

Bellevue School District



# Garden Handbook

Getting a School Garden Started



# Getting Started...

## Assemble a Garden Committee/Team

Establishing a good garden team or advisory committee is critical to the success of the school garden.

Here are some examples of people to include:

### School:

School administrator or Principal (Required)

- Principal buy-in required

Teachers – Include names

Students (Required; perhaps one or two from each grade participating)

Head and/or school custodian

### Parents Volunteers

- Primary Coordinators – Include names & School Year

### Community Business Partners

## Determine Garden Goals/Objectives

What would you like the outcome or follow-on to what you begin? There are many types of gardens, all with benefits for outdoor learning; solar, earth, water conservation, wildlife, food, beautification and so much more. Determine what your team wants to do.

Examples:

Learning where food comes from

Producing food

Promoting beautification

Improving nutrition

Watershed education

Changing family home food habits

Encouraging leadership & service

Stimulating creativity

Teaching

- Science, Math, English, environmental studies, health, family & consumer science, art, history, etc.



## School Garden Plans

Plans should have garden committee/team engaged in all phases of garden design, implementation and maintenance. Plans should be easy to implement and sustainable. Gardens are not a single year commitment!

Once you have decided on the purpose and outcome of your garden, decide on how you want to proceed:

Big or small?

In-ground, raised beds, or container?

Organic? Fertilized?

### Equipment needed?

- Gloves, shovels, rakes, bins (i.e., storage and/or composting), etc.

### Working with other school programs?

- Curriculum integration opportunities abound. Gardens cover a wide range of learning from Science to Art to Economics. Working with other teachers in other subjects and/or departments could make it easier to obtain things for and maintain the garden.
  - ✓ Art programs can create plant signs, stepping stones, etc.
  - ✓ Libraries can invite local farmers, nursery employees, or local college students to speak
- Green Teams
- PTA/PTSA afterschool

### Location

- Some things to think about are -Water (water source, water run-off) sun, shade, hills, accessibility, visibility, protection, bus zones and schedules

### Layout

### Safety Rules

- For people & plants



## Contact District Facilities Department:

Facilities must approve a suitable site for the garden/outdoor learning environment

- Schools/Garden Teams should have a location in mind prior to meeting with Facilities

Responsibilities and follow-thru to the project should be explained clearly

- How the garden will be maintained during and outside the school year
- Identification of school staff supervising/maintaining garden

Facilities does not build, seed, feed, weed or water school gardens. Gardens are the responsibility of the garden team!

## Timeframe

With all that's required to establish a garden, timing is critical. Making decisions to late in the school year could force interruption with school breaks. Creating a timeframe well in advance could ease the planning process. Putting dates to specific events can also help teams stay on track to meet their goals:

### Design & Plantings

- Garden Calendar

Curriculum planning, design (including integration with other teachers or subjects/departments) & rollout

Garden Committee and/or Team coordination meetings

- Where
- How often

Continued operations of the garden through follow-on school years



## Funding

Fundraising and continued operation of the garden should be an on-going effort for the garden team. Understanding how to pay for items, the school's payment system and working with non-profit entities is important. Work with your school administrator for things relating to spending and depositing funds.

Consider the following to support fundraising:

- Private donations
- Community businesses
- PTSA/PTA
- Grants



- Grants and partnerships are the key for getting school gardens going at most schools. Bellevue Schools Foundation offers grants for gardening. Submissions must be made early so call them for details on how to submit/obtain a grant.

## Community Resources

### Bellevue Botanical Gardens

- [Living Lab Classes at the Bellevue Botanical Garden](http://www.bellevuebotanical.org/lab.html) <http://www.bellevuebotanical.org/lab.html>

### Internet Resources for School and Kids' Gardens

- Washington State Farm to School toolkit (<http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Page/6/school-gardens>)
- [www.kidsgardening.org](http://www.kidsgardening.org) – excellent resources, lessons, books and supplies
- WSU Extension Master Gardener program kids' gardening resources  
<http://www.mgfk.org/resources/kid-gardening>
- LSU Ag Center; School Gardening: Best Practices  
[http://schoolipm.tamu.edu/files/2011/08/School\\_gardening-Best-Practices-Final-Publication.pdf](http://schoolipm.tamu.edu/files/2011/08/School_gardening-Best-Practices-Final-Publication.pdf)