

Garden Planning Checklist

1. Understand a garden's benefits

- Gain interest by learning the benefits of having a school garden
- Understand and prepare knowledge of benefits to support decision to get started

2. Engage and form a committee

- Find multiple people who are willing to commit to the project by contacting the school's wellness committee and PTA members
- Assign a contact person to organize potential volunteers and assess their level of interest and ability to commit
- Contact the school's wellness committee, administrators, and principal and engage them in creating a school garden
- Announce at PTA meetings the new initiative taking place and offer volunteer opportunities

→ You can never have too many volunteers!

3. Define purpose of a garden

- Have new garden committee organize a statement that communicates with others the purpose and expectations of the garden
- Consider creating a handout to distribute to faculty and signage for students to create awareness and buzz around the new project

→ Note that this sends the message of full commitment

4. Build community partnerships

- Contact local plant nurseries, churches, YMCAs, restaurants, nursing homes, businesses, foundations, veteran groups, and nursing homes to create associations, spark involvement, and present diversity

5. Secure funding

- Review garden grants and apply
- Approximate costs of supplies
- Request funding from Healthy Zone

→ Acquiring funds requires a designated treasurer or small group on the garden committee that will handle funds accurately

6. Design your garden

- Choose a suitable area
- Prepare students to help during the design process by collecting student volunteers
- Establish start and end date of designing and preparing garden beds
- Choose desired crops that coincide with the planting calendar and are fairly easy to plant and harvest

7. Research and understand the needs of your plants

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- Before you plant, find out when your crops should be planted, harvested, and watered

8. Start preparing beds, ordering seeds and tools

- Choose style of garden beds, either in-ground or raised bed, and decide steps necessary to carry out your school's approach
- Purchase tools necessary to build and maintain the garden for both students and adults
- Purchase seeds and fertilizer for your first crop

9. Develop activities and curriculum

- For teachers, make the garden a classroom by developing lesson plans around your crops

10. Continue to recruit volunteers

- Give updates to parents, faculty, and students via handouts, take-home letters, and signage to spark further interest
- Offer a sign-up sheet for students to become involved
- Designate a time for students to form a gardening club
- Maintain an assigned volunteer contact person for newly interested teachers and parents

11. Maintain safety in the garden

- Continuously update tools when damaged
- Have a monitor check on the garden periodically

12. Keep thorough records

- The garden committee should stay organized with funds, volunteers, student involvement, current crops, classroom activities, and maintenance

13. Spread the word and reach out to the community

- Again, give updates to parents, faculty, and students via handouts, take-home letters, signage to spark further interest, and announcement during PTA meetings
- Have a bulletin board designated for comments, questions, photos, and posts about crop status and activity
- Update local organizations and businesses about the garden's success to present the opportunity for contributions