

**Creating a school garden to
use as an outdoor classroom!**



FIRST STEPS!

- Project support
 - Internal (School/District)
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - After-school/summer programs
 - Parents/PTA
 - Principal
 - Custodians
 - School Food Service Staff



FIRST STEPS!

- Project support continued...
 - Internal (School/District)
 - Upper level school system administrators/committees
 - Head of grounds and maintenance
 - School Board
 - Superintendent
 - Curriculum Director
 - District level Nutrition/Wellness committees or policies



FIRST STEPS!

- Project support continued...
 - External
 - Community members
 - Local businesses
 - Community Organizations
 - Other options specific to your community



FIRST STEPS!

- **WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE SPACE?**
 - Educational goals
 - How will teachers/students use the space?
 - What to grow? And why?
 - Who else may potentially use the space? For what reasons?



FIRST STEPS!

- Site Identification
 - Water access (#1 most important)
 - Sunlight/Shade
 - Current ground space
 - Existing sprinkler systems
 - Accessibility



FIRST STEPS!



- Site identification continued...
 - Proximity to the School
 - Visibility
 - Accessibility to electricity
 - The affect of the maturing garden space on existing infrastructure

FIRST STEPS!

- Begin creating a school garden committee



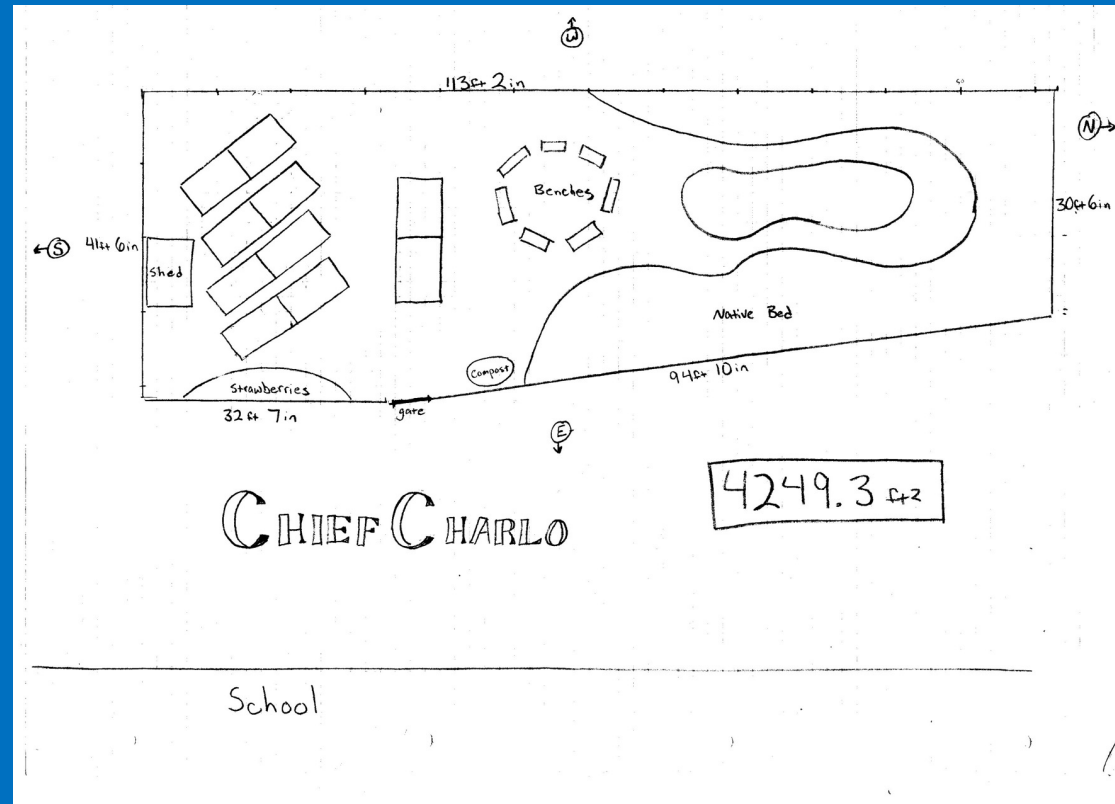
DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- When to start?
 - 6-8 months prior to installation (with one meeting per month roughly)
 - During this time all the “First Steps” are addressed
 - Roles are established
 - Begin searching for funding
 - Establish partnerships



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- Developing the physical garden plan!
 - Watering system
 - Fencing
 - Classroom space
 - Gardening system (in-ground, raised beds, a combination, other techniques (vertical, roof top, window sills, etc.)
 - Shed/Storage area
 - Space to grow into?



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- When to install?
 - Spring is preferred
 - Planting can be done
 - Momentum is still strong at this time
 - Won't site vacant
 - Fall or Summer can be done, but:
 - Most likely less community involvement
 - Limited planting opportunity



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- How to ensure the space will be used as an outdoor classroom?
 - This question should be addressed early in the planning process
 - The answer is unique to each school
 - More on this topic later!



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- Future maintenance of the space
 - Who will maintain the space?
 - Using this as an opportunity to create ownership of the space and engagement with the space.
 - Watering? Automatic is recommended
 - Weeding/other maintenance
 - Outside partnerships
 - Summer programs
 - Adopt-the-garden weeks (families/teachers/community members)
 - Special projects
 - Who takes these on?



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- Budgeting
 - Where will the money come from?
 - Grants
 - PTA
 - Fundraisers for the project
 - Playground Improvement \$
 - Business sponsorships



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- Budgeting continued...
 - Creating a budget
 - Largest line items
 - Fence
 - Beds
 - Soil
 - Compost
 - Weed mat
 - Groundcover
 - Shed



DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING A PLAN!

- Budgeting continued...
 - Tap in-kind donors as much as possible
 - Keep irrigations cheap? Keep them simple!
 - Educational tools
 - Ask teachers what they need to make the garden a successful outdoor classroom space!



INSTALLATION

- When to install?
 - Best time = Late April/early May
 - Still have time to plant before the end of the school year
 - Garden can look beautiful before school's out
 - How long will it take?
 - 2 weekends max!



INSTALLATION

- When to secure building materials?
 - No more than 2 weeks before is really necessary due to the lack of storage space at most schools
 - If you have access to a space you can start accumulating materials ASAP!
- Tools!
 - What will we need?



SPECIAL NOTE ON WATER!!!!

- Water is the most important thing in your new garden space
 - Necessary to have 24/7 water access from roughly April 1 to October 31
 - Don't tap existing sprinkler systems made for watering grass unless you have the above requirement.
 - Do NOT move forward with your garden project until you have secured these water necessities



USING THE NEW SPACE!

- Initial plan was created prior to installation
- The best ways to make sure the space is used:
 - Make the garden an official part of the school
 - Meetings
 - Celebrations
 - Other events
 - Partnerships
 - Both inside and outside the school community



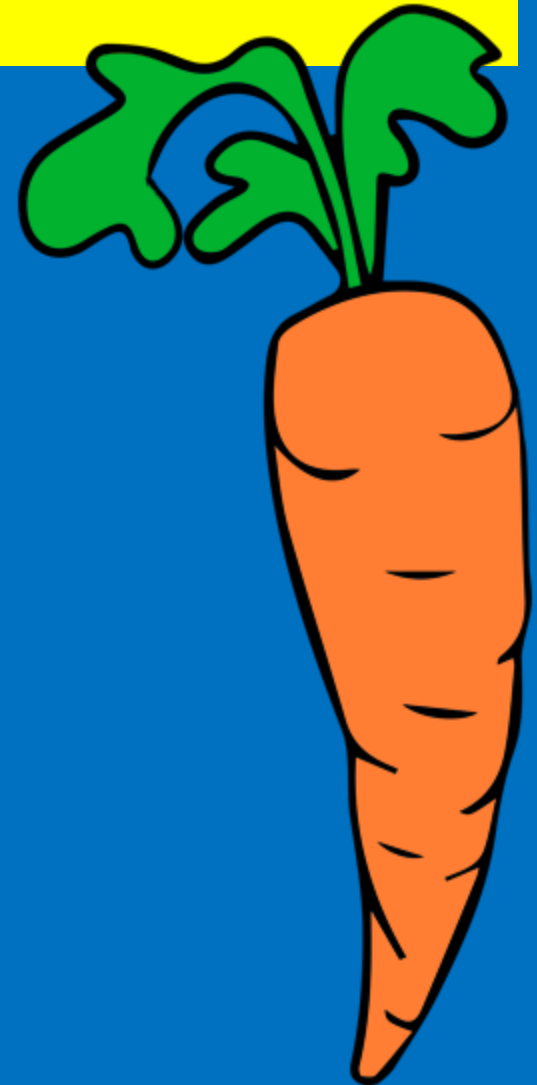
USING THE NEW SPACE!

- The best ways to make sure the space is used (continued): Share the responsibilities, joys, and successes
 - Avoid burnout! Especially of the founders of the garden.
 - Working the garden is fun and builds community = JOY
 - Spread the wealth: Make sure the food from the garden goes to members of the school community



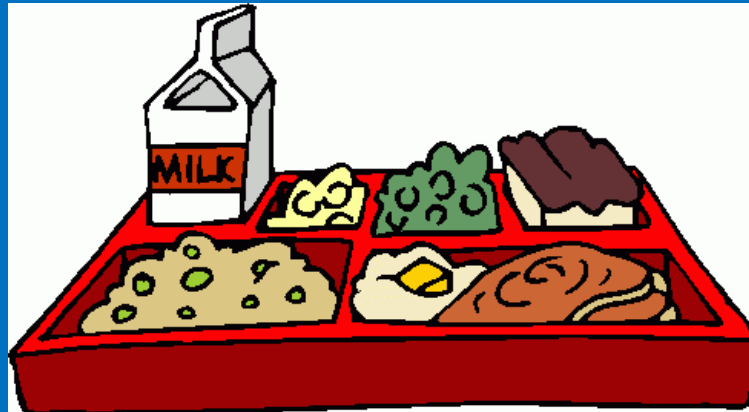
GARDEN PRODUCE

- How to use the food grown in your garden?
 - School lunches (food is usually easily integrated into salad bars if they exist at your school)
 - School snacks
 - Educational lessons in the garden
 - Taste testing events
 - Cooking classes (both in school and special after school/summer classes)
 - Sent home (especially during the summer) with the volunteers that help maintain the garden
 - Backpack programs (send food home with students in need)
 - Donate to students' families



GARDEN PRODUCE

- Other ways the food can be used:
 - Sell extra veggies at a farm stand to raise funds for the garden project
 - Donate to local hunger agencies
 - Special school events (like a Harvest Festival)
 - Donate to neighbors of the school (especially elderly neighbors)



SCHOOL GARDEN COMMITTEE

- So important to the success (especially continued success) of the garden project
- Key roles
 - Chair*
 - Secretary*
 - Treasurer*
 - Garden Education Liaison*
 - Fundraiser(s)
 - Event planner(s)
 - Special Project Leader(s)



**THOUGHTS?
QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?**

