

A red watering can is tilted, pouring a stream of white water droplets onto two green plants with large leaves growing out of a mound of brown soil. In the background, a large yellow sun is partially visible behind a blue sky.

# Douglas County School Garden Toolkit

Starting a  
School Garden  
in Douglas County, NE

DOUGLAS COUNTY  
**Health**  
Department

Douglas County  
Putting Prevention  
to Work  
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# What is a school garden?

School gardens are communal spaces used as learning laboratories to extend quality education beyond the classroom through active discovery. Each garden is unique because it is a reflection of a school's individual landscape and community characteristics. These natural, living environments come in all shapes and sizes and are flexible enough to fit the needs and resources of any school. Gardens can begin indoors on windowsills and be transplanted outdoors in the ground, raised beds, or containers. They are usually coordinated by a teacher or group of teachers, with parent or other volunteer groups often supporting with upkeep and maintenance.

School gardens can be used as outdoor gathering spaces in which participants experience nature. Garden time can be used for imaginative and unstructured play as well as for more formal instruction across disciplines, including science, math, and nutrition. They also nurture communities surrounding the schools by providing opportunities for experimenting with fresh foods, thereby modeling for children and their families how to incorporate these foods into their diets at home.

# Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is a compilation of facts and experiences from six school gardens<sup>1</sup> started in the Douglas County school district. It will be helpful for anyone in Douglas County who is interested in starting a garden in their local school. It will review some of the processes of beginning and maintaining a school garden in Douglas County schools (Omaha Public Schools and Millard Public Schools in particular), as well as general gardening information and local horticulture facts and suggestions.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive set of school procedures or gardening guidelines. Your school district's administrative office can provide assistance for further questions on getting a garden put in at your school. If you have any specific gardening questions, please contact the Master Gardener program at the UNL extension office at (402)444-7804. A list of helpful links and other school garden toolkits is available in the Appendix.



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King Elementary



# Setting up a garden committee

## Who should be involved?

A Garden Committee is integral to the success of your school's garden. One person will not be able to realistically accomplish all the tasks involved in starting a school garden and ensuring its sustainability. This group should lead and inform the garden process. Involve the principal, teachers, students, school staff (maintenance, health, and food service), and community members. Decide as a group who will use the garden, when individuals/groups will use the garden, and how the garden will benefit the students and school community. All members should plan on being a part of the school garden for 2-3 years to ensure the continuing success of the garden.

## A few things for the Committee to decide and/or consider:

- Outline roles and responsibilities of all volunteers and a timeline for completion of all garden activities. Remember to schedule who will upkeep the garden during the summer months, even if no produce will be harvested then.
- If you are incorporating a school garden curriculum, find one that works for your school's existing resources, history, and culture.
- Build an extensive network of caretakers from within and out of the school garden. Schools which included volunteers from within a 4-block radius of the garden are most successful.
- Talk about how to actively promote the school garden amongst the school and the surrounding community.
- Consider meeting at regular intervals to coordinate activities and maintain interest.

"A good team should be set up to make it [the school garden] successful and sustainable".

Beth Rutten-Turner, ESL Teacher at Yates Educational Community Partnership



# Budgets & funding

How and when a budget is determined depends on the individual school. In general, you will need a budget or estimated cost of your garden before seeking internal or external funds. Please check with your individual school and district administrator on determining the first steps of starting a garden and how/when to seek funding.



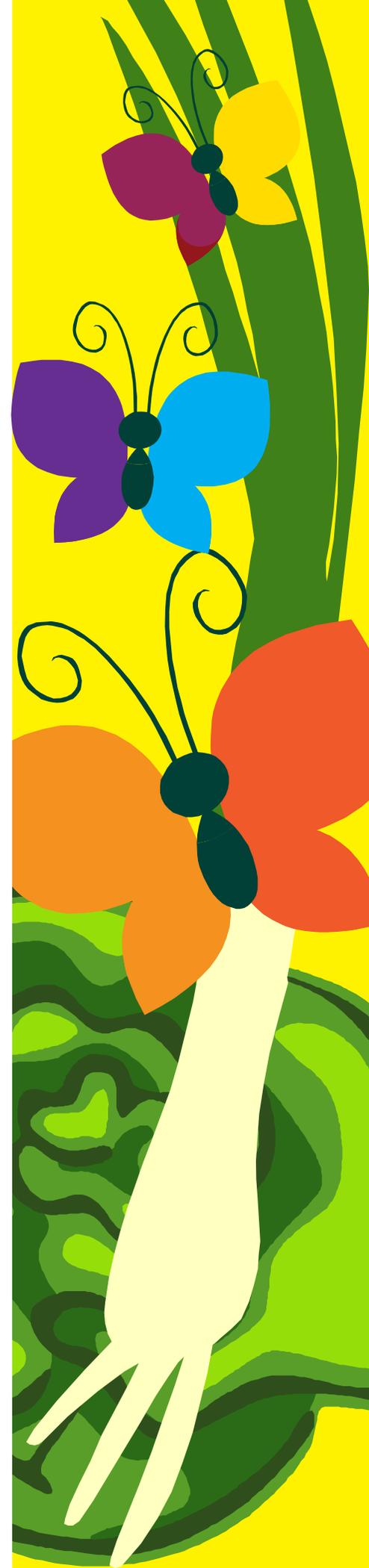
**Omaha Public Schools (OPS)** require schools to fill out a Request to Apply for a Grant before seeking outside funding sources, in which you will have to approximate the total and matching costs (see Appendix D-1). OPS has put together a Pre-Award Grant Toolkit that goes over the entire grant application process. For the Toolkit and OPS grant forms and booklets, login to First Class, click on District Information, and then click on Grants Toolkit (see Appendix D-2 for excerpts). Please contact the Grants Coordinator at (402)557-2151 for further information.



**Millard Public Schools (MPS)** require schools to fill out an Application for Approval of Special Project before any official or professional garden plans are outlined or grants can be sought (see Appendix E-1). Once the Support Service Center has approved your project through written approval, it may be possible to submit outside grant applications. You must first obtain the principal's approval and depending on the size and scope, the approval of one or more district-level administrators. The Grants and Volunteer Coordinator can determine whose approval is necessary (in addition to your principal's) and may be able to provide assistance with outside grant applications. If garden plans are required in the grant application, MPS may hire professional landscape architects to draw up garden plans that meet MPS's building and ground standards. Internal funds, such as coming from the PTA, are allowed to be sought before filling out an Application for Approval of Special Project. Please contact the Support Service Center (402)715-1220 and/or the Grants and Volunteer Coordinator at (402)715-8250 for further information.



Mari Sandoz Elementary



## Some action items to consider:

### **Make a draft budget or estimation of costs.**

You may need to make a draft budget and/or estimate costs if you are seeking internal or external funds. Below are a few things to consider when you are making a budget or estimating costs. Refer to the Douglas County's Community Garden toolkit for more detailed information on budgets (Appendix A).

- Discuss the types of features/plants/amenities you want for your school garden.
- Figure out the ideal size of your school garden or the potential range of sizes available.
- Make a list of items you think you will need or use (tools, equipment, soil, labor, etc).

### **Identify potential funders.**

Talk to your school's PTA and other support groups to see if they could help fund the garden or help to raise funds. Check local hardware stores, grocery stores, and government or community organizations to see if they will be willing to support your school garden financially. The following organizations may be accepting grant applications for gardens: Lowes, Whole Foods Market, and the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District.

### **Identify potential partners.**

Check local community gardens, universities, service learning groups, community and wellness organizations, farmers, churches, and other schools/school groups to see if they would be willing to support your school garden with their time and expertise. Planned partners of Douglas County school gardens were: City Sprouts Community Garden, The Big Garden, the Service Learning Academy at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the Bethesda After-School Program, No More Empty Pots, Nebraska FFA local chapters, the Middle School Learning Center Initiative, and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum.

“The Principal should help direct the logistics” of your school garden, but you need to have a “clear design/plan to put into place” to present to them.



Vincent Gregario, Social Studies Teacher at King Science and Technology Magnet School



# Choosing a garden site



## Choose a safe site

- See page 10 for soil testing



## Choose a sunny site

- It should have at least 6 hours of sunlight
- It should be away from tree shade



## Choose a well-watered site

- It should have access to a water source
- It should be relatively flat to allow for proper water drainage



## Choose a secure site

- It should have proper fencing, signage, and lighting
- It should have an area for storage of garden tools
- It should be easily visible by school staff and the neighborhood

“Don’t wait for everything to be perfectly figured out - just start!”



Jennifer Bird,  
Science Teacher at Nathan Hale  
Magnet Middle School



# Purchasing supplies & equipment for your school garden

## How do I purchase items for the garden?

Each school district will have different procedures for how to purchase items or contract for services. In general, do not make purchases on your own, as most school districts require prior approval and/or do not reimburse funds.



OPS prefers that schools enter requisitions into the OPS Financial Information System for items needed and not make purchases on your own and then expect reimbursement. It is best and easiest to work with an OPS-approved vendor. The OPS-approved vendor can assist you in making up a list of desired items for your particular garden. Give this list to the staff responsible for purchasing at your school, who will work with OPS's Purchasing Department to get approval for the items. The Purchasing Department will set up the fund (or budget string) for your school garden in the system. The district will work with the vendor to contact you when the items have been approved and delivery arrangements can be made. See Appendix D-4 for detailed purchasing procedures for OPS. For further questions, please contact Business Services at (402)557-2200 or see their Helpful Hints: <http://www.ops.org/district/CENTRALOFFICES/BusinessServices/Purchasing/HelpfulHints/tabid/765/Default.aspx>.



MPS requires purchases that are related to the project to be approved/reviewed by the Projects or Purchasing Department of Support Services prior to purchase. Any purchases that involve an "installation", or anything attached to the ground or put into the ground (garden bed, plants, shed), will require more extensive review and direct supervision by Support Services and district administrative personnel than non-installation items (tools). Please contact Support Services for any purchasing questions at (402)715-1220.



## What items do I need?

*This is a non-exhaustive list to get your school garden started. Refer to Douglas County's Starting a Community Garden toolkit (see Appendix A) for a detailed list.*

### 1) Building Materials/Plant Supports

If you are using raised beds or using wood to create a barrier or separate gardens, make sure they are non-toxic and non-leaching (no pressure treated wood or used tires). Bricks, stones, recycled plastic or composite lumber, and cedar wood are all good options. Check with your school district for any building material requirements or restrictions.

 OPS recommends certain vendors for sheds and fencing, if your school is interested in purchasing one (see Appendix D-3).

 MPS does not allow the use of wood for garden beds, so recycled plastic composite might be the best option.

### 2) Compost

Composting is a way to minimize chemical exposure and support resource conservation. Compost can be mixed with the soil at the time of planting and used to mulch the garden once you have planted.

Check with your school district about testing any purchased compost before it is brought on site, especially if the compost contains manure. Further info on composting can be found in the Appendix.

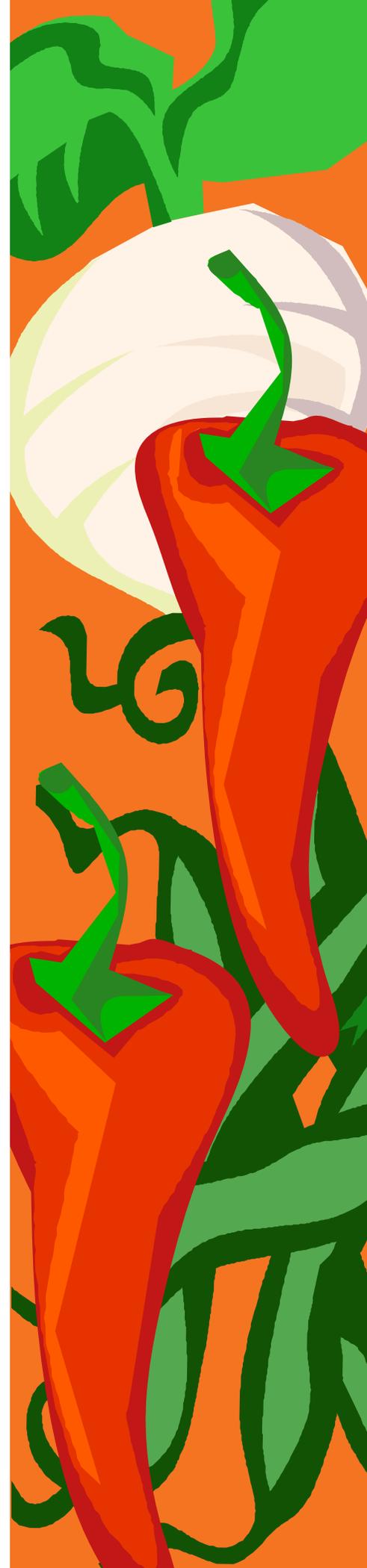
 OPS prohibits the use of garden/yard waste to be put into refuse containers. They have their own guidelines on how to set up a composting area/bin on school property (see Appendix D-5).

### 3) Plants

There are several plants that are allergy-inducing or toxic which should not be planted in the school garden. Please see the following website for a list of plants that are either toxic or could cause allergies: <http://www.canaryzoo.com/poisonous%20plant%20list.htm>. School districts may have guidelines for what type of plants you can have growing on school property, so check with your administration about any restrictions.

Local information on where you can buy or receive free seeds and bedding plants can be found in Appendix C.

  Both OPS and MPS do not allow trees or bushes that produce fruit, berries, or seed pods.



#### 4) Water

The water used in your garden to irrigate and wash the produce should be of drinking quality. Municipal water has been tested to meet safety requirements and is the best choice for watering your garden. If you are not able to use municipal water in your garden, contact the Douglas County Health Department Laboratory Services at (402)444-7496 or the Nebraska Health and Human Services System Public Health Environmental Laboratory at (402)471-8426 for information on water testing.

#### 5) Tools

The basic gardening tools you'll need are gardening gloves, shovels, rakes, trowels, shears, watering cans, and a wheelbarrow or way of transporting mulch and compost. A more exhaustive list of garden tools and how to use them can be found here: [http://gardening.about.com/od/toolschool/a/Tool\\_Shed.htm](http://gardening.about.com/od/toolschool/a/Tool_Shed.htm)

“Get to know the procedures for approvals and purchasing.”

Lisa Tingelhoff, Science Teacher  
at Lewis & Clark Middle School



# Testing the soil

Before you pick a site for your school garden, it is important to have the soil tested for three reasons. For additional information, refer to the Douglas County toolkit (see Appendix A).

- 1) **Checking for unsafe lead levels.** Your school district will have specific procedures for how and when to get the soil tested for lead.



All OPS sites have been tested for lead, so you can contact their Environmental Department to obtain your school's lead level records.



MPS requires the school to pay for any soil testing that needs to be done. The MPS district project manager will help you arrange for the testing to be done.

- 2) **Ensuring the area is free of utility lines.** Your school district will have specific procedures for determining whether your garden site is free of underground utilities. All schools will need to contact the Diggers Hotline in Omaha Metro at (402)344-3565 or within the state of Nebraska at (800)331-5666 to have the primary utilities marked.



For OPS, you also will need to contact Schoolhouse Planning Department at (402)557-2800 and they will evaluate the area for you for other underground utilities that the Digger's Hotline would not have on file.



At MPS, your proposed site will be reviewed during your project assessment. If approved, the district project manager will assist you in utility locates.



Nathan Hale Magnet Middle School



### 3) Checking for nutrient and heavy metal levels.

It is important to check for nutrient and heavy metal levels besides lead to see if the soil is safe and good for growing. For nutrient and additional heavy metal testing (not including lead), contact Midwest Laboratories at (402)334-7770.



OPS does not test for metals other than lead, but does not require this testing before beginning your garden.



MPS requires the school to pay for any soil testing that needs to be done. The MPS district project manager will help you arrange for the testing to be done.

“Be sure the soil for your garden is low in lead content. Choose a garden location that is not over utilities, [otherwise] it may be destroyed in the process of making repairs.

This can be avoided by making a couple of phone calls.”



Shelley Bengsten,  
Environmental Specialist at OPS

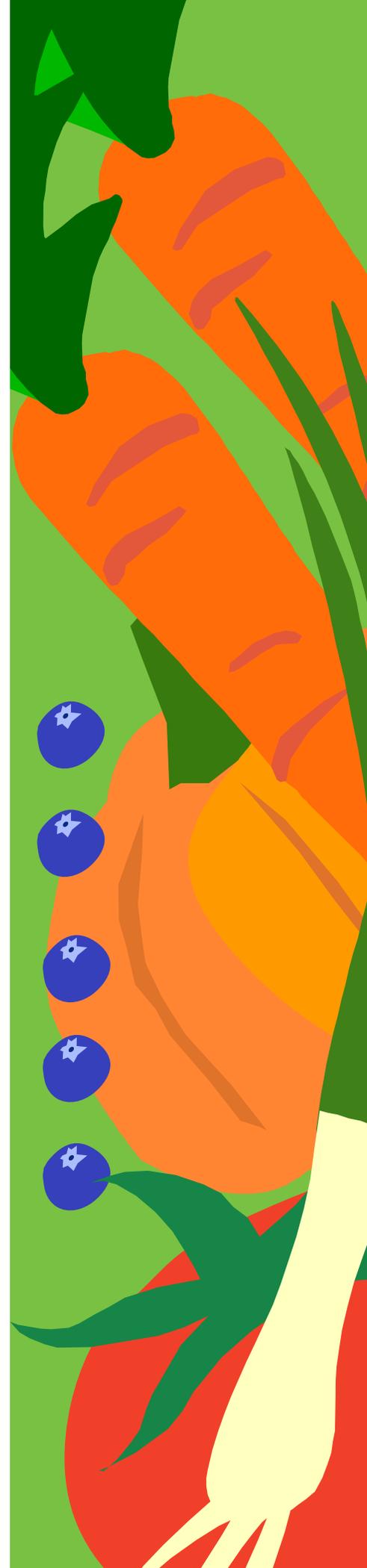


# Planting times for common garden produce

See below for optimal planting times for selected produce. In general, gardens can be planted from mid-March to mid-May, however this will vary based on seasonal weather patterns. Please contact the UNL Backyard Farmers at [byf@unl.edu](mailto:byf@unl.edu) for further information or see their weekly informational videos at <http://www.youtube.com/user/bucslim/featured>.

| Fruit/Vegetable  | Optimal Planting Time |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Asparagus crowns | March 15              |
| Collards         |                       |
| Onions           |                       |
| Peas             |                       |
| Radishes         |                       |
| Spinach          |                       |
| Turnips          |                       |
| Leeks            | March 30              |
| Mustard          |                       |
| Potatoes         |                       |
| Swiss Chard      |                       |
| Broccoli         | April 5               |
| Cabbage          |                       |
| Cauliflower      |                       |
| Carrots          |                       |
| Lettuce          |                       |
| Kohlrabi         |                       |
| Beet (seeds)     | April 15              |
| Cantaloupe       | May 1                 |
| Cucumber         |                       |
| Pumpkin          |                       |
| Summer Squash    |                       |
| Eggplant         | May 15                |
| Muskmelon        |                       |
| Okra             |                       |
| Peppers          |                       |
| Sweet corn       |                       |
| Sweet potatoes   |                       |
| Tomatoes         |                       |
| Watermelon       |                       |

(<http://www.gardenguides.com/96192-vegetable-planting-dates-nebraska.html>)



# Using the garden in the classroom

Garden time can be used for imaginative and unstructured play as well as for more formal instruction across disciplines, including reading and writing, social studies, science, math, and nutrition. The sustainability of the garden is very dependent on how much garden activities are tied to classroom lessons and activities.

Here are a few websites that provide helpful resources for connecting activities in the garden to lessons in the classroom.

## The Edible School Garden Project

<http://edibleschoolyard.org/resources-tools>

## Nebraska Ag in the Classroom

<http://www.ne-aitc.org/>

## Team Nutrition

<http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/educators.html>

## Nutrition in the Garden

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarden/nutrition/index/>

## Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom

<http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu/aitc/>

## The Science Spot: Interactive Math Garden

<http://sciencespot.net/Pages/mathgarden.html>

## Exploring Math in the Garden

<http://www.kidsgardening.org/node/12134>

## Teaching Guide for Building and Outdoor Math Classroom

<http://www.transportationcareers.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/building-an-outdoor-math-classroom-project.pdf>

## Plants in the Elementary Science Classroom

[http://www.internet4classrooms.com/science\\_elem\\_plants.htm](http://www.internet4classrooms.com/science_elem_plants.htm)

## Nutrition in the Garden Workbook

[www.douglascounty-ne.gov/gardens/images/stories/Nutrition in the Garden Workbook.pdf](http://www.douglascounty-ne.gov/gardens/images/stories/Nutrition_in_the_Garden_Workbook.pdf)

“Many of my students were unaware of how their food was grown. Through our experiences in the garden, my students know what living things need in order to survive, identify the parts of a plant, and recognize various fruits and vegetables.”



Angela Holdren, First Grade Teacher at King Elementary School



# Maintaining your school garden

Once the plants are in the ground, there are several steps to ensuring its success. These steps are taken from the *Eat Smart...It's in the Garden Toolkit* (Appendix A). Most, if not all, of these steps can be done by the students.

## 1) Mulching

Mulching helps to maintain the proper nutrient levels in the soil, ensures proper irrigation, keeps weeds from growing, and keeps the soil surrounding the plant roots intact. You can use most organic materials to mulch your garden including leaves, grass clippings, straw, wood, newspapers, etc.

## 2) Weeding

Mulching helps to prevent weeds from growing in your garden, but they will still be present in most gardens. Teach the students and volunteers how to recognize weeds from desired plants, pulling out the entire weed, including the root to prevent further growth.

## 3) Watering

The amount of watering necessary will depend on current precipitation amounts, as well as by plant. Water in the early morning/afternoon.

## 4) Thinning

When the plants start to get crowded, replant further apart to ensure each plant is getting enough nutrients.

## 5) Composting

If your garden has a site for a compost pile, have the students help add organic material to it or help with aerating the pile.

"It's been wonderful for us to have the support of the neighborhood community garden. They've been tremendously helpful, and I don't think we could have done it without their help."

Mary Green,  
Volunteer at the Yates Educational  
Community Partnership



# Harvesting your garden

## When to harvest your garden

The time to harvest depends on the plant and when it was planted. Students can help harvest and prepare the produce for taste-testing or taking it home. For further information, see UNL's extension handouts on *When to Harvest Fruits and Vegetables* (Appendix A).

## What about food safety?

Produce grown in school gardens can easily become contaminated at any stage of the process - from growth to service, resulting in food-borne illness. Therefore, food safety is the foundation to the success of any garden. The food safety practices children learn while working in school gardens can be used anywhere, whether it is getting produce from a farmer's market to growing their own at home.

Listed below are a few food safety tips while harvesting produce from the school garden. This information has been provided by OPS' Nutrition Services Director who may be contacted at (402)557-2230. For further questions, please contact your school districts' nutrition services.

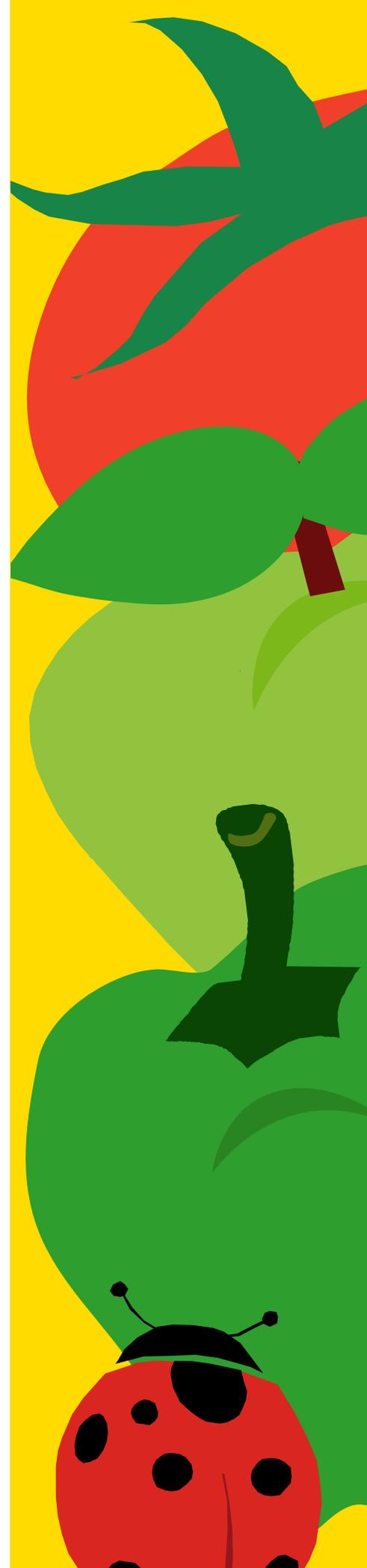
- Do not allow anyone to work in the garden while sick, or until 24 hours after symptoms have subsided.
- All participants should wear proper shoes to prevent cuts and stings. Bare feet, sandals, or flip flops should not be allowed. Any open cuts or wounds located on hands, arms, or legs must be properly covered prior to participating.
- Prior to and after harvesting, all participants must wash hands in warm, soapy water for at least 15-20 seconds, and then rinse with potable water. After harvesting, a nail brush should be used to remove soil from underneath nails. If using gloves, they must be clean and not used to stir compost or pull weeds. As an extra precaution, use single-use disposable gloves.
- All garden tools must be used solely in the garden and cleaned regularly with soap and potable water.
- Use washed, rinsed and sanitized food-grade containers, equipment, and utensils. It is easy for bacteria to come into contact with cut surfaces located on the produce and be absorbed. Brush, shake, or rub off any excess soil or debris before putting the produce in the harvest container or bringing into the kitchen.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize any surfaces (sinks, utensils, cutting boards, etc.) prior to coming into contact with the produce. Allow surfaces to air dry.



- Wash all produce thoroughly with cold, running water prior to eating or preparing for cooking. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush to remove excess dirt and bacteria, prior to cutting. Gently rub and turn softer produce while holding under the water. Do not wash berries until you are ready to eat them. Let produce air dry after washing before refrigerating, as moisture can encourage microbial growth.
- Never use soap, detergent, or bleach to wash fruits and vegetables. Never use standing water.
- Cut away bruised or damaged parts of produce before eating or preparing. Throw away moldy produce.
- Immediately refrigerate melons and tomatoes after they have been cut. Some produce (onions, potatoes, whole tomatoes) can be stored at room temperature in a cool, dry, pest-free, well-ventilated area separate from chemicals. Eat or refrigerate other cut produce within two hours. Label and date the packages.
- If you store the produce without washing, store in plastic bags or containers labeled so that it is clear to others that the produce must be washed prior to use.
- If you store produce in the refrigerator, use a thermometer to monitor the temperature of the refrigerator. It should be 40 degrees or less.



Lewis & Clark Middle School



# Sustaining your garden

Keeping the school and community's interest and support of the school garden is important for its sustainability.

## Things to remember:

- Let go of ideas of perfection and appreciate a rambunctious garden. Students learn by doing and need to be included in meaningful ways in as many aspects of the school garden's creation and maintenance as possible.
- Emphasize quality of experience over quantity. While big and beautiful gardens may be the goal, school gardens must be manageable. So start small and gradually grow the garden as interest and capacity are built and leave room to dream.
- Communicate and celebrate the garden's successes and challenges.
- Keep volunteers connected by keeping them informed and making them feel important and appreciated.
- There is always going to be some turnover of school staff and volunteers, so have an extensive network of caretakers internal and external volunteers to keep the garden thriving throughout the years.



King Science & Technology Magnet Middle School



One important method of sustaining your garden is through promoting it to the school staff, students, parents, and surrounding community.

## Ways to promote your school garden:

- Incorporate the garden into the school curriculum as much as possible. Talk with your school and district administrators about any standards or curriculum requirements that could be met through lessons in the garden.
- Showcase the garden in your open houses, student orientations, and recruiting efforts.
- Have the students take pictures and make videos of the garden efforts. Post these on the school's website.
- Regularly update teachers at staff meetings and parents at PTA meetings about the garden's progress.
- Have classes involved with the garden visit with other classes to talk about the garden and invite them to use it.

“Develop buy-in with the teachers and kids” to ensure sustainability amidst school staff turnover.”



Heidi Penke, Principal at Mari Sandoz Elementary

<sup>1</sup>This toolkit was made possible through funding from the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant allotted to the Douglas County Health Department. CPPW funded five school gardens in the Omaha Public School District (King Elementary, King Science and Technology Magnet Middle School, Lewis and Clark Elementary, Nathan Hale Magnet Middle School, and Yates Educational Community Partnership) and one school garden in the Millard Public School District (Mari Sandoz Elementary). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Douglas County Health Department or any Douglas County school district. The Department would like to thank the following people for their invaluable contributions to this toolkit: Dana Freeman and Tammy Yarmon, for their contributions to the content of this toolkit; Connie Lehman, for her contribution to the design of this toolkit; and Kurt Goetzinger, Mary Green, Patti Falcone, Theresa James, Nathan Morgan, Susan McAdam, Jocelyn Perkins, and Kim Thompson for their contributions to the review of this toolkit.

All of the toolkits in the appendix were used for general information and inspiration.



**Appendix A:** Helpful links

**Appendix B:** Safety Checklist

**Appendix C:** Local Directory

**Appendix D:** Omaha Public School documents pertaining to school gardens

D-1 Request to Apply for a Grant

D-2 Excerpt pages from Pre-Award Grant Toolkit

D-3 Standard Procedure for Garden Sheds/Fence, Department of Buildings and Grounds

D-4 Standard Procedure for Purchasing

D-5 Standard Procedures for School Gardens, Department of Buildings and Grounds

D-6 Integrated pest management (IPM) program, Environmental Services

**Appendix E:** Millard Public School documents pertaining to school gardens

E-1 Application for Approval of Special Project

E-2 Policy 3614

E-3 Policy 3614.1



Yates Educational Community Partnership

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Helpful Links

### Gardening Information Resources

1. Good agricultural practices (GAPs)

GAPs are “practices that address environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm processes, and result in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products”<sup>1</sup>. They focus on four areas of gardening: soil, hands, water, and surfaces. Iowa State University’s Extension provides a simple handout on how to comply with GAPs which can be found at [www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1974A.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1974A.pdf)

2. University of Nebraska at Lincoln Extension Lawn and Garden information

A. General Information

[http://douglas-sarpy.unl.edu/web/douglas-sarpy/lawn\\_and\\_garden](http://douglas-sarpy.unl.edu/web/douglas-sarpy/lawn_and_garden)

B. When to Harvest Fruits and Vegetables

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/g2089/build/g2089.pdf>

C. Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/g1264/build/g1264.pdf>

D. Garden Terms: Reproductive Plant Morphology - Seeds, Flowers, and Fruits

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/ec1257/build/ec1257.pdf>

E. Garden Terms: Plant Classification

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/ec1258/build/ec1258.pdf>

F. Garden Terms: Vegetative plant morphology - Stems, Leaves, and Roots

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/ec1259/build/ec1259.pdf>

G. Understanding the Seed Packet

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/g1953/build/g1953.pdf>

3. UNO Service Learning Academy (provides hands-on training in gardening activities)

<http://www.unomaha.edu/servicelearning/>

### Helpful Garden toolkits

1. Douglas County’s Community Garden toolkit

[http://douglas-sarpy.unl.edu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=87bee400-a5cf-4ab4-9395-d151593792ff&groupId=235778](http://douglas-sarpy.unl.edu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=87bee400-a5cf-4ab4-9395-d151593792ff&groupId=235778)

2. School Year Gardens, A Toolkit for High Schools to Grow Food from September to June

<http://www.cityfarmer.info/2008/03/29/school-year-gardens-a-toolkit-for-high-schools-to-grow-food-from-september-to-june/>

3. Community Garden Toolkit: Starting a Community Garden

<http://fresnetmin.org/downloads/community-gardens-toolkit.pdf>

## Appendix A cont'd

4. Olmsted County Ship Intervention: Community Garden Tool Kit  
<http://www.co.olmsted.mn.us/OCPHS/programs/community/ship/community/Documents/Olmsted%20County%20Community%20Garden%20Toolkit.pdf>
5. Got Dirt? Garden Toolkit for Implementing Youth Gardens  
[http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf\\_files/gotdirt\\_09.pdf](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/gotdirt_09.pdf)
6. Growing School and Youth Gardens in New York City: A Guide to Resources 2009  
[http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub\\_about/partners/greenthumb/school\\_garden\\_resource\\_guide.pdf](http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_about/partners/greenthumb/school_garden_resource_guide.pdf)
7. Gardening Angels: A School Start-up Guide  
<http://www.fldoe.org/bii/cshp/pdf/GardeningAngels.pdf>
8. A Knoxville-Knox County Community Garden Toolkit: The Knoxville Area Guide to Community Gardening 2011  
<http://www.cityofknoxville.org/boards/food/toolkit.pdf>
9. The People's Garden: Checklist for Starting a School Garden  
[http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/grants/Checklist\\_for\\_Starting\\_a\\_School\\_Garden.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/grants/Checklist_for_Starting_a_School_Garden.pdf)
10. Eat Smart....It's in the Garden Toolkit  
<http://agriculture.sc.gov/sgptoolkit>

## Appendix B: Sample Safety Checklist

| Question                                                                                                                                                           | Yes | No |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Has the soil to be used at the garden site been tested for lead and other environmental hazards or do you commit to having it tested?                              |     |    |
| Is the water for the garden potable?                                                                                                                               |     |    |
| Will you ensure that building materials for the garden that are toxic and leaching (ie pressure treated wood, used tires and railroad ties) are not used?          |     |    |
| Will you ensure that plants which are toxic or cause severe allergic reactions are not used in and around the garden?                                              |     |    |
| Are you willing to take steps to minimize chemical exposure and support resource conservation?                                                                     |     |    |
| Will the garden be accessible to all students?                                                                                                                     |     |    |
| Will you work with district and /or school food personnel to ensure that food that is harvested from the garden can be prepared so it is safe for children to eat? |     |    |
| Will you work with the school custodian(s) to address any of their safety/cleanliness concerns?                                                                    |     |    |
| Do you commit to ensuring your garden has all necessary district approvals?                                                                                        |     |    |

## Appendix C: Local Directory



### Gardening Supplies

1. Seeds and Plants
  - A. Free seeds can be found through the America the Beautiful Fund at 202-838-1649 or at <http://www.garden.org/seedswap>.
  - B. OPS gardens have used Indian Creek Nursery and Lowes for plants  
Indian Creek Nursery: [www.indiancreeknursery.com](http://www.indiancreeknursery.com); 402-558-5900  
Lowes: [lowes.com](http://lowes.com)
2. Compost
  - A. OPS gardens have used Oma-Gro Compost, 15705 Harlan Lewis Rd., Bellevue; 402-444-6665
  - B. Lowes: [lowes.com](http://lowes.com)
3. Building Equipment
  - A. OPS school gardens have used Lowes to build garden beds and sheds
  - B. OPS recommends Tuff Sheds (see Appendix D-3): [tuffsheds.com](http://tuffsheds.com); 7530 L Street; 402-592-8833



### Current School Garden Locations Funded by Communities Putting Prevention to Work

1. Mari Sandoz Elementary: 5959 Oak Hills Dr., Omaha
2. King Elementary: 3706 Maple St., Omaha
3. King Science & Technology Magnet Middle School: 3720 Florence Blvd., Omaha
4. Lewis & Clark Middle School: 6901 Burt St., Omaha
5. Nathan Hale Magnet Middle school: 6143 Whitmore St., Omaha
6. Yates Educational Community Partnership, 3260 Davenport St., Omaha



### Local Community Gardens

1. Map of community gardens in Douglas County <http://www.douglascounty-ne.gov/gardens/community-garden-info>
2. Information on community gardens in Douglas County <http://livewellomaha.org/what-were-eating/community-gardens/>

# Appendix D-1

## OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUEST TO APPLY FOR A GRANT



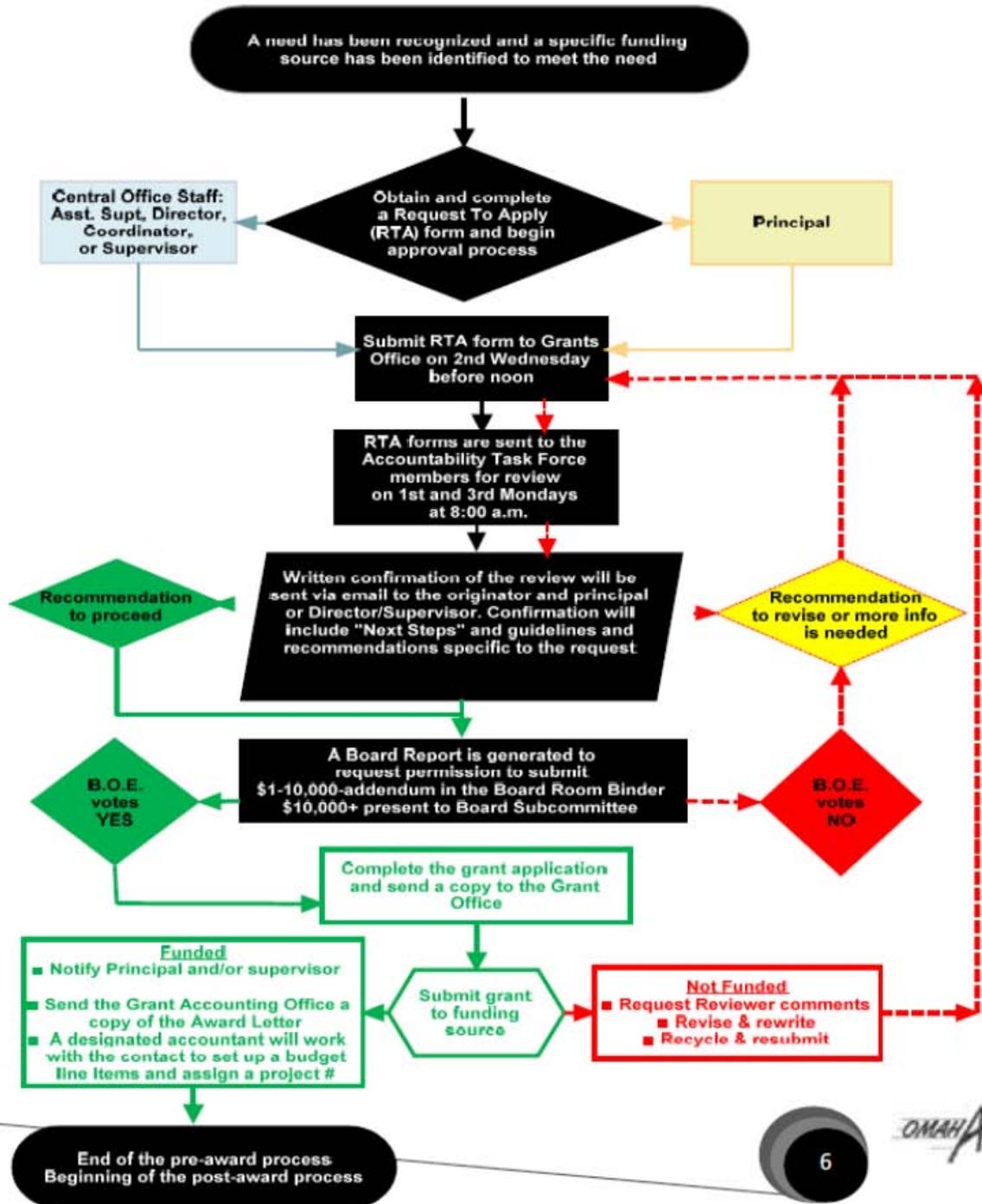
|                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>NAME OF SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT</b>                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>NAME OF GRANT</b>                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1. IN ONE SENTENCE, Describe your proposal. What will you do? Where? When? And why? How many students and/or staff will benefit from this proposal?                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2. Describe the specific need or issue that your project will address, how the need was determined and its alignment with EXCELS Plus.                                              | <i>In our school/district, the current situation is:</i>                                                                                                                        |
| 3. What specific changes or outcomes do you intend to achieve as a result of your project? How will you identify and target participants?                                           | <i>We intend to achieve the following specific outcomes:</i>                                                                                                                    |
| 4. Describe how this program enhances but does not duplicate current school or district efforts?                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 5. What resources will you need to make these happen (people, equipment, supplies, training, stipends, consultants, etc.)?                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 6. Approximate total cost and matching if applicable:                                                                                                                               | \$ _____                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 7. Who else has a vested interest in working with you as partners on this problem or opportunity <i>within</i> the school/district? Is anyone already working on a similar project? |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 8. Who else has a vested interest in working with you as partners on this problem or opportunity outside the district (e.g., university, community agency)?                         |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 9. List <b>specific objectives</b> that will be addressed in the proposal and <b>describe how progress will be monitored and measured?</b>                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10. Will your project continue after the requested funding? If so, how will you sustain it?                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 11. Is your supervisor/principal aware of your proposal?                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <b>Principal's Name</b> _____<br><b>School (if applicable):</b> _____<br><b>Principal's Signature (Required)</b> _____ |
| 12. Name of the funding source(s)?                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Submitted by:</b> _____ <b>Phone:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**PLEASE ATTACH A DRAFT OF THE GRANT**

Please e-mail (or fax to 557-2139) this completed form to the Grants Coordinator ([jocelyn.perkins@ops.org](mailto:jocelyn.perkins@ops.org)) so that a formal request can be made to the Accountability Task Force for approval to proceed.

## Pre-Award Processes

Receiving a recommendation from the Accountability Task Force after identifying a funding source may preclude potentially damaging funding conflicts. If you don't know the district's policies for requesting external funds or have questions that are unique to an individual situation, call (557-2151) or e-mail ([jocelyn.perkins@ops.org](mailto:jocelyn.perkins@ops.org)) the Grant Coordinator.



Omaha Public Schools Pre-Award Process

**Items to Consider Before Completing the General or Technology RTA Forms**

Before completing an RTA form for a specific funding opportunity, it is important that you contact the appropriate personnel listed below to assist in developing a well-designed proposal that demonstrates attention was given to the request as well as the implementation details. Failure to do so could result in a re-submission of your request due to unanswered questions from the Task Force.

| <b>Intent</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Rationale</b>                                                                 | <b>Contact</b>                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Renovate classrooms or parts of the building                                                                                                                                                 | Accurate measurements and capacity                                               | <b>Mark Warneke</b> - 557-2800<br>School House Planning                                                    |
| Technology purchasing, wiring etc.                                                                                                                                                           | Compliance with Technology Standards                                             | <b>Dave Patton</b> - 557-2195<br>Information Management Systems                                            |
| Hire company consultant/purchase services to implement portions of the grant                                                                                                                 | Compliance with district bid-process                                             | <b>Toni Turnquist</b> - 557-2218<br>Business Services                                                      |
| Over \$50,000 of materials to be requisitioned<br><i>⚠ purchased goods in excess of \$50,000 requires submitting an action item to Business Services to be included on the Plants Agenda</i> | Compliance with Purchasing/Plants Committee processes                            | <b>Toni Turnquist</b> - 557-2218<br>Business Services                                                      |
| Build, expand, restore or upgrade a playground                                                                                                                                               | Review of child-safe, appropriate equipment                                      | <b>Fred Clough</b> - 557-2895<br>Risk Management                                                           |
| Implement or expand existing curriculum                                                                                                                                                      | Alignment with standards -based curriculum and existing C & L initiatives        | El Ed: <b>Donna Dobson</b> - 557-2412<br>Sec Ed: <b>Gail Formanack</b> - 557-2411<br>Curriculum & Learning |
| Enhance Magnet Theme                                                                                                                                                                         | Alignment with Student Assignment Plan and existing Magnet School Program themes | <b>Sandy Day</b> - 557-2185<br>Student & Community Services                                                |
| Provide extended learning opportunities with community using non-Title I funds                                                                                                               | Alignment with existing extended learning opportunities                          | <b>Thomas Harvey</b> 557-2130<br>Student & Community Services                                              |
| Increase graduation rate                                                                                                                                                                     | Alignment with standards -based curriculum and existing C & L initiatives        | Sec Ed: <b>Gail Formanack</b> - 557-2411<br>Curriculum & Learning                                          |
| Increase early childhood opportunities                                                                                                                                                       | Alignment with existing Early Childhood initiatives                              | El Ed: <b>Donna Dobson</b> - 557-2412<br>Curriculum & Learning                                             |
| Community Partners Sharing/Using student information for performance data                                                                                                                    | Compliance with FERPA                                                            | <b>Carla Noerlinger</b> - 557-2080<br>Research                                                             |
| Relevant grant cover page information<br><i>⚠After Task Force recommendation to proceed</i>                                                                                                  | Accurate district information (DUNS #, Federal Tax ID, EIN # etc)                | <b>Jocelyn Perkins</b> -557-2151<br>Grants Office                                                          |



Omaha Public Schools Pre-Award Process

Completing the General Request to Apply (RTA) Form

The General RTA form is to be used when requesting any external funding (with the exception of technology purchases over \$5,000) or when the school or department is involved in a community partnership where they may benefit from the grant—but the District is not the fiscal agent or submitting the grant application. The General RTA is only a summary of the support requested from the funding source. It does not replace the actual grant draft. Therefore, it is important to attach all relevant artifacts that provide additional detail for the Accountability Task Force to review. **Overly brief explanations can result in a re-submission of the request and as a result, missing the submission deadline.**

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUEST TO APPLY FOR A GRANT



|                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NAME OF SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT                                                                                                                                                           | Include the name of the school and/or department/division                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| NAME OF GRANT                                                                                                                                                                       | Include the name of the grant (it is sometimes a different name than the funding source)                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 1. IN ONE SENTENCE, Describe your proposal. What will you do? Where? When? And why? How many students and/or staff will benefit from this proposal?                                 | Write a short summary of the grant request. Include where it will take place, how many students and staff, which grade levels will benefit from the request                                                                                                                        |
| 2. Describe the specific need or issue that your project will address, how the need was determined and its alignment with EXCELS Plus.                                              | <i>In our school/district, the current situation is:</i><br>Include the district priority, specific school and/or department need that aligns with EXCELS or the department strategic plan (see p.8-9)                                                                             |
| 3. What specific changes or outcomes do you intend to achieve as a result of your project? How will you identify and target participants?                                           | <i>We intend to achieve the following specific outcomes:</i><br>Describe the targeted population and as a result of the funding, what changes will occur in the participants                                                                                                       |
| 4. Describe how this program enhances but does not duplicate current school or district efforts?                                                                                    | Describe how this request will benefit an underserved group or expand existing services                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 5. What resources will you need to make these happen (people, equipment, supplies, training, stipends, consultants, etc.)?                                                          | Briefly list key items and amounts in your request (certificated extra-pay, software programs, transportation, admission cost etc.)                                                                                                                                                |
| 6. Approximate total cost and matching if applicable:                                                                                                                               | \$ Include the total amount requested. List the matching amount separately                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 7. Who else has a vested interest in working with you as partners on this problem or opportunity <i>within</i> the school/district? Is anyone already working on a similar project? | Describe if there are others in the district that will be working with you (e.g. research-data collection, practices in alignment with Curriculum & Learning Building Support Teams, Title I or SSDS Facilitators)                                                                 |
| 8. Who else has a vested interest in working with you as partners on this problem or opportunity outside the district (e.g., university, community agency)?                         | Describe if the request is a school or department collaboration with a Faith-Based Organization (FBO), Community-Based Organization (CBO), or postsecondary institution that will be writing and submitting the grant, but the school or department participants will also benefit |
| 9. List <b>specific objectives</b> that will be addressed in the proposal and <b>describe how progress will be monitored and measured?</b>                                          | Include specific S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-phased) objectives and describe who is responsible and how progress will be monitored                                                                                                           |
| 10. Will your project continue after the requested funding? If so, how will you sustain it?                                                                                         | Describe how project activities will be continued after the funding period is over (seek more grant funding is not an acceptable answer) or explain how the request will prevent the need for additional requests                                                                  |
| 11. Is your supervisor/principal aware of your proposal?                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <b>Principal's Name</b> _____<br><b>School (if applicable):</b> _____<br><b>Principal's Signature (Required)</b> _____ <b>Principal and/or Asst. Supt. signatures</b>                                                     |
| 12. Name of the funding source(s)?                                                                                                                                                  | List the name of the funding source (e.g. Nebraska Arts Council)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| The person listed in this box will be contacted with Task Force recommendations and/or additional questions                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Submitted by: _____ Phone: _____ Date: _____                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

PLEASE ATTACH A DRAFT OF THE GRANT

Please e-mail (or fax to 557-2139) this completed form to the Grants Coordinator ([jocelyn\\_perkins@ops.org](mailto:jocelyn_perkins@ops.org)) so that a formal request can be made to the Accountability Task Force for approval to proceed.



Omaha Public Schools Pre-Award Process

**FREQUENTLY ASKED GRANT QUESTIONS**



## Omaha Public Schools Pre-Award Process

### **Why do I have to submit a Request To Apply form and my grant application for review?**

There are three reasons for grant application review:

First, the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education (BOE) is responsible for setting all educational and operational policies and regulations for the school district, and the Superintendent, principals and district administrators are responsible for implementing them. Grant projects typically involve some impact/change to educational programs, staffing, school and/or district operations. Because of this, the Accountability Task Force and BOE require a formal review to ensure any proposed changes are acceptable and aligned with EXCELS Plus. Second, it is the Accountability Task Force's responsibility to monitor the district pursuit of external funding and update the BOE.

Third, the review process improves the actual implementation of the grant because key potential operational issues are proactively addressed. The review process includes a variety of district staff members whose support will be required once the grant project begins. The review process allows Task Force members to become familiar with your plans and to make recommendations about issues or changes well in advance.

### **What happens if I don't submit my grant application for review?**

If the RTA and grant artifacts are submitted after the Accountability Task Force's internal deadline (before noon, every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday), they will be moved to the next upcoming Task Force meeting (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 8:00 a.m.) for review.

If the grant application is submitted to the funder prior to Accountability Task Force review, or the application is never submitted for review, then consequences may vary depending on the specific circumstances of each case (e.g. missing the submission deadline, returning non-approved awards to the funder). If failure to submit the grant application was a knowing and deliberate violation of BOE Policy, then additional consequences may be recommended.

### **May I purchase whatever I want from whomever with grant funds?**

No. Purchases made with grant funds are highly-controlled and are limited only to expenses that were fully described in the grant application. All purchases made with grant funds are fully subject to all federal, state and district purchasing requirements, including all limitations/processes on travel, purchase orders, computer hardware specifications, and quotation and bidding requirements. Of all funding available to school districts, grant funding is the most complicated to use.

## Omaha Public Schools Pre-Award Process

### **May I decide what to pay people?**

No. All personnel costs assigned to grant projects are covered by at least two sets of limitations: those established by the BOE/Human Resources and collective bargaining agreements. Grants may only compensate employees at current district rates.

### **Can I get paid for writing a grant application?**

Generally, no. There are usually a number of ethical, legal and professional restrictions against this practice. Consult the Grants Office for more detailed information.

### **Can I include items such as food, recognition awards, admission to amusement parks, clothing (such as t-shirts for field trip safety), or personal grooming items in my grant application budget?**

Probably not. These kinds of purchases are subject to many laws, regulations, and policies and require very detailed scrutiny. Typically, such purchases from state and federal grants are seen to hold more entertainment than educational value (see OMB Circular A-87 and A-133). Attempts at purchasing such items can result in subsequent district audit findings or the funding source unwilling to reimburse the school district for grant expenditures. More importantly, expenditures outside of the approved grant budget risk the district's chances for continued fiscal support from the funding source.

### **A consultant associated with the vendor of a product we want to purchase wants to help write our grant proposal. Is this okay?**

First, the use of vendor-written grant applications approach the periphery of ethical conduct. To honor the fundamental concepts of grant giving, each school or department should be in charge of its own proposals, and each grant application should arise from a very specific educational need that aligns with EXCELS Plus.

Second, the vendor is in the business of making a profit (which is reasonable). Schools are in the business of helping children learn. There are rare instances when these two concerns work well together. It is critical that grant proposals do not demonstrate any conflicts of interest in this area.

Third, permitting a vendor to write a school/department proposal does not build capacity for the school's or department's staff. The district premise for pursuing grant funding is based on the idea that each school or department's grant request is uniquely suited to the population being served (not a template). Grant writing is an important professional skill that is best learned by practice, not by observation.

Fourth, allowing a vendor to do the "heavy-lifting" on district grant projects is not an ideal partnership structure. The District, school (and when appropriate, the community partners) should be in charge, not a vendor.

## Appendix D-3

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Department of Buildings and Grounds  
Standard Procedure  
Garden Sheds/Fence

### GARDEN SHEDS

**Location:** The Principal must approve the location. Schoolhouse Planning will review the location to make sure there are no immediate future needs, existing underground utilities or creates a safety issue. Once the location of the shed has been reviewed and approved by Schoolhouse Planning, Purchasing may be contacted to secure purchase, delivery and installation of the shed.

**Shed:** Schoolhouse Planning recommends using a building that is constructed in a sturdy manner such as those offered by Tuff Shed. Visiting [www.tuffshed.com](http://www.tuffshed.com) will provide examples of the type of sheds recommended. Metal buildings are not recommended as these tend to rust and deteriorate within a few years and are not structurally sound to support shelving or brackets.

**Locks:** OPS will provide the padlocks for shed to ensure standard locks are used. Enter a work request to the locksmith to review your needs and provide the locks once the shed is ready.

**Safety and Insurance:** Please note that hazardous materials such as gas cans, certain cleaning fluids and possibly fertilizer may not be able to be stored in the shed. The shed and items stored in the shed may not be covered by the district insurance. For clarification, contact Risk Management, if you have questions about such items. Repair and upkeep of the garden shed is the responsibility of the school.

### FENCES

**Fence:** Consider the gate(s) location and adequately size the gate to provide access for equipment (tiller, wagons, etc.) and mower access. Remember to include space between the garden plantings and the fence for foot traffic, wheelchair access and mowing. Contact Schoolhouse Planning for contractor recommendations.

Padlocks for fences may also be obtained though submitting a work request.

Revised May 12, 2012

## Appendix D-4

### Omaha Public Schools GARDEN GRANTS Purchasing Division

#### Protocols for Procurement

##### First Step - Approval of the Garden Plan:

- After the school building's principal has approved the location and plan for that school's garden, it should be sent to Schoolhouse Planning, marked to the attention of Director of Buildings & Grounds Mark Warneke at the OPS Service Center, for final review and approval before any REQ orders are entered and before anyone from Lowes comes out to the school.
  - Schoolhouse Planning must have time to arrange for locations of all gas, phone, and cable lines to be marked.
  - Please note that Schoolhouse Planning has stipulated that there are to be no rain barrels utilized as part of any garden plan.

##### Next Steps - Procurement:

- Once a grant award is received by the OPS Grant Accounting Office, budget strings related to any garden grant procurement will be set up in the OPS Financial Information System by the Grant Accounting Office for use by the individual school sites involved.
- Lowes is already set up as a vendor in the OPS Vendor File and will accept OPS POs (purchase orders) for garden projects.
- The sites involved must follow normal requisition entry procedures and have their building requesters (usually, the school secretary) enter REQs (requisitions) into the OPS Financial Information System (PeopleSoft) both for any ground work to be done and/or for products to be purchased, using the budget string of the garden grant for each respective site.
- Those entering REQs should use the CST (CUSTODIAL) category on the REQs so that they will flow through the system to the correct Buyer in Purchasing.
- School staff should not directly order products from any vendor outside of the requisition entry process.
  - Omaha Public Schools official POs (purchase orders) are tied within the Financial Information System to the REQs (requisitions) properly entered at the respective school sites.
  - This REQ-to-PO financial tracking is essential to the eventual process for paying any related invoices.
- During any fiscal year, any REQs must be entered and approved on-line by the end of the last day for OPS requisitions prior to the respective fiscal year-end because the requisition system closes for fiscal year-end audit work after that time (e.g., for fiscal year 2011-2012, that last day for REQs happens to be Wednesday, August 8, 2012)

- o The deadline for REQs is always published in May of each fiscal year and is repeatedly communicated thereafter through June, July, and the first week of August.
- o After the last date for REQ entry in any fiscal year, the next opportunity to enter REQs always begins on the following September 1st, when the next fiscal year opens. Thus, if the grant continues to be in effect into the next fiscal year, entry of requisitions utilizing the grant budget string may resume on that September 1<sup>st</sup> date.
- School REQ requesters (again, normally the school secretaries) should always put in the Comments Section of any garden project-related REQ the name, phone number, and fax number of the Lowes contact person with whom the school's garden '*point person*' (whether a teacher or other staff member) is working on the garden project.
- Schools must keep in mind that there is an end date for any grant and, in most cases, products charged against the grant must have been ordered, delivered, invoiced, and paid by that grant end date. In this context, please note the following:
  - o Payments of invoices must be approved by the Board of Education.
  - o Regular meetings of the Board of Education take place only on the first and third Mondays of each month and that schedule must be taken into consideration with regard to proactive timeliness of ordering so as to facilitate a corresponding timeliness in the payment of invoices prior to the grant end date.
- School representatives with questions on garden grants and procurement procedures are encouraged to call the Purchasing Division with inquiries concerning anything not covered in the above material. It is our hope that all participants recognize that Purchasing Division staff will be happy to assist in any way possible.
  - o The best contact for immediate information is Buyer Jeff Calhoun at 402-557-2248. Mr. Calhoun handles procurement of most of the commodities related to garden grant projects.
  - o Director of Business Services Antoinette Turnquist at 402-557-2218 is also available for any necessary consultation regarding general questions about procurement.

Updated 05/10/12



OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Department of Buildings and Grounds  
School Garden, Standard Procedure

School gardens are wonderful projects that teach different skills to children, but most importantly, they encourage healthy eating. To facilitate this program, the Buildings and Grounds Division has compiled a list of items to take under consideration when plotting a site before planting either a vegetable or flower garden. These points are included in this procedure and in a checklist form attached.

Be sure to contact Schoolhouse Planning (SCHP) at 402-557-2800 once you have determined the primary site for your garden. SCHP can offer assistance in determining the best site for your garden. SCHP staff will check records for underground utilities such as electrical, plumbing, sprinkler systems, and fire alarm or data lines that will be difficult to maintain or repair if damaged during digging and planting. Failure to do so may result in your garden being heavily damaged.

### **Points to consider**

**WATER**--Many schools do not have outdoor water spigots. Where is the nearest water source? Do you have means (garden hose) to get water to the garden?

**DRAINAGE**--Design gardens so that excess water does not flow over sidewalks or toward the building foundation. This includes portable classrooms. Stagnant water under the portable can cause odors inside the classroom.

**SUNLIGHT**--Locate the garden in an area that receives at least 6 hours of sunlight/day.

**LOCATION**--Check with SCHP to be sure the proposed garden is not located in an area with underground utilities or earmarked for portable classrooms, outdoor classrooms, playgrounds, or other uses in the near future.

**MAINTENANCE**--Who will maintain the garden (watering, weeding and harvesting) if the garden is allowed to grow during the summer months? If gardens are found in an untended state, notification will be given to the school or garden coordinator. Failure to correct the situation within 15 days will result in discussions with the principal or building administrator to remove the garden and returned the area to its prior state at expense to the individual school garden program.

Consider accessibility to water or stored materials when the work is performed on weekends, after school hours or during extended spring and summer breaks. Where will hand tools, hoses, and other supplies be stored?

**SUSTAINABILITY**--Some funding sources require these gardens to be sustained, not just end with the school year. Will the garden become curriculum-based or supported long term in some other way?

**PESTICIDES**--OPS has implemented an Integrated Pest Management plan that discourages the use of traditional pesticides. If pesticides are used, notification signs must be posted for at least 48 hours before the area is treated and left in place 48 hours post application. Material safety data sheets (MSDS) for each product used must be submitted to ENVY for review before the product is used on OPS property. This includes all pesticides; professionally applied or those purchased over-the-counter.

**TREES**--Trees of any kind cannot be planted over geothermal well fields nor near underground utilities. Trees need to be planted in areas where the mature tree branches do not provide access to the roof, interfere with power lines or parking spaces and do not block the line of visibility at exits/entrances. Remember, tree roots can eventually cause damage to sewer lines and pavement. Plant trees so that there is sufficient distance between them to allow mowing. Again, check with SCHKP.

Trees or bushes that produce fruit, berries or seed pods are not acceptable and will not be considered for planting on OPS properties.

**ADA ACCESSIBILITY**--If a portion of the garden needs to be raised to accommodate ADA accessibility or other ADA support features such as ramps or a sidewalk need to be installed, be sure to include those considerations in grant applications. It is critical to coordinate this activity through OPS Buildings and Grounds to insure compliance with existing ADA code.

**PRODUCE**--Determine where the produce will be used. Some OPS schools have chosen to sell their produce at local Farmer's markets. Contact the Director of Nutrition Services (402-557-2230) before garden produce is used in school cafeterias. It may not be possible to use all produce in the school cafeteria.

**GARDEN/YARD WASTE**--Our current contract for waste disposal does NOT allow garden or yard waste to be put in the refuse container. Garden/yard waste disposal arrangements must be made in a way that does not involve OPS resources. Do not put tree branches, grass clippings, dirt or any vegetation in OPS refuse or recycling containers.

**COMPOSTING**--Composting of food and biodegradable wastes might be considered for fertilizing the garden soil. A functioning compost pile is a difficult environment to sustain. Consult with a master gardener before composting. The compost must be in a container to prevent pests (insect and mammal) and to control odors. Compost containers should be kept as far away from the school and garden as possible. Be considerate of the neighbors during placement. Designate from among school garden supporters, a person or persons who will be responsible for stirring and routine maintenance of the compost. This task should not fall to custodial staff. The compost final product must be used on OPS property only.

## **Requirements**

In order to provide a positive gardening experience in a safe, secure, outdoor setting, safety and insurance considerations must be addressed for the continued welfare of students and staff, and to protect OPS property. During the planning phase remember to include these district requirements which are based on district policies, practices and standard procedures that must be met.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**--Contact information for the garden coordinator, the person placed in charge of the garden, must be submitted to Buildings and Grounds. The garden coordinator contact name and after-hours contact information can be submitted to either SCHP or ENVT at 402-557-2800. Contact information is vital should the garden become vandalized or damaged.

**LABOR**--Determine who will be providing the labor to plant and maintain the garden. Decide when the garden work will be performed. Is it during the day, after school, or on weekends? Is that work being performed by students as part of their curriculum, or as an after school project? Adult supervision must be provided whenever students are present.

Volunteers can be a great support and valuable resource to schools. Human Resources has established and requests the completion of the "Application for Volunteer Service" form prior to their use. Contact OPS Human Resources at 402-557-2300 for a copy of this form and for clarification or questions.

**SOIL**--OPS Environmental (ENVT) maintains records for all lead-in-soil samples collected across the district and can be reached 402-557-2800. Remember to contact ENVT to test all soil before the soil is spread on OPS property. All borrow, fill dirt and top soil must be sampled for lead content. This includes bagged soil or soil bought from nurseries. Receipt of soil analysis is generally available within four working days

**TOOLS**--Power tools should never be used by students. Students should be trained in the proper use of hand tools and be advised of general safety rules when working in the garden (no throwing dirt, joisting with hand tools, general horseplay, etc.).

**INSURANCE COVERAGE**--Vendors contracted with OPS to provide goods or services performed on district properties, in agreement with either the school or central office departments, are required to maintain the insurance consistent with the OPS standard which includes general liability (umbrella coverage as needed), automobile, and worker's comp coverage. Maintaining proper insurance will help protect all parties involved should an accident happen. Contact Schoolhouse Planning for a copy of vendor insurance requirements.

Even in situations where the vendor is donating supplies or where labor to projects on OPS properties, insurance coverage may be required. Vendors should have existing business coverage and be willing to provide an insurance certificate reflecting that coverage. Contact Risk Management at 402-557-2890 for clarification or questions.

Revised May 2, 2012

Appendix D-5 cont'd

**GARDEN CHECKLIST**

|                            |                                           |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Location                   |                                           |
| Size                       |                                           |
| Design                     |                                           |
| Plants                     |                                           |
| Project Lead               |                                           |
| Contact Info               |                                           |
| System to sustain          |                                           |
| Water source               |                                           |
| Water transport            |                                           |
| Clean up water for workers |                                           |
| Disposal of waste products |                                           |
| Compost?                   |                                           |
| Mulch?                     |                                           |
| Effects on wildlife        |                                           |
| Funding Source             |                                           |
|                            | <b>** OTHER OPS DEPARTMENT SUPPORT **</b> |
| Site Plans                 | SCHP                                      |
| Mark Utilities             | SCHP/MA                                   |
| Soil Tests                 | ENVT                                      |
| ADA considerations         | SCHP                                      |
| Purchasing materials       | Purchasing                                |
|                            | <b>** STORAGE **</b>                      |
| Security                   |                                           |
| Hand tools                 |                                           |
| Supplies                   |                                           |
|                            |                                           |
|                            |                                           |

### OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS IPM for Gardens

Omaha Public Schools has been actively seeking ways to reduce the quantity and type of chemical compounds students and staff are exposed to during activities at school. To that end, OPS has been engaged in an integrated pest management (IPM) program for control of pests inside our buildings for several years. IPM is the control of pests through the use of methods that stress implementation of pest identification and behavior modifications to reduce the use of pesticides.

IPM programs for gardens are very similar to those implemented in the schools. The use of pesticides is allowed after other measures have failed, and the pesticide must be chosen to control the specific pest causing problems. Before using an insecticide or other pesticide in your garden, check out some of the other options available to you here and through other sources.

If you determine the use of toxic pesticides is warranted, you must post warning signs 48 hours before application and leave them up for a minimum of 48 hours after application as notification for those individuals who may be sensitive to those classes of chemicals. Keep a material safety data sheet (MSDS) on site for each chemical used. Copies of those MSDS must be sent to Environmental, OPS Service Center, 4041 N. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, Omaha, NE 69134.

#### IPM Cultural practices

- Whenever possible, purchase disease or pest resistant plants.
- Water plants at ground level to keep foliage dry to prevent the onset of certain diseases by use of a soaker hose or a trickle of water from the garden. If that is not possible, try to water at a time that allows the leaves to dry before night.
- Mulch around plants to help prevent weeds and retain moisture.

#### Non-toxic insect treatments

- Soap; Spraying plants with a mixture of two tablespoons of liquid soap per quart of water will help control aphids, meal worms, and red spider mites. There are also specific insecticidal soaps that can be purchased for insect activity.
- Hand pick and destroy individual insects, eggs and larvae.
- Horticultural oils are good for treating fungi and some insect activity.
- Liquid formulas of lime-sulfur are also good for treating fungi and some insect activity.
- *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) is a bacterium that is pathogenic to caterpillars of butterflies and moths but not harmful to humans. If you plant vegetation to attract butterflies, expect caterpillars and don't kill them.
- Search the net for recipes that can be used to treat your particular type of insect or disease. Some use boiled water with certain plants added and steeped for several hours and sprayed on plants.

- Spinosads are synthetic insecticides with the benefits of a biological pest control. The active ingredient derived from *Saccharopolyspora spinosa*, a bacterium that lives in soil.
- Know which insects can be beneficial. Common predators or beneficial insects are lady bugs, ground beetles, striped earwig, praying mantas and many others.

### Pesticides

If other methods fail to control insects and treatment is necessary consider a Pyrethrin insecticide. Some are made from chrysanthemums that are less toxic to humans. Never allow students to apply the insecticide nor be present during application.

### Companion Planting

Companion planting is the practice of planning specific types of plants together to repel insects or disease. Companion planting has been practiced for years and has been shown to play a significant role in assisting with pest control. Some combinations work because the scents they produce repel insects while others work because they attract good insects.

In addition to compatible companion planting, many flowers such as nasturtiums and marigolds and herbs like sweet basil planted throughout a garden can help deter insects.

For a special project consider the practice of “three sisters planting” used by Native Americans. This method started with the planting of corn. When the corn became well established, beans were planted that used the corn stalk for support, eliminating the need for stakes. At the same time, squash was planted. The large leaves of squash shaded the ground that eliminated most weeds and the spiny leaves deterred several pests.

\*A table of Companion Plants for vegetables is attached.

### Recommended websites

- <http://www.extension.org/pages/13641/garden-lawn-and-landscape-pests:-integrated-pest-management-ipm>
- <http://www.doitgreen.org/article/gardening/pest>
- For control options specific to certain pests or pests on particular vegetation try <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/GARDEN/veggies.html>
- Several pages of great information [http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0500-B/VOL2-2011/home\\_vegetable\\_insects.pdf](http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0500-B/VOL2-2011/home_vegetable_insects.pdf)
- Beneficial insects [http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/339\\_BeneficialBugs.pdf](http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/339_BeneficialBugs.pdf)
- Information on Horticultural oils <http://www.colostate.edu/Dept/CoopExt/4dmg/PHC/hortoil.htm>

### Companion Planting Chart for Vegetables

| Vegetable       | Compatible with...                                          | Incompatible with...                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Asparagus       | Basil, Tomato, Nasturtium, Parsley                          | Onion, garlic, potato                        |
| Beans           | Carrot, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, marigold            | Chives, leek, garlic                         |
| Broad Beans     | Brassicas, carrot, celery, corn, lettuce, potato            | Fennel                                       |
| Beets           | Brassicas, lettuce, onion, sage                             | Bean (pole)                                  |
| Broccoli        | Celery, chamomile, dill, rosemary                           | Oregano, Strawberry                          |
| Brussel Sprouts | Potato, Thyme                                               | Strawberry                                   |
| Cabbage         | Beetroot, potato, oregano, sage                             | Strawberry, tomato                           |
| Carrot          | Bush beans, pole beans, lettuce, onion, pea, radish, tomato | Chives, dill, parsnip                        |
| Cauliflower     | Beans, celery, oregano                                      | Nasturtium, peas, potato, strawberry, tomato |
| Celery          | Cabbage, leek, onion, spinach, tomato                       | Parsnip, potato                              |
| Corn            | Bean, cucumber, melon, pea, pumpkin, potato, radish         | Tomato                                       |
| Cucumber        | Bean, celery, lettuce, pea, radish                          | Cauliflower, potato, basil                   |
| Eggplant        | Bean, capsicum, potato, spinach                             |                                              |
| Leek            | Carrot, celery, strawberry                                  |                                              |
| Lettuce         | Carrots, radishes, strawberry                               | Beans, beetroot, parsley                     |
| Melon           | Corn, radish                                                | Potato                                       |
| Onion           | Bean sprout, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, strawberry tomato  | Bean, pea                                    |
| Pea             | Beans, Carrot, corn, cucumber, radish                       | Onion family                                 |
| Potato          | Bean, corn, cabbage, pea, eggplant                          | Cucumber, pumpkin, squash, sunflower         |
| Pumpkin         | Corn                                                        | Potato                                       |
| Spinach         | Celery, cauliflower, eggplant                               |                                              |
| Tomato          | Asparagus, celery, carrot, parsley, marigold                | Corn, fennel, potato                         |
| Zucchini        | Nasturtium                                                  |                                              |

# Appendix E-1

## MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF SPECIAL PROJECT

(See, Policy 3614 & Rule 3614.1)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Directions:**

- (1) Use "File → Save As" to save this form to your desktop.
- (2) Complete items 2-8 on the form and "Save." Use any file name you like.
- (3) E-mail the completed form to Ed Rockwell at SSC: [erockwel@mpsomaha.org](mailto:erockwel@mpsomaha.org)

\*\*\*\*\*

**1. Project information (To be completed by District):**

Project Number Assigned  
Date Application Received  
Project Manager Assigned  
A/E Firm Assigned (if any)

**2. The building principal (or highest ranking site administrator) submitting this application is:**

Name of Applicant  
Phone Number of Applicant

**3. What is the specific location of the proposed project (e.g., building, room, area, etc)?**

**4. Describe (in detail) the proposed project.**

**5. Are plans, sketches, catalog sheets or other such information available for this proposed project?**

Yes  No

If "yes," please mail such information to Ed Rockwell at SSC (via school mail).

**6. How will this proposed project benefit the District?**

**7. Do you have an estimated cost for this proposed project?**

Yes  No

If "yes," what is the estimated cost? \$            and who (or what) was the source of this estimate?

If "no," would you like to request assistance with acquiring an estimate or bid?

Yes  No

**8. Describe how the proposed project will be funded. (For any District funds, show the account code(s) to be used.)**

Funding Source #1



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date:

**PURSUANT TO POLICY 3614 and Rule 3614.1, the following determinations are made by the Superintendent (or Designee):**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| The proposed project is clearly defined.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The proposed project is beneficial and desirable to the District.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The funding for the proposed project is clearly delineated, is committed, and is immediately available.                                                                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The material and/or equipment in the proposed project are appropriate for their intended use.                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The proposed project materials, equipment, and workmanship meet the standards of the District for those areas for which standards have been established (e.g., color and quality of paint, width and depth of sidewalks, make and model of defibrillators, etc.).                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The proposed project presents no unacceptable long-term operational, maintenance, licensing, or other expenses for the District.                                                                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The proposed project meets (or will be designed to meet) all building, fire, and safety codes; all ADA requirements; and all other requirements of local, state, and federal law.                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The proposed project does not interfere with the physical integrity of (or access to) existing utilities, cabling, irrigation systems, or other installations (either above or below the surface) or, in the alternative, provides for the relocation of such installations.       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| The outside contractors (or others acting as such) for the proposed project possess the appropriate skills and experience and, further, carry (or will agree to acquire) insurance coverage deemed appropriate by the District (with the District named as an additional insured). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Other reasonable criteria deemed appropriate by the Superintendent (or designee) as follows:                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**UPON CONSIDERATION of all of the statements, comments, and requirements contained in this Application, I, the undersigned Designee of the Superintendent determine that this Application should be, and hereby is:**

- Approved
- Denied

**Name:** Kenneth J. Fossen, Assoc. Supt. for Gen. Admin. (If > \$40,000)  
**Name:** Ed Rockwell, Gen. Mgr. for Support Services (If < \$40,000)  
**Date:**

## Appendix E-2

### Support Services – Construction

### Planning – Special Projects

3614

Every proposed project that impacts the facilities and/or grounds of the District shall receive written approval from the Superintendent (or designee) before such project commences.

Related Policies & Rules: [3614.1](#)

Policy Adopted: August 6, 2007  
Reaffirmed: May 3, 2010

Millard Public Schools  
Omaha , Nebraska

## Support Services – Construction

### Planning – Special Projects

3614.1

- I. All special projects shall require written approval by the Superintendent (or designee) prior to commencement of the project.
  - A. “Special projects” shall include, but no necessarily be limited to, projects that involve the following:
    1. Building additions or renovations (including out-buildings)
    2. Planting of trees, shrubs, flowers, or any other plants
    3. Landscaping
    4. Drilling, cutting, or otherwise penetrating the walls, ceilings, or floors of any facility.
    5. Carpeting & painting
    6. HVAC, electrical, & plumbing
    7. Installation of marquees or other permanent exterior signs
    8. Fencing
    9. Irrigation systems
    10. Sidewalks, driveways, parking lots or other concrete work
    11. Playground equipment
    12. Technology (including but not limited to data, voice, and video systems) that would be (or could be) connected to or impact the District’s data network
    13. Any equipment or devise that would become permanently affixed to any building or grounds (e.g., picnic tables, bike racks, benches, etc. that are anchored in concrete)
  - B. “Special projects” shall not include the following:
    1. The taping of materials to walls (within the limitations provided by the fire code).
    2. The tacking of materials to bulletin boards or other surfaces designed specifically for such use.
    3. The moving of desks, chairs, file cabinet, or other stand alone furniture or equipment that is not fastened to or otherwise attached to the floors, walls, or ceilings of a facility.
    4. The routine repairing and/or maintaining of existing facilities, grounds, and equipment by the District’s custodial, grounds, maintenance, and technology personnel.
    5. The hanging of pictures, plaques, posters, etc. that are light-weight (i.e., not exceeding 10 lbs.). Such hangings shall not be in close proximity to electrical wiring; data, video, or voice cabling; HVAC control systems; or any other such installations that may be present in or on the walls.

C. All proposed special projects shall be reviewed in light of the following criteria:

1. The project must be clearly defined.
2. The project must be beneficial and desirable to the District.
3. The funding for the project must be clearly delineated and the funds must be committed and immediately available.
4. The project must contain materials and equipment that are appropriate for their intended use.
5. The project materials, equipment, and workmanship must meet the standards of the District for those areas for which standards have been established (e.g., color and quality of paint, width and depth of sidewalks, make and model of defibrillators, etc.).
6. The project shall not present unacceptable long-term operational, maintenance, licensing, or other expenses for the District.
7. The project must meet all building, fire, and safety codes; all ADA requirements; and all other requirements of local, state, and federal law.
8. The project must not interfere with the physical integrity of (or access to) existing utilities, cabling, irrigation systems, or other installations (either above or below the surface) or, in the alternative, must provide for the relocation of such installations.
9. The outside contractors (or others acting as such) for the project shall possess the appropriate skills and experience and, further, shall carry insurance coverage deemed appropriate by the District (with the District named as an additional insured).
10. Any other reasonable criteria deemed appropriate by the Superintendent (or designee).

II. The District may require that a project be designed by an architect and/or engineer. The architect and/or engineer shall be selected by (and be directed by) the District. The cost of such services shall be paid for by the District.

III. All applications for approval of special projects must be submitted by the building principal (or the highest ranking administrator at a site without a principal). If any student, parent, or community groups are directly involved in a special project, such group(s) shall work directly with and through the building principal. They shall not work with or through the District's architects, engineers, or project managers.

IV. No administrator shall approve (or acquiesce to) any special project being conducted in the facilities or on the grounds under his/her supervision unless such project has received prior written approval as noted hereinabove.

V. Any employee who has knowledge of the planning or commencement of an unapproved project in the facilities or on the grounds of the District shall immediately notify the Superintendent (or designee) or the administrator who has supervisory responsibility for such facilities or grounds.

Related Policies & Rules: [3614](#)

Rule Adopted: August 6, 2007  
Reaffirmed: May 3, 2010

Millard Public Schools  
Omaha, Nebraska