

Abraham Lincoln School Garden Project

“Grow With Us!”

A General Guideline

“A school garden provides an outdoor learning environment and is a means to create a sense of season and a place for all children...a school garden puts the natural world at the students’ fingertips. This living laboratory offers a rich context for exploring science, nutrition, social studies, math, art, language arts and more.” (Life Lab Science Program, p. 5)

Purpose

“Our school garden will...”

- Be a living laboratory where educational opportunities provide life-long lessons that exist well beyond the growing season
- Include students, staff, parents and members of our community, thus fostering a sense of ownership and equity for all involved
- Define sustainability for our students in that they will grow, use and share with our community what our garden produces
- Give the students the opportunity to experience project/inquiry based learning that extends their classroom curriculum beyond the school walls
- Incorporate the components of STEAM education

Selecting the Site

“We will consider...”

- sunlight—minimum of 6 hours of full sun
- water source—should have one easily accessible to the garden
- drainage—flat area with good drainage
- accessibility—garden should be easily accessible to students/staff
- security—garden should be visible and enclosed
- visibility—garden should be in a central, visible location

“In planning the garden, we will...”

- be realistic
- design a garden that has areas allocated for all grade levels/classrooms
- include an outdoor classroom/meeting area
- include a storage shed/area
- consider adding a compost area
- develop a fencing system to keep wildlife from nibbling

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Preparing the Site

“We will...”

- determine the dimensions of the garden
- check the moisture levels of the soil
- test the soil
- determine the best way to remove the grass
- determine the method of turning the soil
- determine if/how much topsoil is needed
- mark off the garden/plots with string
- make the plots no more than 3’ wide
- mulch the walking paths in the garden

Determining What to Plant

“With guidance, our students will...”

- explore grocery stores to come up with ideas as to what to grow
- research fruits, vegetables and herbs that would grow well in our soil/climate

Determining When to Plant

“With guidance, our students will...”

- research the selected produce and determine when to plant the seeds
- plant indoors—starting with seeds, growing into seedlings and young plants
- research weather/climate to determine when to move the young plants outdoors

Planting

“When we are ready to plant, we will...”

- determine a planting schedule in order to ensure that each classroom/grade level has the opportunity to plant their items
- determine a watering and weeding schedule for each grade level
- establish a routine (“garden time”) for classrooms to observe/monitor the progress of the garden
- determine how the produce will be harvested

Summer/Holidays

“When we are not in school, we will need to...”

- enlist the help of families/staff to weed, water and harvest
- develop a schedule for those who are willing to help with this

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Lessons to consider

“The students may be involved in...”

- researching the aspects of selecting the site
- mapping what our garden should look like
- giving ideas regarding what should be included in the outdoor classroom area
- determining what tools need to be purchased
- researching the animals that may visit our garden
- testing and preparing the soil
- measuring and marking off the garden/plots
- mulching the walking paths
- planting the young plants
- making garden signs
- weeding and watering
- harvesting
- determining what we will do with the produce we grow
- fundraising for items related to the garden
- monthly assemblies to outline the progress of the garden
- listening to speakers present topics regarding:
 - sustainability
 - soil
 - weather
 - planting
 - farming

Fundraising

“How will we finance...”

- preparation of the garden area
 - grass removal
 - turning the soil
 - topsoil
 - mushroom manure
 - mulch
- an enclosure
- tables and chairs for the classroom area
- a tent/roof for the classroom area
- a toolshed
- a hose
- seeds
- seed trays/soil

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Partnerships

“We will work collaboratively by...”

- creating a steering committee made up of our principal, interested staff and parents, and community partners
- developing lessons and activities for teachers to present to their students
- including parents in fundraising efforts, planning, preparation/implementation of the garden project
- involving community members/businesses in the planning, preparation and implementation of the garden project

Possible Partnerships

“We will work with...”

- classroom teachers
- administrators
- parents
- the public library
- SHIM
- WQED
- local businesses

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