

Cultivating Gardens and Minds

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Roles



District of Clayton Wellness Plan

The Board recognizes the relationship between student **wellbeing** and student **achievement** as well as the importance of a comprehensive district wellness program. The primary goals of the School District of Clayton's wellness program are to:

- Promote student **health**, reduce student overweight/obesity, facilitate student **learning** of lifelong healthy habits and increase student **achievement**.
- Strive to provide joint school and community recreational activities by actively engaging families as partners in their children's education and collaborating with community agencies and organizations including The Center of Clayton to provide ample opportunities for students to participate in physical activity beyond the school day.
- Plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Today's Food Conversation

- People are asking about food and farming
 - Where food comes from
 - How it happens
- Perceptions and myths may not be truths
- Agriculture connects to STEM
- Food loss and waste

Child Health Data:

Nationally- CDC says 1 in 5 or 18.5% of children are obese.

Missouri- Alliance for a Healthier Generation says 1 in 4, or 25%, of Missouri children are overweight or obese.

Meramec Elementary- Out of 373 students, 6 are considered obese, by the CDC Guidelines. That is 1.6% of our students. Five of the six students, are children of color.

<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/defining.html>

The Meramec Five

Be Cooperative

Be Kind

Be Responsible

Be Respectful

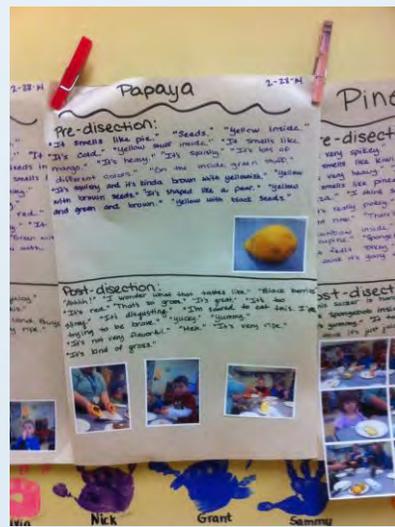
Be Safe



Mighty Munchers



Mighty Munchers



Meramec Science Garden Year 1!



2017 Science Garden



Reduce-Reuse-Recycle



Worm Cafe

This year, we added an indoor Worm Cafe, that I won on a Facebook contest!

Most popular garden inhabitants! They eat Chartwells waste, toilet paper rolls, paper towel rolls, and newspapers, all year! They visit classrooms and even go on vacations!

Mason and Leafcutter Bees



Pest Management 101



Garden Progression:

- Assessment
- Listen to students, teachers, parents
- Planting “Possibility Seeds”
- Funding

Roadblocks

- Receptivity
- Funding



Students were the solution!

Partnerships

Meramec

- Teachers
- School leaders
- PTO
- Food/ Nutrition Services

Outside Partnerships

- St. Louis District Dairy Council
- Dole
- Monsanto
- Produce for Better Health Foundation
- Prairie Farms Dairy
- Grimmway
- Texas A & M
- National Association of Corn Growers
- Mackinson Dairy Farm



Free Resources

Team Nutrition

St. Louis District Dairy Council

PBH Foundation

Dole Kids

MyPlate

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

JAM (Just a Minute)

Chartwells

Other parents and schools



What does all of this mean to the school?

- Students are connecting with their food and food sources
- Teachers have another resource to enhance their curriculum
- Engaging in different physical activities, like gardening
- Engaging each other
- Learning about giving back to others (5-7 pounds a week)
- Plant and Pest Control
- Decrease in food and paper waste
- Increasing consumption of non-competitive foods
- Families are engaging with their children, in the garden through our **“Adopt the Garden for a Week”** and **“Summer Seeds”** programs.
- Learning about other cultures from “Gardens Around the World.”**
- Learning about other schools, from “MyPlate” challenges**
- The garden is being used for Therapy, De-escalation, and all subjects.
- Students are making healthier choices
- Garden Club was initiated by the second graders! They are in the Junior Master Gardener Program!

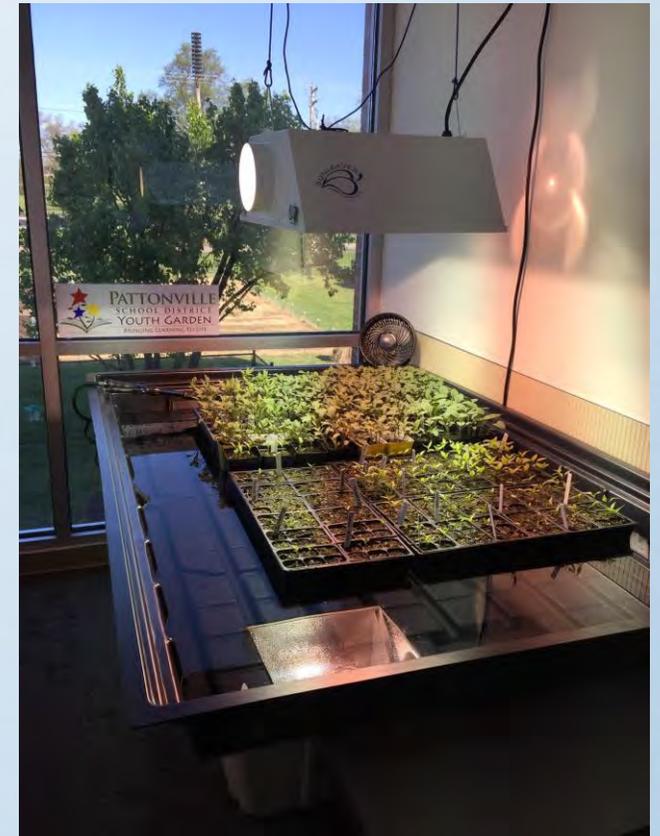
Local School Gardens

Westchester Elementary School, Kirkwood School District:
Their garden is part of their “Green Team Club.”



Local School Gardens

Pattonville School District



National School Gardens

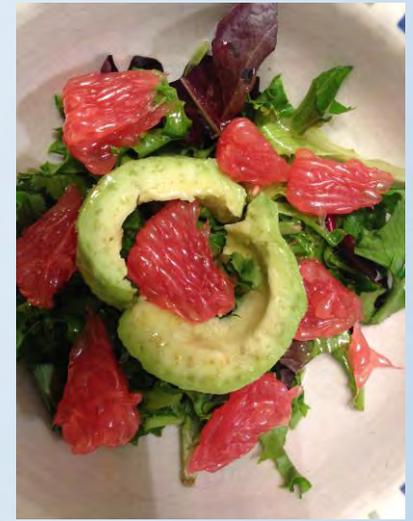
Texas, California, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida, lead the way with school gardens.

The School of Public Health, at Texas A&M, and the University of Texas, received a \$5M grant to see what gardening meant to schools. They spent two years, following 9 schools, students, and their families.



Some of the results:

- Veggie consumption increased, as did preferences for other foods.
- Parents preparing and eating meals together increased.
- Engagement in moderate activity increased.
- Significant reduction in child BMI.
- Increase in student self-esteem and helped develop a sense of ownership and responsibility.



Globally



Globally



Many Ways to Garden



Chartwells

- Provide waste foods for the worms and the RRR Garden
- Support students making healthy food choices
- MyPlate Challenges
- Try Days



Cafeteria MyPlate Challenges



Try-Days!

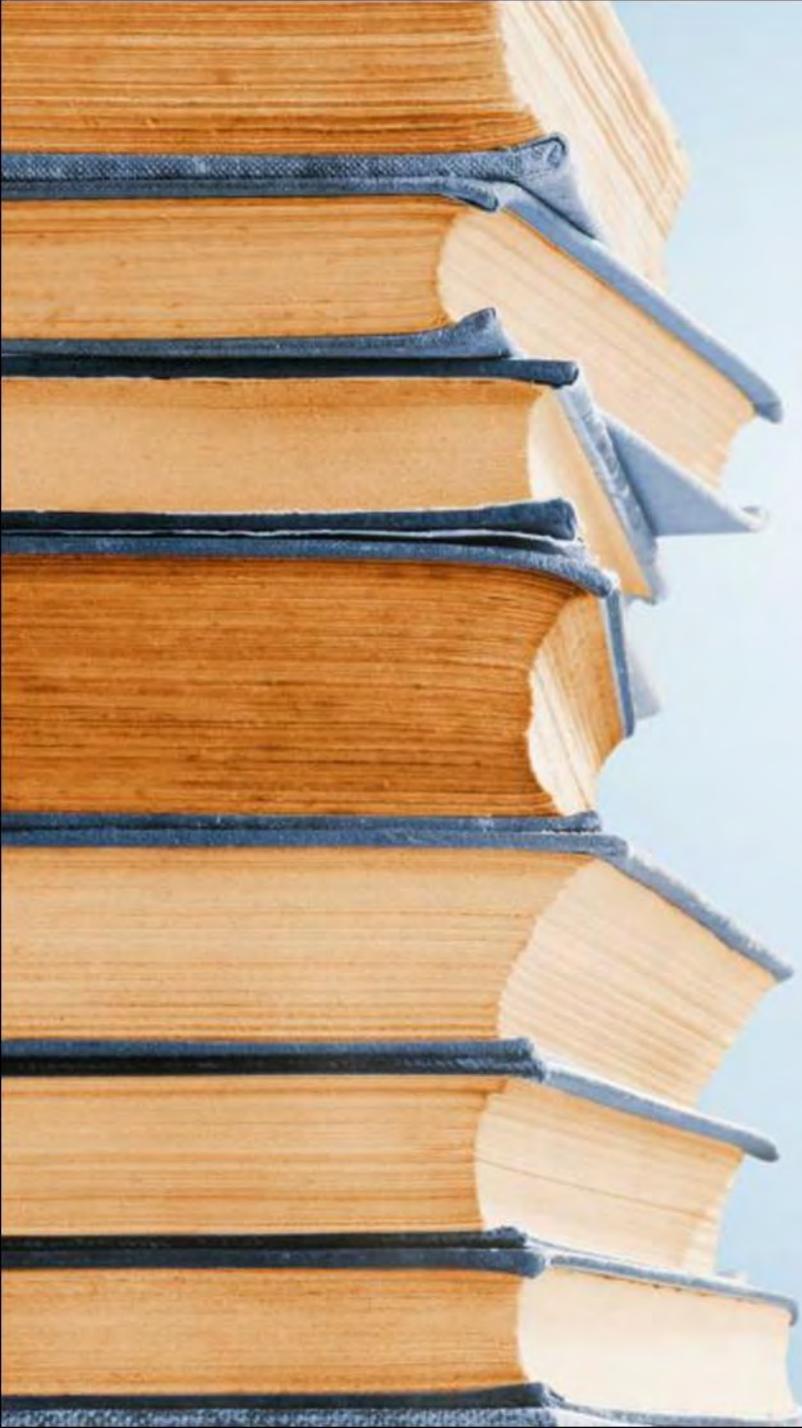
... something different and unique

Key Takeaways

- Gardening supports the Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Nation, and Whole World.
 - Think globally, with your garden. Expose students to other schools and to other cultures, to learn about diversity, and adversity.
 - Nurturing plants nurtures minds.
- Students, teachers, families, neighbors, and community partners are your greatest resources.
- We all eat, no matter where we live. It is what connects us to each other.
 - Connecting students to their food sources enhances environmental stewardship, health, and wellness.

Stephen Ritz, Bronx Educator





Thank You!

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