



Building Strong School Garden Committees

Workshop Handout and Notes

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The 5 “P’s” of Effective Garden Committees- Purpose, People, Place, Preparation, Process

- **Purpose**
 - What are different purposes a committee may have?
 - Examples of different purposes- planning, coordinate projects, solve problems, make decisions, maintain committee by giving and receiving information, build community
 - Why is a purpose important?
 - This is the guiding force behind the committee and is the shared reason people are there, keeps people focused, helps achieve goals
 - What should committees consider when setting goals?
 - Resources, Roles, Stakeholders
 - SMART goals framework to help set goals
 - Specific- specific is more likely to be accomplished than general, consider who, what, where, when, why
 - Measurable- establish concrete criteria for measuring progress and quantify success
 - Attainable- goals need to be realistic and achievable
 - Relevant- keep goals relevant to the overall purpose or direction of your committee
 - Time-Bound- keep goals grounded within a time frame and set deadlines
- **People**
 - Who are potential garden committee stakeholders?
 - Parents, Teachers, Administration, Food Service, School Staff, Community Members, Non-profit partners, After school programs, Behavior Specialists, Volunteer organizations, Master Gardeners, Students, Retirees, Summer Program Staff, Community Service Organizations, etc.
 - What are strategies and tools can be used to recruit members?
 - School/PTA listserv (Connect 5), Newsletters, Flyers, Social Media, Open House, Back to School Nights, Teachers recommending specific parents, Parent to Parent recruitment, Kids, Health & Wellness Fairs, Newspapers
 - What are examples of volunteer roles on a garden committee?
 - Committee President/Chair, Treasurer (PTO/PTA connection), Secretary, Event Organizer, Work Day Volunteer, Teacher Liaison
 - Specific jobs: watering, harvesting, scheduling, planning, muscles, budgeting, fundraising, outreach, volunteer coordinator
- **Place**
 - What environments are most inviting to committee members?
 - Not at school, Coffee Shops, Breweries, Restaurants, Garden, Library, Office or conference room, Child care provided
 - What environments are least inviting to committee members?

- Not kid friendly, places that serve alcohol (breweries), loud, limited and appropriate seating
 - When and where can garden committee meetings take place?
 - Convenient time and place for teachers and parents (before school- 8am, after 5pm, before dinner, in their neighborhood), SNACKS!
- **Preparation**
 - What can be done in advance to make a committee meeting effective and efficient?
 - Make, email, and/or print agendas and materials, follow up on action items from prior meetings/homework, make sure everyone is invited, personal invitations, setting up if necessary, snacks
 - What supplies and materials may be needed for a garden committee meeting?
 - Printed materials, technology, computers for taking notes, etc.
- **Process**
 - During a meeting, what is important to keep in mind in order for it to be effective?
 - Have a facilitator, assign roles, take notes, keep records, delegate action items, set future meeting dates and establish goals
 - What strategies can be used to make a meeting go smoothly?
 - Introductions in group, sign in sheet with contact info, use and give out agendas, stay on task but keep fun, balance of inviting new ideas, start and end on time, send out meeting notes after including action items, be efficient, good location, good listeners and self awareness
- **Best Practices for Staying Power-** strategies to insure the success of your garden through the years regardless of those involved (parents, teachers, staff)
 - **Many types of record keeping!**
 - Site plans and yearly garden maps (used for crop rotation)
 - Meeting agendas and notes
 - Tracking system for budgets, donations, grants, and fundraisers
 - Memorandum of Understand (MOU) documents
 - Staff guides with information about the space
 - Site guides including past events, challenges, successes
 - Promotional materials (reuse Open Garden Hour, GC Meeting Flyers)
 - Volunteer, school, and community contact information
 - Tracking of garden use, visits, and produce volumes
 - Seasonal calendars help structure seasonal needs of the garden
 - Lesson content, date, grade, instructor reflections and feedback
 - Photos (with photo releases!), stories, recipes
 - **Have Garden Celebrations!**
 - Garden Work Days
 - Harvest Parties
 - Potlucks
 - Volunteer Appreciation Parties
 - Family-friendly cooking classes
 - Thank you notes
 - FOOD
 - Do others have best practices they would like to share?