at the request of Auburn business alumnus Jimmy Pursell. A resident of the Fayetteville, Pursell is chairman of FarmLinks, an 18-hole, multi-award-winning public golf course the Pursell family built on Pursell Farms' land in early 2000.

The FarmLinks entrance adjoins Fayetteville School property, and the course staff is a strong supporter of the school. In 2008, FarmLinks grounds crews voluntarily built the school's first-ever football field.

Keep up with the Fayetteville School landscape project online at [campuslandscapeproject.wikispaces.com](http://campuslandscapeproject.wikispaces.com).

