



DISTRICT 497 TOOLKIT

Changing relationships with food.

A guide to increasing healthy habits through local food purchasing, curriculum integration and building student gardens. Working Document, last updated April 7, 2015.

Building Healthy
Relationships with
Food

Connecting to
Whole, Local & Fresh
Food options

Improving Health

Preserving a
Stronger Community
through Student
Gardens

EATING

LAWRENCE PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

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This toolkit is a collaborative work put together by the farm to school team for the purpose of creating a resource for local farmers, school gardens, volunteers, food service and LPS staff to understand the goals and guidelines of Farm to school initiatives and activities. Included in each section will be the most comprehensive and up to date policy available along with recommendations for best practices compiled by the Farm 2 School team

Disclaimer: The tools, resources, and organizations referenced herein reflect a broad interest in farm to school and community-based food systems generally. While some policies are specific to District 497, the views expressed in additional resources and links, are not necessarily reflective of, or endorsed by Lawrence Public Schools, or the Farm to School Program. The project team acknowledges the existence of a diversity of viewpoints related to this emerging area of work and believes that, in the spirit of fostering an open and thoughtful dialogue, exploration of these viewpoints is essential to sound food system decisions in Douglas County.

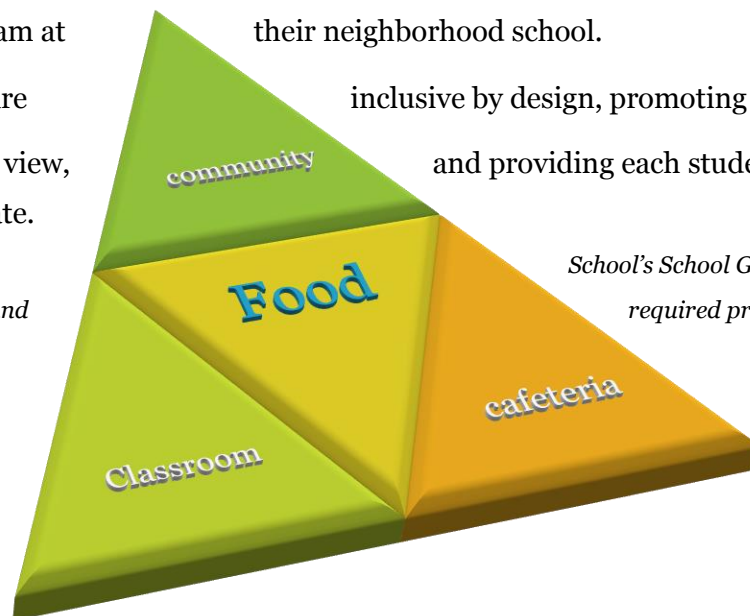
Farm to School initiatives: Lawrence Public Schools

School gardens can be the crossroads for the classroom and playground. As we create these verdant spaces to gather, play and learn, we must have a common vision, clearly defined standards and community support. The goal of the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) Farm to School program is to expand the prevalence of fresh, local foods in school cafeterias and bolster agriculture and nutrition education. Lawrence Public Schools received a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to fund and support a robust and sustainable Farm to School Program. This program is intended to primarily impact the 10,147 students (enrollment data from 2014) attending USD 497, and directly supports the board of education's goal to "enhance student wellness by integrating supports and services across the district." Students will be impacted by serving meals that feature more locally produced healthy foods, advancing farm to school experiential learning through school gardening initiatives and farm field trips, and facilitating curriculum integration of health and wellness in classrooms and cafeterias. As construction moves along at many locations, kitchens are being updated and space is being allocated for more school gardens. The district wide program will also impact children served by the summer feeding program. This program provides an ideal connection to farm to school, as seasonal summer produce from local farms can be integrated into these menus.

Guiding Principals

- School gardens are spaces for “hands-on” education, incorporating the full cycle of learning associated with healthy food—from growing to nutrition to cooking and eating.
- School garden programs are designed to involve teachers and support their multi-disciplinary curriculum primarily in the subjects of science and social studies, while also promoting self-growth and a respect for diversity.
- Student education, rather than food production, is the primary purpose of a school garden program.
- Community involvement from the school administration, parents and neighborhood volunteers is essential to the function and sustainability of a school garden program and its inclusion into the day-to-day culture of the school.
- School gardens are “outdoor classrooms” which utilize the grounds of the school to expand learning and stewardship opportunities for students without having to leave the school site.
- School gardens are engaging spaces for children to develop both a respect and a nurturing relationship with nature and their community
- School gardens should model environmental stewardship and sustainability, while emphasizing the importance of seasonality to these concepts.
- Student should be provided with simple and culturally relevant take home messages and practical skills to put what they’ve learned into practice at home.
- School gardens and programs should serve as training spaces and models for others interested in developing a similar program at their neighborhood school.
- School garden programs are inclusive by design, promoting a respect for all backgrounds and points of view, and providing each student involved with an opportunity to participate.

**borrowed from JEFFCO Public Greenhouse operating manual and*



School's School Garden and required procedures, 2012



Gardens in the Wake of Construction

Gardens serve as a learning and gathering space for all ages, but also come with huge responsibilities and commitment. It is vital that as we move forward we take care in planning and understand how to create a sustainable and successful program. The district is committed to supporting Farm to School activities, including school gardens. As we phase through construction at the elementary schools, Food Service and Facilities and Operations are working with Farm to School team members, meeting once a month to plan our future garden spaces and the programs that tie them together. We are excited to see school gardens expand to the elementary level and are working on designating new space and integrating curriculum support for those new green classrooms. At this time we need to be mindful of construction, by holding off on implementing new space or structure to existing gardens, most of which will be moved and improved upon. Garden spaces at any school under construction will be inaccessible for the coming season. If you would like to become or continue to be an integral member of Lawrence Public School garden programs, please remember to communicate with your building principal as schools are moving into their new location

Taking Smart Steps

Everyone involved in new projects must exercise patience and flexibility along with a willingness for open conversations and change. First and foremost, whether you are a district employee, parent or community organization, **contact the building principal first who then contacts the Farm 2 School committee to start the approval process.**

1. Get the word out, you may not be the only one interested in building a garden. Is this location ready for a garden? It is beneficial to join forces and work together to build a stronger and more sustainable project. If so, complete the application.
2. Develop a clear plan of what it is you want to do.
 - a. What is the guiding principal, mission or vision?
 - b. Who are your team members?
 - c. Location and space
 - d. Time frame and Schedule- Be as specific as possible
 - e. Funding-if in-kind donations are being requested, tools, seeds and other supplies are the best way to get started, but other funding such as grants and major fundraiser events must be approved by administration in accordance to district policy.
 - f. Do you plan to alter any physical space? If so, a detailed map, blueprint and list of building materials must be included with the application.
3. Submit the completed application with the building principal. The principal will then forward to the Farm 2 School committee. All new applications need to be submitted by January first of each year. The committee will review all submitted applications and set up a time to discuss and review.

Safety-garden, harvest and storage

The information in this section is a general guideline to follow with recommendations by Lawrence Public School Food Service Department.

Site Selection, Materials, and Water Use

- Identify soil history from all sources. Have soil tested to determine levels of contaminants such as chemicals, pesticides, lead, etc., especially if located near high-traffic zones. The link below includes information about soil testing through K-State Research and extension. Our local Lawrence office is located at:

2110 Harper
Douglas County Fair Grounds
Lawrence, Kansas 66046
785-843-7058

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF734.pdf>

- Create reasonable barriers to keep wild animals away from the garden.
- Use non-toxic, non-leaching materials for raised-bed gardens, containers, stakes, or trellises. Do not use pressure-treated wood, used tires, single use plastics, old railroad ties, etc.
- Select non-allergenic and non-toxic plants.
- We do not allow rain barrels in the gardens because the high risk of contamination likely to cause food borne illness.
- Use food grade containers to transport water.

Chemical and Fertilizer Use

- Check with your county Cooperative Extension Office for the best non-chemical method of control for local pest problems.
- Label the container with the common name of the fertilizer if transferring fertilizers into a dispensing container. Never use a food container.



Compost and Manure Use

Composting is a highly complex process that requires strict attention to specific procedures and conditions. These facts are a summary of key points but not a comprehensive list. Contact your local Cooperative Extension Office, or a composting expert for assistance.

- Avoid the use of raw manure, as it may increase the risk of contamination from pathogens.
- Consider using worms to form vermicompost. Learn about vermicomposting at: <http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/vermicomposting/>
- Add only plant products, such as fresh fruit and vegetable culls from food production (apple and pear cores and vegetable trimmings), to a school compost pile. Other plant material, such as grass clippings, leaves, and twigs also can be added to fruit and vegetable clippings.
- Do not use animal products, animal waste, and make sure that any cafeteria waste going into the compost pile, doesn't contain animal products. Harmful pathogens might be introduced through animal products and must be properly managed to ensure their destruction.
- Wear gloves when handling compost material.
- Locate the compost pile in a secure location away from potential contamination, such as garbage, water runoff, etc. Restrict access by animals as much as possible. Compost should be located away from the building foundation, because the moisture can cause damage.



Harvesting and handling produce

A school garden provides an opportunity for children and volunteers to learn about how to handle food safely. The following are some food safety tips to follow when growing and harvesting produce. Our goal is to be consistent in practice, adhering to the same food safety policies from garden to table.

Ensure that all persons, including staff, students, and volunteers receive basic food and gardening safety training instructions according to local health regulations. Discuss food safety practices in the garden. The following topics are recommended:

- ✓ Hand washing and personal hygiene-Laminated signs by wash sink can be a helpful reminder.
- ✓ Cleaning and sanitizing garden equipment and containers used to hold produce-Use bleach solution in spray bottles with clean towels to sanitize surfaces.
- ✓ Handling produce during harvest, washing, and transportation



- ✓ Glove use- using vinyl gloves to cover up open wounds & bandages while harvesting and processing produce.

- Require signed permission slips for all student gardeners. Permission slips should list potential hazards of working in a school garden and identify any allergies the child may have. Record all allergies, including food and insect, and provide a first aid kit and drinking water.
- Do not allow anyone to work in the garden while sick, or until 24 hours after symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhea, have subsided.
- Ensure that all harvesters wash hands thoroughly in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds, and then rinse with potable water. Ensure that all open cuts or wounds on hands, arms, or legs are properly covered prior to participating in the harvest.
- Require harvesters to wear closed-toed shoes to prevent cuts, stings, or other injuries.
- Consider using single-use disposable gloves when harvesting, or handling, fresh produce as an extra precaution.
- Harvest the garden regularly and remove any rotten produce.

Keeping records

- Have gardeners document their practices. Maintain a Harvest and traceability log, and keep on file.
 - ✓ Date of harvest
 - ✓ Field or bed harvested from
 - ✓ Name of crop
 - ✓ Amount harvested
 - ✓ Harvested by (name)
 - ✓ Date delivered (if applicable)
 - ✓ Destination- Market/Cafeteria(497)/Restaurant
 - ✓ Garden leader initials

Additional considerations

- Kitchen managers will receive and inspect produce harvested from school gardens according to the same procedures used to inspect produce from the district's distributors. *Kitchen managers reserve to right to reject produce that does not meet school nutrition program standards, including but not limited to proper cleaning, packaging, freshness and quality.*
- Do not deliver produce that has been noticeably contaminated by animals or insects.
- Non-food service refrigerators- Deliveries should take the shortest route from harvest to cafeteria. If there is no staff available to receive produce and it must be stored in another refrigerator, do not keep produce comingled with other foods, i.e. you cannot store fresh produce with your leftovers. The refrigerator should be clean and sanitized before using it for produce storage.
- Washing Station- Make sure that there is a proper station for hands and produce.

School Garden-Related Programs



1. After School Garden/Cooking Clubs
2. Summer Garden Clubs/Programs
3. Summer of Service
4. Boys and Girls Club
5. Farmer's Markets
6. Summer Feeding Program
7. Backpack Program
8. Junior Master Gardeners
9. CSA's