

Building a Sustainable School Garden

- **Form a Garden Committee**
 - Teachers don't have time to do it alone.
 - Hold a meeting, inviting as many people, from as far and wide as possible, to gauge support for the project, to communally envision a sustainable, successful school garden and to glean the excitement and energy that comes from many people
 - 6-12 people (faculty, **administrators**, parents, teachers' aides, interested neighbors)
 - Begin to delegate- roles make committee members more accountable and increase ownership.

- **Visioning...**
 - Once you have everyone that has expressed interest in being involved on board, hold a "visioning meeting" to clarify what the garden's purpose will be, what objectives you want to meet, what the school's needs are, and how to meet these needs.
 - Focus in on a select few objectives to organize around.
 - The long-term sustainability of the garden must be considered at the outset. What would happen if half the committee left?
 - Garden's are not a 'build it and they will come' project. Include all stakeholders in the visioning process.
 - You, as adults, do not know what's best. Kids have to own it.
 - There are various models for drafting a common vision. Try to take input from all those involved.
 - Draft an action plan.

- **Place...**
 - Make this a part of the above visioning process if you don't already have a site. Think about how many classes will be utilizing the outdoor classroom, what they want to use the space for, and how best to serve the identified needs.
 - Site analysis, design plan, 3D visioning, volunteer coordination, building.
 - Sun, water, drainage, soil, access, class usage, storage.

- **Collect Resources/ Make Connections**
 - Apply for grants
 - Solicit donations and in-kind support from local businesses
 - Cultivate volunteer support
 - Befriend your maintenance worker
 - Let local news agencies, government, and organizations know about what you're doing

- **Plan...**
 - Plan, in as much detail as possible, what garden activities and curriculum you want to be a part of your garden.
 - What will the structure be for using the garden as a classroom?
 - Who, what, for how long?
 - Define volunteer, coordinator, and committee roles.
 - Draft a simple, replicable, year-round garden plan (summer maintenance, winter Food Bank donation)

- **Build it. Rock it.**
 - Build it with them, not for them
 - Hold a “garden build party” on a Saturday. Involve **everyone**.
 - Hold regular meetings, always involve new people, stay active.