

GARDENING AND COOKING PROGRAM SEMESTER REPORT

FALL 2015

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The Berkeley Unified School District Gardening and Cooking Program semester reports review the brief history of the Program and recapitulate highlights and achievements that have occurred during the semester, including special projects, budgets, fundraising efforts, and other activities. These reports are distributed to school site communities and District administration and the School Board. They are also made available to the public on the Program website and social media, where past semester reports can be found.

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ABOUT OUR WORK

The Berkeley Unified School District Gardening and Cooking Program engages all students in preschool through high school with hands-on instruction in science, language arts, environment, and nutrition education in three preschools, eleven elementary schools, two middle schools, and Berkeley Technology Academy. As part of the 2020 Vision for Berkeley Children and Youth, the Program is woven into student life to help close the achievement gap by ensuring the academic, physical, emotional, and social development of the whole child.

Remaining focused and committed to student growth and education is our priority. We support students during classroom minutes by connecting them to nature, healthy food, and each other. We provide a bridge between academic standards and the school garden with our newly published Garden-Based Learning Curriculum. The Curriculum allows for flexibility and creativity, and invites different teaching styles and lesson interpretations to best fit each classroom and school culture. It's important to ground this work in real-life experiences and everyday practices, which is often how many students learn best, so we implement special projects to address equity so that all learners can engage in the school gardens.

*6909 STUDENTS ARE INSTRUCTED BY 10 GARDEN EDUCATORS IN
OUR 17 SCHOOL GARDENS EACH YEAR*

We are able to continue this work with support from our dedicated team of garden educators and teachers, and with generous funding from our school site communities, School Board, the City of Berkeley and the Measure D Panel of Experts Commission, and food system and education focused grants.

GARDEN-BASED LEARNING CURRICULUM

We work closely with teachers to bring classroom learning to life in the garden by utilizing a place-based, interdisciplinary, and experiential approach to supporting teaching academic standards and building good practices for healthy lifestyles. We teach students that taking care of the land and their body and understanding the importance of healthy food and the intricacies of a food system allows for the development of multiple intelligences. We modify our lessons for age appropriateness, starting at preschool with attention to sensory and observation skill development as they connect with the natural environment, their peers, and themselves. As students develop, lesson activities offer them opportunities to gain valuable communication and collaboration skills, while building confidence as problem-solvers.

In 2013-2014, we organized a team of teachers, garden instructors, standards specialists, and school garden curriculum consultants to create our first District-wide comprehensive Garden-Based Learning Curriculum for preschool through seventh grade that incorporates health practices and academic standards: Next Generation Science, Common Core, Nutrition Education, and Environmental Education. Each 45 minute lesson invites students into the garden every other week throughout the seasons. Additionally, each grade

has at least two lessons that focus on nutrition education, particularly sugar content and the health implications of drinking and eating too much sugar.

We piloted this curriculum last year, in 2014-2015, and made improvements with a robust assessment project that documented changes made and suggestions offered from teachers, principals, and garden educators. These assessments and results can be found in past semester reports in 2014-15. We included necessary changes and rewrote the Garden-Based Learning Curriculum for preschool through fifth grade that includes compatible student workbooks with accessible diagrams and worksheets. All garden instructors use the Curriculum to teach in the school garden with support from classroom teachers.

We are delighted that many other school districts and garden educators are using our newly published curriculum as a resource for their school gardens. The Curriculum is available for free PDF download in both English and Spanish on our Gardening and Cooking Program website. It is also available to the public for purchase by contacting the Program Supervisor.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We value continual growth not only for our students, but also for ourselves. We practice these values in many ways, including professional development around meeting students where they're at and connecting the Curriculum and the garden to the academic standards and student life. This semester, we participated in the District's Professional Development Days on October 12th, when the District hosted workshops with school sites on Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI) and equity classroom practices and strategies. On November 16th, we worked together on teambuilding exercises as a staff at the Cragmont Elementary school garden, with volunteer support from staff at Grower's Secret, a socially responsible company in the Bay Area providing organic agriculture materials.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special projects are funded through grants focused on innovation and need, such as developing engaging and applicable lessons for secondary education and utilizing the natural calm and focus of the garden to support our students with the highest need. We've begun these projects at Longfellow Middle School and Berkeley Technology Academy with support from teachers and program staff. We also support District-wide sustainability efforts across campuses and collaboratively across Departments.

LONGFELLOW MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

The Longfellow Middle School student population is diverse and representative of the greater Berkeley community population. Longfellow Middle School has historically been underserved in garden education, compared to the other two middle schools (Growing Leaders at Willard Middle School and The Edible Schoolyard at Martin Luther King Middle School). Longfellow Middle School has also recently developed a brilliant courtyard garden with the help from teacher leadership and the District Maintenance Department.

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To better serve our students at Longfellow Middle School, we are developing a project-based learning curriculum that connects the classroom to the the garden with support from the principal, teachers, and garden education specialists. We're growing the newly developed courtyard garden and the recently developed garden on the corner of California Street with student innovation. Students who have participated in these projects have approached a design, engineering, and life sciences problem with real-world parameters as they work together in small groups over a three week intensive rotation with garden staff to come up with multiple solutions that they then present on.

Thus far, these lessons include a framework for students to work in teams to measure and map the garden, plan for companion and seasonal planting, create materials lists and project steps. Students in math and science classes have followed through with solutions that result in planting edible garden beds and building compost bins that consider building practices, designs and materials, and cafeteria waste reduction.

OVER 50% OF STUDENTS AT LONGFELLOW MS ACCESS FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS; MANY STUDENTS ARE NOT NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS; AND SEVERAL STUDENTS HAVE VARIOUS LEARNING ABILITIES THAT REQUIRE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

This project is made possible with a generous grant of \$40,000 from Annie's Homegrown, which allows us to pay teachers, curriculum specialists, and garden educators for their time developing project-based curriculum for a middle school garden education. We're enlivening science and math lessons while concurrently developing assessments to measure and document the work being done to capture lesson content and quality. We intend to finesse and replicate the lessons we collaboratively develop this year for next year when we publish our middle school project-based learning curriculum for the garden.

RTI IN GARDEN

The garden is a great tool for providing students with emotional support and trauma care. There is ample research highlighting the impact the natural environment and gardens has on positive interventions. This semester we are collaborating with teachers at Berkeley Technology Academy (BTA) to develop a project that utilizes the school garden to facilitate social-emotional and academic interventions to better support the students at BTA. The intention of this project is to involve both general and special education students and teachers to work collaboratively on self-care, social-emotional and social justice strategies, and curriculum development for employing these strategies in the school garden, often the best place to regain calm and student focus.

IN ADDITION TO A HIGH NEED FOR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL INTERVENTION, MANY BTA STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED TRANSIENT AND MORE THAN 50% OF STUDENTS AT BTA RECEIVEs FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM BENEFITS.

A core team of teachers, representative from each teaching department, have developed two professional development meetings with the entire staff at BTA to provide training on RTI practices. The team has guided teachers and students in using the garden for self-reflection, conflict resolution, and internship opportunities for students to work more in the garden.

GREEN TEAM LEADERSHIP

We lead and organize Green Teams, groups of parent and teacher volunteers at individual school sites, to help them facilitate projects that promote sustainability with student participation. We partner with local nonprofits and donors to promote waste reduction practices across the District. We were awarded a grant of \$20,785 from the Altamont Education Advisory Board to build upon past work, which has enabled us to continue to institutionalize processes and procedures to meet the District's goals of reducing the amount of recyclable and compostable materials sent to the landfill to less than 10% by 2020, as well as incorporating the natural connection between sustainability education and garden-based learning.

FUNDRAISING

We host fundraising events each year, where we invite the Berkeley community and beyond to celebrate garden-based learning, local food systems, and community partnerships. Parents, students, community organizations, families, teachers, administrators, and more join us over food, drink, and conversation. These events are made possible with collaboration and support from local donors, restaurants and grocery stores, and civic leaders and associations. These community-based events are not only fundraising opportunities that we rely on to help provide a connective garden-based education to all of our students; it's also a chance for us to share the value of a food systems education and build deeper partnerships with our community.

WE RECEIVED \$6,250 IN DONATIONS THIS SEMESTER

On February 18, 2016, we will cohost Dine Out Berkeley with local Berkeley restaurants. On this date, participating restaurants will donate a percentage of sales earned that day to our Program. We will be reaching out to our community supporters to encourage them to Dine Out with us on this day and night in support of Berkeley's Gardening and Cooking Program. A list of restaurants and event updates will be posted on our Tumblr site here: <http://berkeleydineout.tumblr.com/>

We are grateful for the generous donors who contribute to the success of our Program throughout the year. Financial support of this kind goes directly towards our staff instructing in the school gardens. This semester, we would like to thank The Bar Method of Berkeley and their member supporters for donating

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\$3,200 and One Love Café for donating \$3,000. We appreciate all donations of any amount, which can be made out to the BUSD Gardening and Cooking Program and sent to our District office.

FUNDING

The School Board approves program budgets each year. At the end of last year, the School Board approved funding for the Program for 2015-2016 school year with an annual contribution from the General Fund of \$350,000. We also received a forward funded grant of \$250,000 from the City of Berkeley through Measure D (soda tax), as directed by the Panel of Experts Commission advising the City on granting these funds.

70% OF BUSD'S GENERAL FUND AND 62% OF COB'S MEASURE D FUNDS GOES DIRECTLY TO STAFF GARDEN INSTRUCTORS.

Additionally, we asked Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and School Governance Councils (SGC) at each school site to contribute \$15 per student served, which collectively provided us with \$100,000, with some schools supporting more garden instruction at their site with additional funding.

THANK YOU

We are a community-driven program of our Berkeley public schools and we could not do this work without strong support from Berkeley residents, non-profit leaders, District families, the School Board, and our dedicated garden educators and classroom teachers. Additionally, generous support from local businesses and organizations partnering with us in fundraising and campaigning efforts has been imperative to the Program's success. This support and our ability to continually innovate and serve our students, allows us to model what it's like to institutionalize a garden-based education across campuses and within a diverse school district.

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