

A top-down photograph of a school garden. A person wearing a grey knit sweater is planting rows of lettuce seedlings in dark, rich soil. The seedlings are in two colors: bright green and reddish-purple. The person's hands are visible, carefully placing the plants into the soil. The title 'BUILDING SCHOOL GARDENS' is overlaid in white serif font on the left side of the image.

BUILDING SCHOOL GARDENS

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September 15, 2023

WHY BUILD A SCHOOL GARDEN?

Learning in the garden provides students with lots of benefits!

Academic

- Connects with learning in other subjects (e.g., math, science, nutrition, English, etc.)
- Hands-on and relevant learning

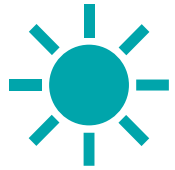
Physical

- Gardening is great exercise that can take place indoors and outdoors
- Ties in nutrition, health, and wellness

Community

- Allows children to connect with local farmers, gardeners, business owners, and community members

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER?



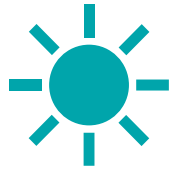
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How will maintenance fit into the teacher's
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What about the summer?

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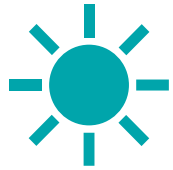
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*Is there a
champion?*

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administrator leaves, who is going to care for
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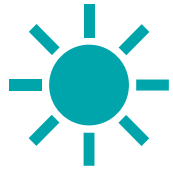
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Can the garden be easily integrated with standards?

For new teachers taking on the garden, what experience do they have?
Agriculture teachers are usually more familiar with how to use the garden, but about the math teacher?

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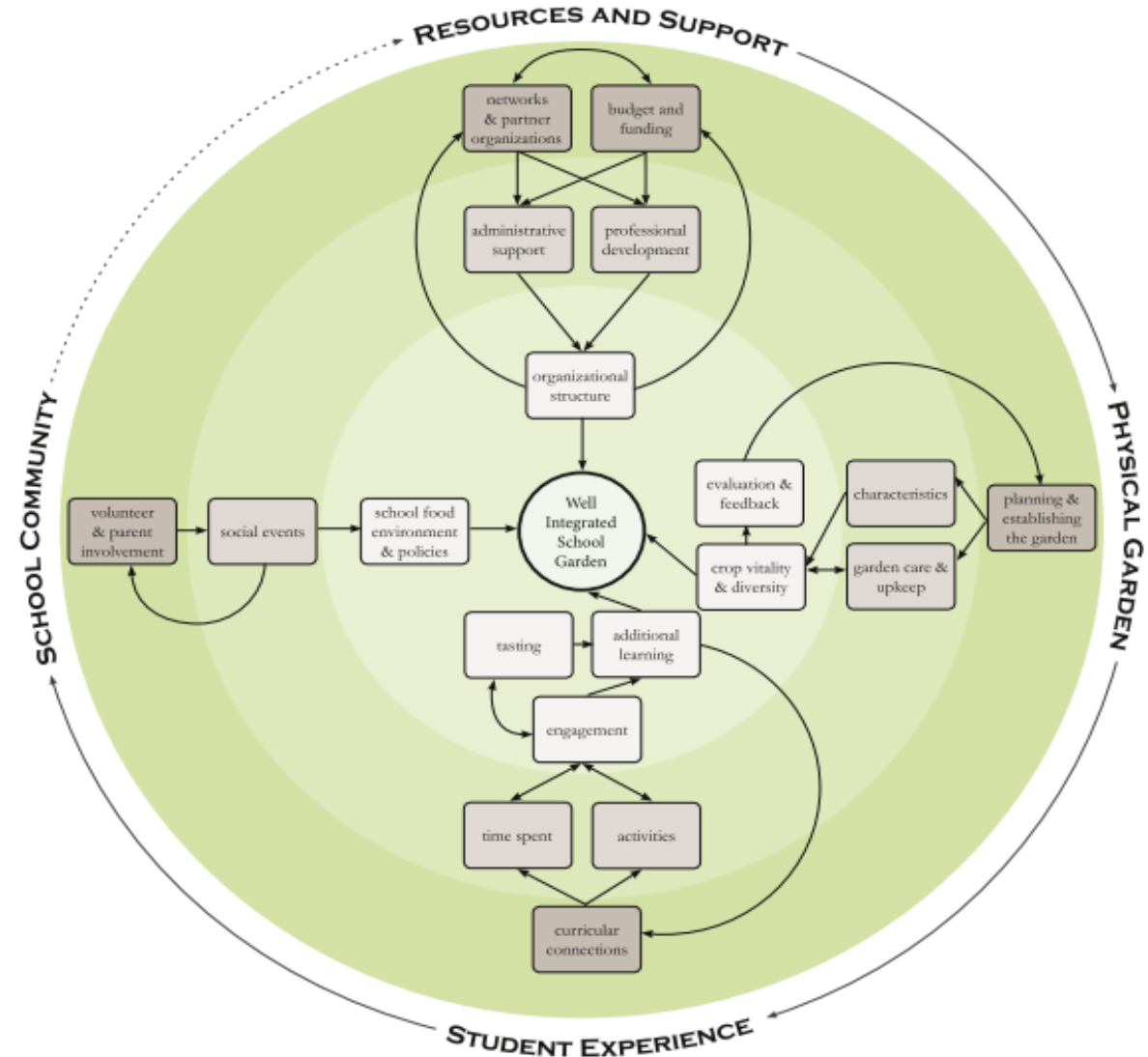


Other considerations

Administrative support
Funding
Professional development opportunities

THE GREEN TOOL: WHAT IS IT?

- The "Garden Resources, Education, and Environment Nexus" Tool
- Measures the level of integration of a school garden
- Hypothesizes that the more integrated a school garden is, the more likely it is to be sustained over time



DOMAIN 1: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

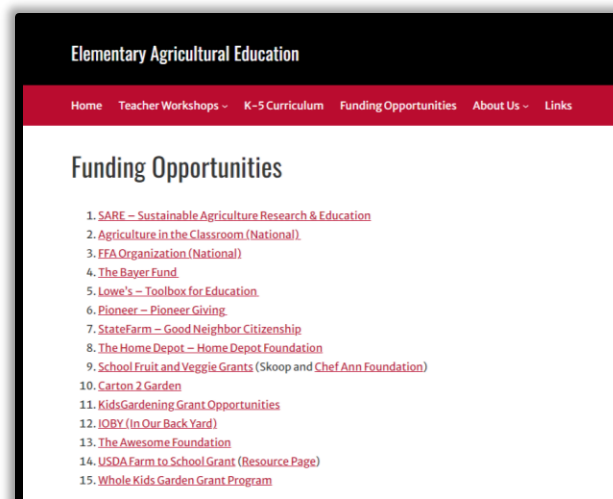


BUDGET AND FUNDING

What is the financial estimate or requirement necessary to support this gardening program?

"The garden has no financial support and it is hard to find money through partnerships and grants... it takes time to find those things."

"Extension plays a huge role."



NETWORK AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

How connected is this school with other supporting organizations or individuals in the field of school gardens?

“Whatever you have local, Home Depot, or mom-and-pop shop, whoever is local is your best supporter.”



ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

What mental, practical, or other encouragement and help from key leaders within a school is required for teachers, parents, or others to implement an ongoing gardening program?

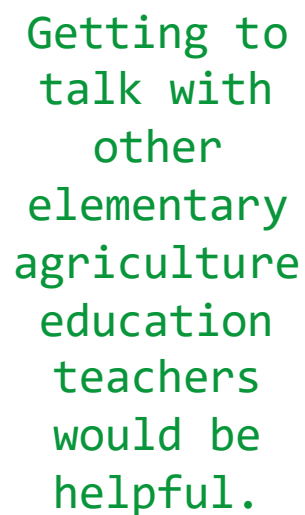


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What guided learning opportunities or trainings are provided to educators in order to help them improve in their knowledge, skills, and comfort using school gardens as an educational tool?



Pest
management.
I have aphids
in my lettuce.



Getting to
talk with
other
elementary
agriculture
education
teachers
would be
helpful.



Summer
maintenance. I
need help
planning that.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Who or what is the decision maker regarding how the school garden program should be implemented?



Will you create a garden club?



Will you rely on community members or build a committee to help with decisions?



Will most of it fall on you?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY!

After listening to the components within the Resources and Support domain, consider who are your top supporters.

With the 3-5 people around you:

Share with your group members who has been important in making your program a success.

DOMAIN 2: PHYSICAL GARDEN



PLANNING AND ESTABLISHING THE PHYSICAL SPACE

What actions will you take to develop and implement a strategy to maximize the garden's potential to meet the school's goals and needs for the space?

What attributes of the garden will facilitate or promote its use and space?



How close is the nearest water source?

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What types of garden bed will be most effective (e.g., raised beds, hydroponic system, etc.)?

GARDEN CARE AND UPKEEP

What physical support will you provide to the garden to ensure that plants, animals, or habitats in the garden have the adequate care and resources necessary for growth?

"The administration wants me to take all students to the garden every day, so that makes it easy to care for the garden, but it can be difficult to do the in-class teaching."

"If I can't get to work early to water, it is tough because it takes several hours to water and it is a big time commitment."

"If you're going to plant it, you have to take care of it...it is a lot of work."

"Once you put your heart and soul in it you want it to be successful. If you put all that energy in it, you want it to succeed."

CROP VITALITY AND DIVERSITY

What types of plants will you grow, will do well in the climate, or will the children prefer?



EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

In what ways will you ask for feedback about the effectiveness and/or efficacy of one or more aspects of the garden or gardening program?

EXAMPLES OF THE PHYSICAL GARDEN: ADDIE TUCKER



EXAMPLES OF THE PHYSICAL GARDEN: STEPHANIE PETERSON



EXAMPLES OF THE PHYSICAL GARDEN: PATTY CUMMINGS



DOMAIN 3: STUDENT EXPERIENCE



WAYS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN THE GARDEN



CONNECTIONS WITH THE
CURRICULUM



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ACTUAL TIME SPENT
MAINTAINING AND CARING
FOR THE GARDEN



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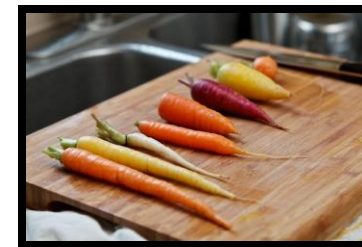
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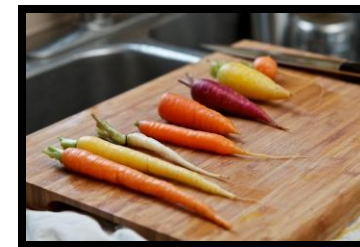
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TASTING THE ACTUAL PLANTS
GROWN



LEARNING BEYOND THE
MANDATED CURRICULUM



TEACHER EXPERIENCES WITH USING THE GARDEN

- On teaching in the garden: *"The students' lightbulb moment - when they see the result of a seed turn into a plant - it makes it all worthwhile."*
- On connecting the garden to the curriculum: "I look for intersections because we're required to teach them all for each grade level. I use the standards as a lens to look at the garden."
- On tasting: "We makes smoothies and kale chips!"
- On extended learning: "I do this thing toward the end of the year where [the students] can kind of create their own farm...after they've learned everything, they take a pencil and draw a paper design, and they need to tell me how they're going to make money. I give them the market bulletin to go through and find contacts for proceeds or animals or anything."

MINI GUEST SPEAKER:

LEN HELM



Teaching practices for teaching in the garden



DOMAIN 4: SCHOOL COMMUNITY



ENGAGING THE LARGER COMMUNITY



Volunteer and Parent Involvement

- Who are the non-staff members of the school, neighborhood, or community that help with the garden?



Social Events

- What or how much time is allotted for fun activities in the garden?



Food environment

- What is the school's culture and standards surrounding food, nutrition, and wellness?

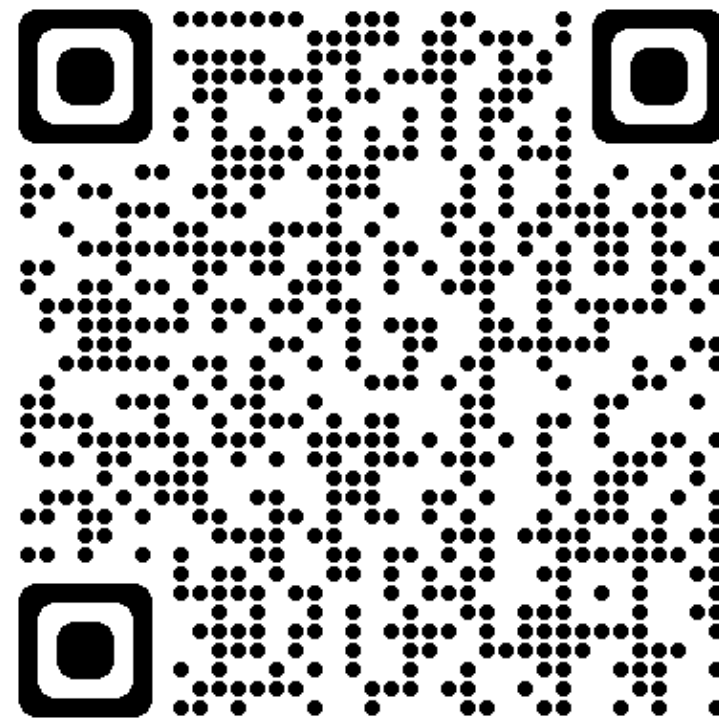


SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

In your same small groups:

After reviewing [Module 6B on the Google Classroom](#), briefly discuss your community committee efforts.

Designate one person to share their efforts with the larger group.





TOP SCHOOL GARDEN TAKEAWAYS

- Every school and school garden is different!
- Take time to get to know your classroom, administration, students, and community.
- Ask around - maintaining a garden can be a lot of work, and it's a good practice to build a team.
- Include the students - what do they want to see?
- If you can, take part in planning the space.
- Make the garden work for you!



THANK YOU!

What are your top takeaways?

Any questions?