



SCHOOL GARDEN
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Farm to School BC

Discussion Group

February 2, 2023

Territorial Acknowledgement

Addie would like to acknowledge that she is presenting today from the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the:

- WSÁNEĆ (Saanich),
- lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees)
- Wyomilth (Esquimalt)

Tessa would like to acknowledge that she is presenting today from the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Quw'utsun Nation.



Please rename yourself with your name, pronouns, and community you live in :)





Tessa Stiven

Central Island Community Animator,
Farm to School BC

Tessa believes that through food we engage our hands and hearts in growing a connected, equitable and sustainable community. She is a teacher, market gardener and avid seed saver!



Addie de Candole

Food Literacy Advisor, Farm to School BC
and Teacher in SD62

Addie is an elementary school teacher and home gardener, and has been working with schools for over 8 years. She has seen how much more successful projects are when they are thoughtfully planned in advance of growing.



Discussion Group Purpose

- Tessa and Addie will host a facilitated discussion group for a deeper dive into workshop topics
- Opportunity to learn from other educators, network, share resources, ask questions, and celebrate successes.
- Open to new and seasoned school gardeners
- Attendance at the webinar is not a prerequisite for joining the discussion groups.



Guidelines

- We want to create space to hear from everyone
- If you like to talk a lot, we encourage you to also step back and listen
- If you like to listen, we encourage you to share your voice
- Approach new ideas with curiosity
- Respect others' opinions and local context



Topics

1. Garden committee
2. Navigating school policies



Garden Committee



Notes: Garden Committee

What is working well?

- At a middle school, the garden was part of a Sustainable Resource class. So the teacher was responsible for the garden.
- Having a group of community volunteers (Master Gardeners, parents/guardians, etc) is really helpful not to burn out staff.
- Good to have a range of skills on the committee (e.g. writing grants, gardening)
- Nice to make the committee a bit of a social time, get support from each other.
- Important to have school staff on the committee as well so that learning is incorporated outside, and that things are not lost year to year.
- Opportunity to have reconciliation incorporated into the garden.
- Events - Spring Harvest Celebration are a great way to celebrate the garden and bring students together.
- Community School Coordinators are a helpful person to have continuity in the garden
- Multigenerational garden - school/senior centre/ group home residents/food bank (year round, on City property)

What is not working well?

- Hard to find other volunteers (e.g. Master Gardeners) and get them working in the garden.
- Paperwork like criminal record checks make it harder/take longer to get volunteers.
- Changes in the garden were done without checking with everyone - needs better communication
- Difficult when the teacher champion leaves, or energies/interests change
 - Learning Circles are helpful, getting everyone in the same room, sharing that everyone is working for the same job. From different schools, but nearby.



Form a Garden Committee

Recruit people using your ideas and your **PASSION** for the garden!

Committee's role:

- Make garden decisions
- Planning vs operational
- Direction for coordinator



Who could be on the committee?

- Teaching Staff
- School Administration
- PAC
- Parents/guardians
- Community Organizations
- Students (Secondary)
- Neighbors
- Master Gardeners

....or whoever wants to help :)



Colquitz Middle School, SD61



School District Policies



Notes: School District Policies

- SD fixing irrigation - volunteers cannot do their own work, only union
- School District Nutrition Program - build school gardens into the program
- SD support builds when they see progress
- School Trustees can really build support for school gardens through the superintendent
- Opportunity to incorporate Indigenous learning, Learning from the Land toolkit, planting native plants.
- Watch out for poisonous plants:
 - Poison hemlock - looks a lot like carrots, present from compost facilities
 - School maintenance - hard to get timely help when there are poisonous/invasive plants
 - Reminder to get plant ID training - remind students not to eat anything before checking with grown ups
- How can we build consistent funding for the garden? Can to cook and prepare food grown in the garden and serve it to the students for the program to be sustainable.
- Funding - Has shifted a bit away from gardens more recently.
- School Lunch Program - how can school gardens be a part of that?
- SD Strategic Plans - a big part to show up in grassroots way to show support for school gardens
- Nanaimo-Ladysmith (68) Environmental Stewardship Action Plan is a great examples
- Getting permission from SD - License to Occupy, gets around some union work
- Approach from curiosity - "Why is it a no? What is your reasoning?" Start dialogue, create vision plan, this is what we would like to do, choose what we agree on (especially getting students building and being hands-on), and build more gardens!



Words of Wisdom

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
— Margaret Mead

Kids need this, keep doing what you need to do, this is important.

Build trust with the SD, and you will get there!

Be patient, things takes time, this will take many years.

Look at the successes, reflect with the students.

Easier to repair children than repair broken adults.

Attach yourself to the process, not the outcome, you will go where it needs to go.



School District Plans and Policies

Strategic Plans

Environmental Plans

Garden Policies

NLPS Goals and Objectives

GOAL

3

To be a leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability



POLICY 6161.5 Instruction: School Gardens

Adopted: November 23, 2020
Revised:
Frequency of Review: Annual



School District Facilities Departments

Possible considerations:

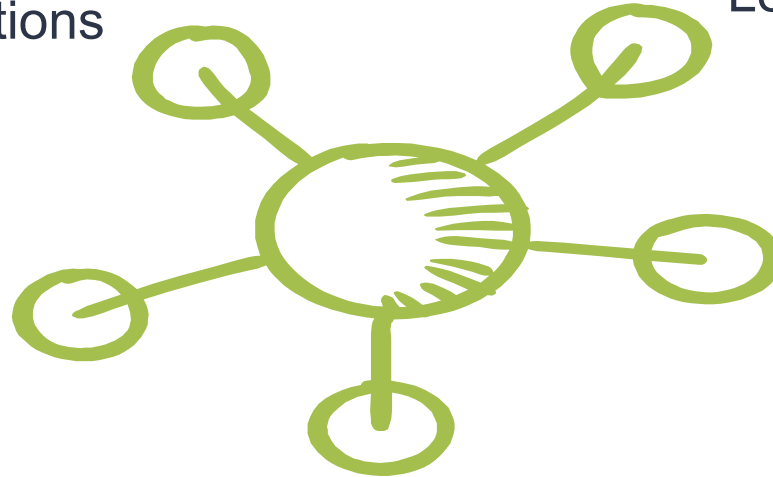
- Water access, especially in summer
- Fencing requirements and installation
- Garden design and building materials
- Garden tool shed design
- Composting systems
- Lawn maintenance around the garden
- Type of plants permitted



Community Connections

Community
Organizations

Local Farmers



Neighbours / Senior
Centers / Daycares

Master Gardeners /
Landscape Architects

Other schools and
universities

