

Adams 12 School Gardens Land For Learning

Operations and Procedural Guidelines

This document shall serve as a guide to all land for learning gardens on Adams 12 Five Star School Property.



Foreword

The selection and planning of gardens appropriate for school facilities is a complex undertaking. School facilities are varied and unique to an area and must be conveniently and safely adaptable for use by many school and community activities.

This publication will go over many factors that must be recognized during the process of garden site selection, planning, development, and use. Some of these factors are the result of increased concern for environmental conservation and management; others result from the demands put on facilities by the many educational, parent organizational activities, and gardening partnerships to entire communities.

School planning consistently encourages improvements in the planning and care of school grounds. With the assistance of appropriate consultants and resource agencies, school officials can provide communities and schools with the adequate usage of gardens within school properties.

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Section I:

Overview and General Guidance



A. Introduction

School gardens provide a hands-on learning experience and living classroom for schools. Researchers show that gardeners consume more of the daily recommended fruits and vegetables and obtain increased amounts of physical activity and decreased sedentary time.

Guidelines

This document must be reviewed, and the New Garden Proposal and Agreement, along with the Facilities Modification Request submitted to the Adams 12 Facilities Department and Ilene Agustin for a garden to be considered for approval. This must be done by October 1st for a Spring Garden Build. Requests will be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis. Please be aware that the process for approval and creation of a new school garden may take several months. Consider this as you make plans for creation of the garden, planting, harvesting, etc. Note: **Submission of these documents by the above listed date does not guarantee project completion.**

Schools that already have a garden in place will submit the Existing Garden Agreement Form with appropriate signatures to Ilene Agustin annually by August 31st of each school year. This will provide updated contact information for the primary garden contact each year.

This document applies to all gardens on Adams 12 School grounds. These guidelines intend to ensure that Adams 12 Five Star Schools' facilities comply with District policies, applicable building codes and that they are safe, reliable and maintainable. Adams 12 requires that schools follow and abide by the guidelines and requirements outlined in this document. Failure to do so may result in the closing of the school's garden permanently.

Thank you to the Denver School Garden Coalition and Jeffco Public Schools for guidance in this process and for the use of wording and sections from the Coalition's Garden Operating Manual.

Definitions

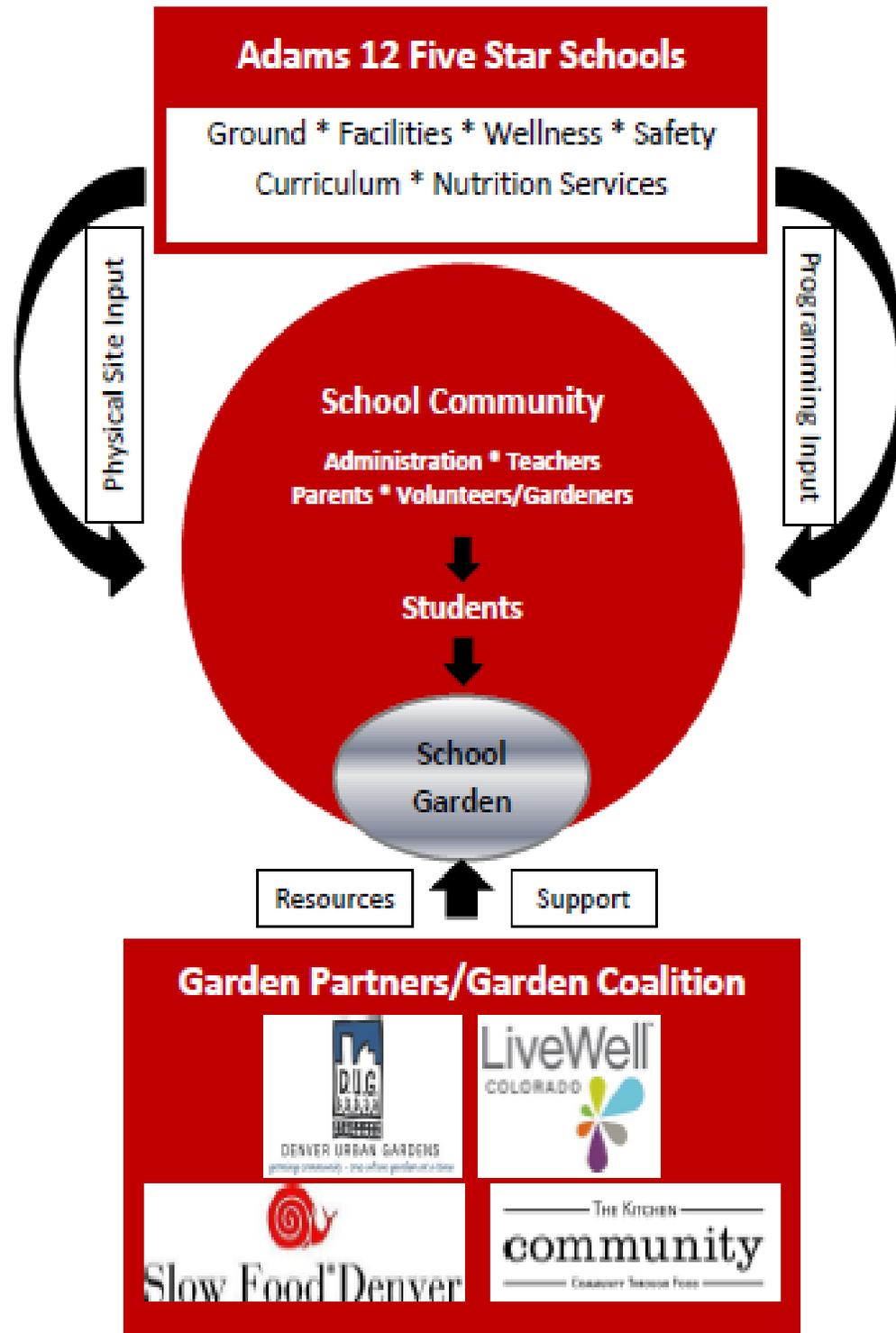
- **Garden:** A defined area for growing ornamental plants or vegetables. **There are two general types of school gardens:**
 - **School-only garden:** Plots are for the school and do not allow outside gardeners/families to grow their own food there (with the exception of family plots in the summer if desired).
 - **School-based community garden:** Plots are for both the school and outside gardeners/families, typically for a fee. If the school chooses this model, it **MUST** have a contract with a community garden partner such as DUG, as well as complete additional steps between the district and community partner.
- **School:** The actual school site with or planning a garden

- **District:** Adams 12 Five Star Schools
- **Volunteer:** Any individuals who are not students or staff of the school district
- **Community Gardener:** Anyone paying for a garden plot in a school-based community garden
- **Community Garden Partner:** Garden-related entity specializing in school gardens or gardening techniques (master gardeners, Denver Urban Garden, Slow Food, etc)
- **Sponsor/Oversight Group:** The school, unless the garden is partnering with an outside entity for a school-based community garden, in which case the sponsor/oversight group is the outside entity

Guiding Principles for School Garden Programs

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Student education, rather than food production, is the primary purpose of a school garden program.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. School gardens are engaging spaces for children to develop both a respect and a nurturing relationship with nature and their community.
7. School gardens should model environmental stewardship and sustainability, while emphasizing the importance of seasonality to these concepts.
8. Students should be provided with simple and culturally relevant take home messages and practical skills to put what they have learned into practice at home.
9. School gardens and programs should serve as training spaces and models for others interested in developing a similar program at their neighborhood school.
10. 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.

B. Partnership Model



C. Checklist

School-Level

- Develop a School Garden Team (may include principal, teachers, parents, custodian, kitchen manager, BASE director, students, community members, etc.)
- On-site administrator identified as the sponsor
- Principal approval, Executive Director signature, and submission of **New Garden Proposal and Agreement Form** to Ilene Agustin (By Oct. 1st for Spring Build)
- Submit **Facilities Modification Request** (Through Resident Facility Coordinator (RFC) and the SchoolDude Work Order Software- By Oct. 1st for Spring Build)

Meeting #1: Exploration, confirming interest, partners and support

Attendees: garden team leader(s), administrator, teachers, parents, custodian, other school staff, garden organization representative (Slow Food, Denver Urban Gardens, etc.)

At the meeting:

- Assign two garden co-leaders (parents, staff, community members, etc.)
- Choose Garden Type (school-based community or school-only) MUST have contract with community partner such as DUG if doing a community garden on a school site.
- Discuss potential programs (see menu of programs on pg. 9-10)

School Based Community Garden-related steps:

- School **must** partner with a community garden organization such as Denver Urban Gardens.
- Engage community (master gardeners, city and parks planners, neighborhood associations, local farmers, garden organizations, non-profit organizations, etc.)
- Secure community input and support via at least one community garden meeting
- Complete required contracts/agreement paperwork as applicable.

Meeting #2: Site locations, Facilities approvals, planning

Attendees: garden team leader(s), administrator, facilities representatives, garden organization representative

- Review site and create Drawing/Map with details for construction and location on school site: include site's master plan and identify all potential garden phases.
- Coordinate efforts to finalize a plan and submit plan along with a Facilities Modification Request Form. This information is submitted with a Facilities Modification Request work order.

Ongoing meetings: Planning, fundraising, programming, etc

Attendees: garden team leader(s), garden organization representative (Slow Food, Denver Urban Gardens, etc) Add additional team members: community members (master gardeners, farm owners, etc.) students, parents, teachers.

- Develop school break/summer maintenance plan
- Garden team leader succession plan in place

District Level

Facilities and Construction Requirements

- Final approval from Facilities (after New Garden Proposal and Agreement form and Facilities Modification Request approved)
- Soil Test completed (if applicable) and copy sent to District Environmental Health and Safety Staff (see soil test section in Site Considerations)
- Storm water management plan as recommended by facilities.
- Compliance with Facilities Technical Guidelines for Irrigation, Fencing, Planting, ADA access, Benches, Shade Structures, etc.
- The Facilities administrative staff will review the documentation and consider the project's approval. Upon approval, Facilities Management will notify the school and make the work order available for scheduling.
- When the school receives approval notification, they should verify the intended installation schedule. If the project is not approved the on-site administrator will receive a written explanation for non-approval.

Pre-Construction

Pre-Construction Meeting must occur prior to building the garden

Attendees: District Facilities Manager, or Project Manager (from facilities), team leader, principal, garden organization representative, community representative.

- Coordinate utility locations prior to any underground digging
- Plumbing permits and inspections
- Contracted labor requirements:
 - Procurement (follow district policy)
 - Vendor approval package submitted and approved
 - Executed contract with vendor
- Prior to starting work, inform the appropriate group leader(s) of the work schedule.

Required Paperwork: Found at <http://www.adams12.org/nutrition>

- New Garden Proposal and Agreement Form (Due by Oct. 1st for Spring Build)
- Existing Garden Agreement Form (Due by August 31st on an annual basis)
- Facilities Modification Request Form (Completed by Resident Facility Coordinator (RFC) in SchoolDude Work Order System by Oct. 1st)
- Volunteer Application (For the safety of the school, students, employees, and volunteers, all volunteers must complete all volunteer paperwork while also reading the Volunteer Handbook) (<http://www.adams12.org/community/get-involved/volunteering>)
 - Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement
 - Volunteer Release of Liability Form

Additional Requirements for school-based community gardens

- Agreement between community gardening partner and school (form to be developed on a site-by-site basis)
- Application for community garden plot (required for all community gardeners, work with community garden partner to develop)
- All community gardeners MUST complete a Criminal Background Check. The garden team is in charge of paying for and running this check.

Funding Paperwork

- Gift/Donation Paperwork (if applicable)

D. School Garden-Related Programs

Additional Programs and Resources Can Be Found at <http://www.adams12.org/nutrition>

Each school garden program is designed to meet the unique needs of its school community. Depending on the site, the garden team and partners will work with the school community to develop garden programming. The following are programs that a school community may consider when deciding how to incorporate the garden into the culture and programs of the school.

Curriculum – Seasonal, standards-based youth curriculum is an essential piece to providing extraordinary support for teachers and volunteers utilizing school gardens. Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) and Slow Food Denver (SFD) offer complementary sets of school garden curriculum that are free and available for teachers and volunteers to access. Denver Urban Gardens' curriculum is largely focused on the science of gardens and nutrition, incorporating botany, horticulture, and the nutrients our bodies need to be healthy. Slow Food Denver's lesson plans are geared toward taste education and healthy cooking, creating dishes that are tasty and nutritious, in addition to lessons in the cultural history of the foods we eat. These organizations along with The Kitchen Community provide educators and volunteers with a wide variety of resources in support of the school standards that can be easily incorporated into daily lesson plans, afterschool programs or extracurricular activities.

Youth Farmers' Markets – Schools can coordinate youth-run farmers' markets to provide additional opportunities for learning, as well as an opportunity for small fundraising. The youth markets offer healthy food to communities, promote nutrition, demonstrate healthy meal preparation in partnership with local chefs and community members, and develop community capacity and leadership. Schools typically hold anywhere from 1-16 markets between July-October, either afterschool or on a weekend.

Afterschool Garden Clubs – Partnering with the afterschool BASE program or creating an afterschool Garden Club is a great way to get a smaller group of students in the garden or working on garden-related projects on a regular basis. Most groups meet once or twice a week in the spring and/or fall, using garden-related curriculum as the foundation for learning. The Junior Master Gardening program or other programs that collaborate with local farms are perfect opportunities in your community. The Youth Farmers' Markets programs are often times operated by students from the school garden club.

Summer Garden Clubs – Participating in the complete growing season through spring, summer and fall, deepens the educational experience for students. This allows the youth to follow the entire seed to harvest experience, along with making sure the garden is cared for during the summer months. Partner with an existing BASE summer program or, if funds allow, create a new summer program that focuses on the care of the garden. Most groups meet once a week starting in June.

Seed to Table (STT) School Food Program – Slow Food Denver's program creates meaningful relationships between young people and food in order to transform the school food system. By placing an emphasis on hands-on experiences, community interaction, and the pleasures of the table, STT projects help to strengthen the food communities of tomorrow by engaging youth today. Schools are able to teach students where their food comes from, how to prepare it, who grows it, the importance of food choices and the pleasure of sharing with friends and family.

Connecting Generations – Denver Urban Gardens’ intergenerational mentoring program bridges the school and community by bringing older adult community volunteers into the school to support garden-related programming. The goals of this program are to: strengthen school-based programming around gardens; support teachers and increase use of gardens year-round; support school science curriculum and improve academic achievement; improve the nutritional health and well-being of both the children and older adults; increase fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity; and strengthen social networks in the school community. Connecting Generations provides a solid base of trained, committed volunteers that assist in many tasks such as supporting teachers when taking their kids out to the garden, facilitating and supporting afterschool or summer programs, and caring for the garden during the summer.

Helping Kids Get Healthy: A Workshop Series For Youth Educators – Denver Urban Gardens offers a seasonal workshop series designed for teachers and volunteers who work in youth education programs and focus on nutrition and gardening. In these train-the-trainer workshops, participants learn the basics of teaching gardening and nutrition to their elementary-age students. Workshops are offered every other month, and each workshop highlights two unique, seasonal lessons from DUG’s School Garden and Nutrition Curriculum.

“Backpack” Programs - Schools can team up with local food banks or Rotary Clubs to send home bags of produce from the garden along with non-perishables and healthy recipes to children in need. This is typically done on a weekend basis, and/or during the summer.

Garden to Cafeteria Program – Schools may also team up with Nutrition Services to bring their produce into their school lunches. Items from the garden will be posted on the day of service, so the kids can taste the fruits and vegetables that they worked so hard to grow. The Garden to Cafeteria Program requires attending a training with Denver Urban Gardens and following the Garden to Cafeteria Protocols.



Section II: **Garden Planning,** **Construction, and Safety**



A. Introduction

To our community, the appearance of the school and site often determines the perceived quality and care for education. Beautiful, functional buildings in an attractive environment help to create in children an appreciation for schools and in adults, an added civic interest and respect for the dignity of their education. Adams 12 Five Star Schools Facilities is entrusted with the oversight to a significant public investment.

- Adams 12 Facilities has been tasked with providing and maintaining a place and an environment that are conducive to the learning/teaching experiences that benefit youth who attend the school.
- Adams 12 Facilities provides the rational process of selecting, planning, developing, and constructing school sites that is based on the principal of adequate and accurate information. Information for gardens should include all the pertinent facts about the project's requested data concerning the school under the responsibility of its local administration unit. With the assistance of appropriate consultants and resource agencies, Adams 12 Facilities will use this information to provide an environment to reflect exceptional learning inside and out.
- Adams 12 Facilities has employed the expert staff of individuals to help you navigate, design, construct, and manage your highly complex and regulated garden project request with you from beginning to end.
- District policies stipulate that all requested work, addition, or improvement to Adams 12 school property, which constitutes a building modification, will require advanced approval and oversight from Adams 12 Facilities. The approval process may extend throughout every phase of the project and at the minimum requirement, includes initial and final approval. A funding source may be required if maintenance technicians provide additional labor and/or materials. Any site-funded work will require an estimate, the necessary funding approved by an on-site administrator, and written approval before any work is scheduled.
- Adams 12 Facilities directs the Facilities Modification Request (FMR) approval process involving the inspection of documents, site selection, code review and compliance, and project management of the work to assure that the project remains within specifications and compliant with district, local, state, and federal regulations and requirements.

B. Garden Site Planning

1. Project Requirements:

Each project must have an on-site school administrator identified as the sponsor. The on-site administrator along with the Resident Facility Coordinator (RFC) will be responsible for submitting the required documentation to Adams 12 Facilities. The Initiation of Facilities Modification Request Work Order (FMR) along with the completed FMR form is submitted by the RFC into Adams 12 Facilities computerized software system

The on-site school administrator will provide Facilities with a brief written description for the project. Through the collaborative process with Facilities, everyone will share the project's scope, history and tentative schedule. The on-site school administrator and RFC are trained to help you with this description and other pertinent information on a Facility Modification Request Form. The administrator may ask for a detailed drawing showing the proposed project's location and alternate site locations on the school site along with the intended scope of work in this area.

2. Planning Considerations:

Please remember, Adams 12 Facilities does not require you to be an expert and has staffed the right individuals to help you navigate, plan, design, construct, and manage your highly complex, regulated and site specific garden project from start to finish. When choosing a site for the proposed garden, Facilities staff must account for a highly varied list of considerations that need to be addressed and included in the scope of work. You are not expected to be in command of all specific details, but should be able to understand the following requirements:

- Schools' strategic site master plan
- Adequate Space
- Water access
- Water Drainage
- Sun exposure
- Level ground/not sloped too much
- Water drainage/retainage in relationship to distance away from school buildings
- Access: classroom, community and ADA. Gardens are required to abide by federal play area guidelines
 - Link to ADA play area guidelines: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/ada-standards>
- **Design Garden Layout:** learning opportunity with students (when applicable) to develop, plan, design, implement, and operate a garden
 - Visit and benchmark other school gardens in the metro area
 - Bed considerations:
 - One per class
 - Community plots
 - Phasing if budget is tight
 - Hand watering vs. irrigation
 - Seating/gathering area for classes
- **Shade Structures:** Does your jurisdiction require a permit? Follow District Technical Guidelines.
- **Sheds:** Require a separate scope of work and FMR request under the jurisdiction of Adams 12 Facilities and as mandated by the District Technical Guidelines for sheds.

- **Water:** Any non-exempt plumbing work will require a state permit and to be performed by a State of Colorado licensed plumber. Adams 12 Facilities must comply with all permit requirements, seek state inspector's final acceptance, and maintain records as such.

3. District Garden Technical Guidelines

Scope of work compilation in this section constitutes the level of effort applicable for adherence to Facilities project requirements on both single and multi-plot gardens located on Adams 12 School Sites. You are not expected to be in command of all specific details, but should be able to understand the needed requirements as follows:

- Prior to construction/planting submit the following:
 1. Facility Modification Form (Must be submitted by October 1st for a Spring Build).
 2. New Garden Proposal and Agreement Form (Must be submitted by October 1st for Spring Build)
 3. Existing Garden Agreement Form (Must be submitted by August 31st - existing gardens only)
 4. A garden plan consisting of drawings describing the proposed plan, the location on the property, any obstructions or improvements that could impact the location (Must be submitted by October 1st for new gardens only)
 5. Maintenance plan indicating responsible parties, planting dates, fall clean-up responsibilities.
 6. Garden to Cafeteria Registration (Must be turned in by March 1st of growing season for gardens providing food to lunch service)
- Initial site preparation.
 1. School/Facilities/Contracted Entity will strip sod in preparation of single plot sites.
 2. Facilities will provide utility locations. Facilities/Contracted Entity to relocate or reconfigure irrigation lines.
 3. Sponsor or oversight group will stake, prepare beds and paths between beds.
 4. Garden area shall be enclosed with 4' chain link fencing or other approved fencing. A concrete/crusher fine mow strip is required. Refer to Technical Guidelines received from facilities.
- **Single Plot Gardens:**
 1. School to appoint 'advocate' who will monitor and be responsible for garden condition.
 2. Maximum plot size 10' x 15'.
 3. Raise ADA plots to 18" above grade using facility approved materials.
 4. Provide and place topsoil, supplemented as required. If topsoil is stocked on site provide appropriate storm water BMPs until material is placed.
 5. During growing season maintain plot by removing dead material, weeds, selective pruning and dispose of properly.
 6. At the end of planting season, remove dead plant material off-site.
 7. Facility Management will advise sponsor when irrigation will be activated and deactivated.
 8. Should the plot or garden be abandoned or vacated the school shall be responsible for the cost of reclamation and restoration.

- **Multi-Plot or Community Gardens:**

1. School or Community Garden oversight group shall designate representative who will monitor and be responsible for garden condition.
2. Community Garden oversight group shall register and distribute plots, collect user fees, monitor condition of garden during growing season.
3. At the end of planting season, remove dead plant materials off-site.
4. Maximum plot size 10' x 15'. Plot number must be approved by facilities.
5. Plots shall be raised above grade approximately 6" and bordered using facility approved materials.
6. Provide and place topsoil at each plot, supplemented as required. If topsoil is stocked on site provide appropriate storm water BMPs until material is placed. Federal and State stormwater management statuses.
 - a. Pesticides are not permitted.
 - b. Due to stormwater regulations, fertilizer cannot be stored on site. If used, fertilizer must be brought to site and distributed in gardens immediately. Only organic fertilizers should be used to minimize potential for stormwater pollution. Do not over fertilize, use only a minimal amount according to manufacturer directions.
7. Plots shall be separated by 3' min. to 5' wide crusher fine walkway all four sides.
8. Irrigation spigots on a quick coupler will be provided at the rate of 1 per four plots. Where practical the irrigation line will be a part of the site's irrigation system, on a dedicated zone.
9. Results of soils testing for RCRA heavy metals in imported/unpacked soil shall be provided to District Environmental Health and Safety Staff for review along with testing protocol.
10. Should the Community Garden become abandoned the school will be responsible for the removal of wood borders, paths, fencing, reconfigure irrigation and reclamation and restoration of the site.

Prohibited items and materials: (For the most up to date list contact the Facilities Department)

- Railroad ties and other treated woods
- Untreated timbers
- Fruit-bearing trees are prohibited by the district
- Pig, dog and cat manures, and ALL untreated manures are prohibited
- Wood and bark mulch within garden plot
- Non-Organic fertilizer
- Tires
- Scrap metals, plastics and broken bricks and pavers

When a garden is out of compliance with these guidelines, it is in jeopardy of losing its use agreement.

4. Plot Planning

Plot Boundaries: Interior “boundary fences” around individual plots are discouraged; they are hard to weed and can quickly make the overall garden unsightly. The preferred boundary is a weed-free edge between your plot and the adjacent path or neighbor. Ideally, a preferred material is selected, which if everyone uses will contribute to the overall visual continuity of the garden.

Plot Size: While the max plot size is 10’x15’, narrower plots are easier for school-aged arms to reach across; consider 4’ wide plots in your school garden.

Plot Materials:

All materials installed on the site must meet the Adams 12 Five Star Schools Technical Guidelines. If the material you wish to use is not listed in this document or in the prohibited list, please contact facilities staff or project manager to obtain approval for your desired materials. All installations must meet the District’s installation standards. The intent is for all materials and installation methods to meet the same durability standard as the school itself and present no hazard to the students, staff or community.

Soils

Manure: Untreated or unsanitized manure has been linked to disease through either ingestion of raw food or through open wounds while tending gardens (bacterial infections). Pig, dog and cat manures, and ALL untreated manures are prohibited.

- It is recommended that any school planting directly into the soil do a soil test for nutrients, pH, and phosphorus.
- Please use the CSU Extension services: (<http://www.soiltestinglab.colostate.edu/>) or garden center soil testing services.

Planting:

- **Meet with your Facilities representative to view the Technical Guidelines for details on permitted plants, trees and bushes.**
- Suggested Fruit and Veggie items: Carrots, radishes, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, spinach, bell peppers, jalapenos, celery, broccoli, eggplant, cabbage, cauliflower, basil, onions, cilantro, summer squash (multiple varieties), eggplant, melons, berries.
- Seeds to start indoors: summer squash, zucchini, cucumbers, peppers, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, onions and tomatoes.

Suggested tools and supplies for a school garden:

- Classroom set of hand trowels or 3-prong cultivators (25-30)
- 5 long-handle shovels
- 2 hard rakes
- 2 hoes
- 1 soft rake
- Wheelbarrow
- Hand pruners
- Garden gloves- youth and adult sizes
- Hose(s)
- Watering wand(s) with hand shut off valves
- First Aid Kit
- Supplies for plant signage
- Supplies for classroom grow labs
- Shed or toolbox in which to store everything (tools may not be stored inside the school if ever being used outside of school hours- See District Technical Guidelines for sheds)
- Combination lock for shed

C. Garden Site Maintenance Requirements:

Adams 12 (landowner) requires that garden team keeps their garden sites clean, attractive and orderly at all times – especially during the winter. The garden must have a year-round unified appearance to landowners, city officials, and the general non-gardening public. The benefits of a well-maintained garden are at minimum threefold:

- 1) The use agreement for the garden remains in good standing with the landowner,
- 2) Owners, neighbors and non-gardeners enjoy and recognize the garden as a community asset,
- 3) Your garden will harbor fewer pests and weeds, and will be healthier from season to season.

Garden Plot: Each plot must be kept clear of weeds, spent plants, debris and trash. Each fall, turn compost and organic material into the soil and cover it with a layer of mulch to regulate soil temperature and retain moisture throughout the winter. This makes a garden plot look cared for to the passer-by. It's important to recognize all gardens have a significant role and responsibility regarding the sustainability of the garden. Any perennials in your plot must appear well kept. In addition, you are responsible to maintain the area immediately adjacent to your plot including paths, compost bins, trash collection areas, fences and the garden's other common spaces.

- **The Garden is NOT a District or Facilities maintenance responsibility:** The garden team must take sole responsibility for maintaining the common areas of the garden such as:
 - Trees, flower beds and lawn
 - Pathways and courtyards
 - Trash containment areas
 - Street fronts and sidewalks

Should the plot or garden be abandoned or vacated the school shall be responsible for the cost of reclamation and restoration. In addition to this document, schools must abide by Adams 12 Facilities Technical Guidelines for any FMR Improvements. These guidelines will be received with the submission of New Garden Proposal and Agreement form and FMR Form and/or at the initial on-site meeting with facilities (Meeting #2)

School Breaks: Plot Management

Each school must have a champion or sponsor identified with a maintenance plan in place for breaks/summer for non-community plots. For example: assign each break to 1-3 families to:

- Weed
- Water
- Harvest any produce and take home
- Check in on garden
- Any other items as deemed necessary by garden team/school

“Off-Season” Storage: the following items are not authorized to be left standing during the off-season, and must be disassembled and stored in the garden shed or removed from the site when not in use (see Facilities Technical Guidelines for sheds- requested from a separate FMR through Facilities):

- chairs and individual benches,

- shoes, clothes (shed only),
- wire cages, fencing,
- plastic plant pots, tools,
- piles of brick and stone,
- water bottles, milk bottles,
- sticks, steel “t” posts, • wheel barrows, wagons • bags of compost or leaves
- buckets, plastic containers, • pipe, hoses and nozzles • non-permanent garden art



D. Safety Protocols for School Gardens

Volunteer Requirements

- All individuals working in the garden MUST read the Volunteer Handbook and complete the Volunteer Application, the Volunteer Code of Conduct, and the Volunteer Release of Liability Form to be signed and pre-approved by the school (<http://www.adams12.org/community/get-involved/volunteering>).
- All community gardeners MUST complete a Criminal Background Check, which is to be signed and pre-approved through the school.
- ***All volunteers MUST abide by the site-specific check in rules, for example: check in at the front desk and wear a Visitor’s badge/tag while in the garden during the school day. *****
- Best practice suggestion: It is recommended that regular volunteers attend the school site’s Safety and Emergency Response Training as available.

Construction Safety

- All work on school district property shall be in accordance with Federal, state, local, and district regulations.
- If any labor is provided for your project in exchange for money (other than District support), the contractor must supply proof of the appropriate license(s), liability insurance (\$2,000,000.00 minimum) listing Adams 12 Five Star Schools as an additional insured, and workman’s compensation insurance. This is a District requirement and documentation must be presented to Facilities Management before any work begins. This document must address the donated fair exchange value of labor, supplies, and material as a reference to a taxable deferred value in return.
- All work on school district property shall be in accordance with Federal OSHA, state, and local safety regulations.

Gardening Tool Safety

- No running in the garden
- No children under age 10 will be allowed to use long handled tools (shovels, hoes, rakes).
- Children will be encouraged to use their hands (as opposed to tools) as much as possible when gardening.
- Children will be provided with gardening gloves if exposed to thorns or other dangerous plant material.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- All participants will be instructed as to proper handling of tools, including no running and carry tools face downward at their side.

- Children must be supervised when gardening
- Participants who do not follow safety rules will not engage in gardening.

Food Safety:

- All participants must wash hands before working in the garden
- No use of non-organic fertilizers or pesticides in the vegetable garden
- No use of raw manure as fertilizer
- Participants must be healthy and not suffering from illness or communicable disease to work in the garden
- All containers used to hold harvested produce must be clean
- All produce will be washed before being eaten or sold
- Liability waivers may be issued on a site-by-site basis for selling food from garden
- All participants will wash hands, using proper hand washing techniques, after being in the garden.
- Food from the garden may be used in the school cafeteria (See the Garden to Cafeteria Protocols-
<http://www.adams12.org/nutrition>)



Section III:

Funding School Gardens



A. Funding New School Gardens

The district will not cover the cost of building, maintaining or reclaiming school gardens. Seeking funds for a new school garden project is typically a shared effort among project partners including the garden team, PTA, community and any other participating organizations. Depending on the size of the garden, and whether or not there is space for community members to have their own plots, costs can vary significantly. Community members can use their skills to apply for grants, seek donations, hold school fundraisers, or use their skills to offset the cost of construction labor. These efforts also encourage ownership of the garden.

For labor and materials paid for with District funds, standard purchasing procedures must be followed, including the requirement for three competitive (3) bids when requisitions exceed \$5,000. For additional information on District purchasing procedures, visit the Adams 12 Five Star Schools purchasing website at <http://www.adams12.org/departments/purchasing>.

Gardens typically range in cost from \$7,500 to \$25,000, depending upon the following variables:

- Size/ Area
- Demolition i.e. sod removal, etc.
- Linear feet of chain link fencing
- Number of gates/entrances
- Existence of community plots
- Irrigation
- Proximity to existing water connection and master meter
- Number of spigots
- Potential need for drip zones
- Garden Details
- Soil quality/ amendment required
- Raised planting beds
- Pathways and accessibility
http://www.ada.gov/2010ADAsstandards_index.htm
- Tool storage
- Shade structures
- Benches/ tables
- Additional features

Grant Funding

If you plan to apply for grants to help fund your garden, please reach out to Ilene.Agustin@adams12.org or x6032 for more resources and information.

Donations and Gifts

The District Contribution Letter may be sent to the funder of the school garden as a receipt and recognition of giving.

Managing School Garden Funds

When a garden can manage their own funds, they are able to be more self-sufficient in the long-term. Because, in most cases, the school garden is not in itself an “entity”, it is not able to establish a bank account for receiving and disbursing garden funds. However, a sub-committee designated for the school garden within the PTO/PTA is the ideal entity to house garden funds. This is highly dependent on the types of funds received.

B. Looking Into the Future: Sustainability of School Gardens

1. Sustaining Existing School Gardens

Garden-related educational programs can be as simple or involved as a school community would like to make them, which in turn varies the costs needed to sustain garden programming. Some programs have the potential to be fundraising opportunities for educational purposes. There are also resources offered by community partners that have the potential to help provide tools, plants, seeds, and other supplies for the garden. For example:

- Schools can participate in Denver Urban Gardens’ Free Seeds and Transplants program.
- Some schools are able to markup produce sold at the Youth Farmers’ Markets, and therefore make a modest profit that can be funneled back into school programs.
- Small grants are available to pay for supplies at school gardens. The National Gardening Association’s website, www.kidsgardening.org, compiles a list of these types of grants.
- Local garden centers and hardware stores may be willing to donate to school garden projects.
- Members of Slow Food Denver’s School Garden Alliance are eligible for small micro-grants for specific garden projects, which are available once a year.
- Businesses and restaurants near to the school make great partners in school garden fundraisers. Consider asking a business close to the school to donate a percentage of their proceeds for a day to your school garden.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Garden from school year to school year

At some schools the Parent Teacher Organization/Association (PTO/PTA) will have fundraising mechanisms in place to be able to support the garden programming as part of their larger goals. Children grow up, and with their parents, move on to new schools; teachers and administrators sometimes change schools or retire, and through these changes the garden remains. Thus, long-term planning is critical to the success of any garden project. School gardens require planning, fundraising, community organizing, and maintenance, and therefore are not to be rushed into, but rather developed over time. A more deliberate, intentional process supports the garden in gradually becoming part of the culture of the school, its goals and programs. Likewise the garden needs to be built into the long-term vision of the school site. For this to happen, the visions for the garden must be shared by the school administration, teachers, parents, volunteers and cafeteria staff alike.

3. Encouraging Ownership of the Garden

Ownership in the garden is built over time among the school community members. As opposed to focusing on just the end goal of building a school garden, focusing on the process of organizing to create a school garden fosters lasting garden stewardship. Parents, teachers, administration and volunteers

should be included in every step of the process of planning and implementing school gardens and related programs. Getting your hands dirty during community workdays is one of the best ways for your school community to feel an investment and responsibility for their new garden project.

4. Developing a Diverse Garden Committee

A garden committee comprised of key teachers, parents, administration, neighbors and/or volunteers helps to ease transitions in the school community and ensures representation of all garden stakeholders. The garden committee organizes programming, coordinates volunteers, ensures proper maintenance of the garden, communicates relevant issues about the garden with the larger community, acts as a liaison between the school community, the district and garden partners; the committee also manages garden funds. To prevent participant burnout, it's important that no one person is tasked with garden leadership; responsibility should be shared among committee members.

5. Engaging the Community as Volunteers

Additionally, the effectiveness and sustainability of the school garden as an educational space is enhanced when it is supported by a committed group of volunteers, which might include parents, grandparents, on-site community gardeners and/or neighbors. Vegetable gardens are high-maintenance and whether it is a school or school community garden, support is needed to take care of the physical space. The garden must be cared for during the summer when school is not in session, so that students can return in late summer to a productive garden that is primed for learning. Volunteers can become dedicated caretakers of the school plots over the summer, as well as important support within the school to support garden-related programming. Volunteers can also facilitate programs such as Garden to Cafeteria, Youth Farmers' Markets, seed starting in classrooms and cooking demonstrations using freshly harvested produce. Any ongoing volunteer program does require some management in training and supporting volunteers as they work through the nuances of the school community. Community partners such as master gardeners, DUG, and Slow Food, in conjunction with the garden committee, provides these volunteers with support through trainings and workshops, and information as needed.

Section IV: Indoor Garden Spaces/ Tower Gardens



A. Introduction

Due to the primary goal of gardens being an educational tool, indoor garden spaces and tower gardens have grown in popularity. The benefits of indoor garden spaces lie in the extended growing season and a reduced time and effort factor in incorporating them into the school environment.

The extended season allows students to see multiple plant life cycles and gives the opportunity to create a greater understanding for gardening. Additionally, time and effort is reduced in the initial stages of the garden and through the life of the garden program. Indoor/Tower Gardens do not involve soil, have little pest control needs, do not need to be put to bed at the end of a growing season, and can have multiple rounds of growing seasons during the school year maximizing learning opportunities. They simply require a seedling program, pH and nutrient checks, water, grow lights, and electricity. Most importantly, they are not permanent structures and therefore, do not require facilities approval. However, in order to take part in this program, schools must follow specific guidelines.

B. Guidelines

The following guidelines must be adhered to in order to implement an indoor garden program. Please note that if the Facilities Department is required to provide services due to changes needed to accommodate an indoor garden or to not properly following guidelines, then charges will apply.

- **Required Paperwork:** Found at <http://www.adams12.org/nutrition>
 - New Garden Proposal and Agreement Form (Rolling Deadline)
 - Existing Garden Agreement Form (Due by August 31st on an annual basis)
 - Student Release Form (for all students participating in garden-related activities)
 - Volunteer Application (For the safety of the school, students, employees, and volunteers, all volunteers must complete all volunteer paperwork while also reading the Volunteer Handbook) (<http://www.adams12.org/community/get-involved/volunteering>)
 - Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement
 - Volunteer Release of Liability Form
- **Tower Garden Specifications**
 - Tower Gardens should be consistent in size, power requirements, and mobility from site to site. Therefore, gardens will be purchased through Juice Plus at <http://www.towergarden.com/>
 - Tower Garden Extension Kits are **not permitted** at this time

- The number of units per school building is currently limited to **4 Tower Gardens**. This number may change in the future pending an evaluation process by the district.
- **Location Guidance**
 - Always consider and include programs using shared spaces when identifying garden placement (BASE, Nutrition Services, Clubs, Custodial, etc.)
 - In case of emergency, indoor gardens should not be in egress paths or blocking doors/doorways.
 - Multiple tower gardens should not run off of the same electrical outlet due to electrical load issues.
 - Areas to Consider
 - Well, naturally lit areas
 - Areas with easy access for staff and students
 - Areas that can be well supervised to ensure food safety practices
 - Areas with proper power supply
 - Areas that showcase the gardens to the school community
- **Indoor Growing Needs: Resources available: ilene.Agustin@adams12.org or x6032**
 - To successfully grow indoors, each tower garden purchased will be required to be accompanied by:
 - Tomato Cage
 - Grow Lights
 - Review/Understanding of Indoor Pollination



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