



## Considerations for New School Garden Utilization

The Elementary school garden provides lifelong benefits for the students and is a tremendous asset to the school. Research shows that when children participate in a school garden program, they show improvement in healthy eating; social emotional skills, environmental attitudes; scientific achievement; and attitudes toward learning. Because the garden needs a network of support to unlock its full potential, please consider the following points to help sustain the garden and provide lessons or garden club.

These are critical elements to consider for establishing a program that will last into the future.

1. **Garden Committee** – To make decisions about maintenance and goals for the garden and build community to ensure sustainability. This can't be overemphasized. You need a network of support from School staff, Parents and community, and an outside school garden support network.

Who will serve on your school garden committee? (Principal, teachers, parents, students, community, maintenance staff, cafeteria staff)

2. **Maintenance days**- schedule them now – promote them now

Fall – early/mid November Set a date and advertise at the back to school events and newsletters  
Spring – late February/early March – advertise and spring conferences and newsletters

3. Identify your **goals for the garden** and how they link the garden to curriculum.
  - a. Topics to teach in the garden (butterflies, habitats, soils, plant growth, cycles etc.) This can dictate what plants you grow.
  - b. Do you envision using the garden for in depth special study 1time/year or throughout the year?
  - c. Which classes are involved? Will there be shared garden space or individual classes oversee specific spaces?
4. Will teachers **utilize the garden** independently or will parent volunteers schedule and provide lessons/garden clubs? Will you partner with a school garden support organization to support teachers or a Garden Education Manager to provide garden use? What is the cost of this partnership support?
5. Who will **coordinate scheduling and communications** of garden use and maintenance? Can garden use occur on certain days of the week? Who can be a staff point person and a parent point person?
6. How will you **communicate** your ideas, requests, progress and recruit volunteers?
  - a. Newsletter
  - b. Email
  - c. Bulletin board
  - d. Robo call
  - e. Fliers home
7. **Volunteer registration** - Are back ground checks required? **How do parents/community volunteer:** name and contact information to teacher/front desk/PTA . List preference for type of work (garden club (after school or recess) or during classes or for maintenance events.
8. After school or recess garden club. How to provide registration for garden club if it's after school