



Healthy Schools Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-209) Report
As Required by Sections 303 and 503: Mandatory Reporting
June 30, 2012

Table of Contents

Section 1	p. 2
The District’s farm –to-school initiatives and recommendations for improvement	
Section 2	p. 5
The District’s school gardens, plans for expanding them, and recommendations for improvement	
Appendix A	p. 11
School Garden Advisory Committee by Working Group	
Appendix B	p. 13
School Garden Snapshot 2011-2012	
Appendix C	p. 15
School Garden Site Visit Form	
Appendix D	p. 17
School Gardens List	
Appendix E	p. 20
School Garden Map	
Appendix F	p. 21
School Garden Data	
Appendix G	p. 25
School Garden Program 2012 Service Provider List	
Appendix H	p. 28
Checklist for Starting a School Garden	
Appendix I	p. 33
Growing Garden Teacher Training Agenda	
Appendix J	p. 35
Green Ribbon Schools Descriptions	
Appendix K	p. 36
Composting Pilot Sites	
Appendix L	p. 37
School Garden Program Grantees	



Healthy Schools Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-209) Report
As Required by Sections 303 and 503: Mandatory Reporting
June 30, 2012

As required by Sections 303 and 503 of the Healthy Schools Act of 2010 (HSA), the Office of the Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is pleased to report to the Mayor, the Council and the Healthy Youth and Schools Commission on:

- (1) The District’s farm-to-school initiatives and recommendations for improvement;
and
- (2) The state of school gardens, plans for expanding them and recommendations for improving the program

SECTION 1: The District’s farm-to-school initiatives and recommendations for improvement.

HSA Requirements – Local Food Sourcing

Under section 301 of the HSA, public and public charter schools shall serve locally-grown, locally-processed, and unprocessed produce from growers engaged in sustainable agricultural practices whenever possible. Preference shall be given to fresh unprocessed agricultural products grown and processed in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.

HSA Requirements – Education Programs and Annual Celebrations

Under section 302, OSSE in conjunction with the District government agencies, community organizations, food service providers, public schools and public charter schools shall develop programs to promote the benefits of purchasing and eating locally-grown and unprocessed foods that are from growers engaged in sustainable agricultural practices. In addition, OSSE is required to conduct at least one program per year, such as an annual flavor of the week or a harvest of the month program, in collaboration with other District agencies and non-profit organizations.

Results – Compliance with the HSA Farm-to-School Initiatives

Local Food Sourcing

In D.C. Public School (DCPS) meals, 35% of all produce served to students from September to December 2011 came from farms in the mid-Atlantic region.¹ Some of the local items served on DCPS menus included apples, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, Bibb lettuce, pears, kale and collard greens. The public charter schools also served similar local seasonal produce onto their menus (primarily pears, apples, sweet potatoes, and collard greens).

Education Programs

In the past year, schools received tools, resources, information and materials related to serving local foods in school meals, and conducting hands-on food, farming and nutrition education, including:

- *Healthy Food for Healthy Students: Getting Everyone On Board* – on April 18, OSSE and the D.C. Farm to School Network hosted approximately 60 public and public charter school foodservice representatives for an afternoon workshop. The goal of the workshop was to get students and cafeteria staff on board with the healthier, farm-fresh foods now being served in school meals. Featured speakers included Councilmember Mary Cheh and representatives from USDA and The Food Trust in Philadelphia.,
- *“Local Food Throwdowns”* – in conjunction with the D.C. Farm to School Network, a chef visited 11 elementary schools in the spring to expose students in the cafeteria to seasonal, local foods. Taste tests were conducted with over 4,000 students each month featuring different local foods, including Spinach Salad in March, Red Radish Salsa in April, Strawberry Gazpacho in May, and Zucchini Bread in June. The chef also distributed educational one-pagers, stickers, and table-tents to participating schools.
- *Mobile Market School Visits* – Arcadia’s farmers’ market school bus (Mobile Market) visited 10 elementary and middle schools during the spring. Students were engaged in hands-on activities around farmers’ market operations, food systems, seasonality, local food, and nutrition. Students participated in a food web activity, “shopped” at the Mobile Market for a healthy meal on a budget, toured the insides of the farmers’ market school bus, and participated in a chef demonstration and tasting. In total, the Mobile Market reached approximately 2,500 students.
- *Eastern Shore Field Trip* – In July, eight school food stakeholders visited growers, processors and distributors on Maryland and Delaware’s Eastern Shore. The group saw

¹ *What’s Local in DCPS Meals?* D.C. Farm to School Network, May 2012. Available at <http://bit.ly/DCPSLocalFood>.

how watermelons are grown and packed, how tractor trailer truckloads of sweet corn make it to our shelves, how shelf-stable boxed soups are made, and how a state-of-the-art orchard powers giant coolers from a solar roof.²

- *Blue Ridge Field Trip* – In December, eight school food stakeholders visited the new local produce distribution company Blue Ridge Produce. The group toured the Blue Ridge Produce warehouses, cold storage, and greenhouse facilities in an effort to establish local food purchasing relationships.
- *D.C. Farm to School Directory* – In May 2012, the D.C. Farm to School Network published the first ever D.C. Farm to School Directory.³ It lists growers, distributors, and other sources of agricultural products in the mid-Atlantic region interested in selling local food to schools and foodservice vendors.
- *Seasonality Chart* – A colorful poster displaying the different types of fruits and vegetables annually that are available on farms near Washington, DC was distributed to 150 schools.⁴ The Seasonality Chart hangs visibly in school cafeterias, so that students are able to identify which produce is seasonal each month.

Annual Celebrations

In conjunction with the DC Farm-to-School Network, two annual events were held this school year. The annual D.C. Farm to School Week took place October 12-15th, 2011. The goals for the week were to: a) highlight seasonal, local produce in school meals; b) engage students in the farm-to-table process through hands-on educational events; and c) raise awareness about farm to school programs. Over 200 public schools, public charter schools, and private schools featured local items in school meals during the week. Activities included hands-on educational activities, chef demonstrations, farmer-in-the-classroom programs, farm field trips and film screenings. Events reached approximately 5,000 students in all eight wards and engaged over 100 community volunteers.

The Week started at a kick-off event in which four local chefs competed to create the best local dish for a panel of esteemed judges. White House Executive Pastry Chef Bill Yosses emceed the chef demonstration, while Pat Dombroski, Administrator of the USDA Food & Nutrition Service Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, State Superintendent of Education Hosanna Mahaley and National Farm to School Network Director Anupama Joshi spoke to the importance of healthy eating, supporting local farmers, and engaging students in the farm-to-table process.

² For a complete recap of the Eastern Shore field trip, visit <http://bit.ly/EasternShore>

³ *D.C. Farm to School Directory* D.C. Farm to School Network, May 2012. Available at <http://bit.ly/DCDirectory>

⁴ Designed by a D.C. Public Charter School parent, the Seasonality Chart is available at <http://bit.ly/Seasonality>

The annual Strawberries & Salad Greens day took place on May 23rd. Over 150 schools served fresh, local strawberries and greens as part of the school meals. A total of 50 schools - 37 public schools and 13 public charter schools - coordinated volunteer staff for “Where Food Comes From” tables in their cafeterias, displaying plants, seasonality charts, stickers, maps, and more to remind students of the farm-to-table process. School gardens across the city integrated garden-education activities as part of the event. DCPS held a kick-off event at Maury Elementary School with Councilmembers Mary Cheh and Tommy Wells.

Recommendations for Improvement – HSA Farm-to-School Initiatives

- Expose students to more seasonal, local food through garden education, taste tests, and special events to excite students about healthy eating and sustainable agriculture.
- Tie school gardens to local procurement efforts in the cafeteria, to strengthen students’ connections between local food items in their school meals and how they are grown.
- Highlight farm to school programs regularly, for example, through a program that features a unique local food each month, in order for students to truly grasp the concepts of seasonality and locally-grown.
- Role models such as chefs, farmers, school staff, nutritionists and garden educators play an important role in shaping students’ acceptance of farm-fresh food. More of these professionals should be represented in the District’s farm to school programs.
- Train cafeteria staff to encourage students to select fresh produce items.

SECTION 2: The state of school gardens, plans for expanding them, and recommendations for improving the program.

HSA Requirements - School Gardens Program

Under section 503 of the HSA, OSSE is to establish a School Gardens Program. This program will work with public schools and public charter schools to:

- Coordinate the efforts of community organizations and District agencies to establish gardens as integral components of the schools
- Establish and convene a Garden Advisory Committee
- Collect data on location and types of school gardens
- Provide horticultural guidance and technical assistance
- Coordinate curricula for school gardens and related projects
- Provide training, support and assistance to school gardens
- Assist schools in receiving certification as U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools.
- Work with UDC to provide technical expertise, curricula and soil testing for schools gardens.
- Establish demonstration compost pile when feasible

HSA Requirements – School Garden Grants

Under section 102 of the HSA, OSSE shall make competitive grants available to support school gardens through a competitive process to public schools, public charter schools, and other organizations.

Results – Compliance with the School Gardens Programs

In June 2011, Sam Ullery joined OSSE as the first School Gardens Specialist. Before joining OSSE, Sam taught science at Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School (T.M.A.), where he founded the Green Club which oversaw the construction and maintenance, and expansion of the school's first garden. He also established the first outdoor classroom and curriculum for 9th-12th grade science classes, mentored Green Club students to testify for the HSA, and trained teachers, youth, and community members on school garden best practices while securing valuable teaching tools such as a medium scale solar panel system. As a result T.M.A. was awarded the 2011 Mayor's Sustainability Award in Outstanding Achievement by an Educational Facility.

Garden Advisory Committee

The School Garden Program has established and convened a Garden Advisory Committee, composed of community organizations, district government agencies, and other interested persons. The advisory board is comprised of 20 active members that serve one-year terms and participate in at least one of seven working groups (Appendix A)

School Garden Data

Baseline data was collected and ongoing site visits were assessed to measure progress of the School Garden Program. OSSE developed two data tools to collect this information. The first was a web-based snapshot, which was sent to the schools in July (Appendix B). Sixty three (63) public schools and public charter schools provided information about their school garden programs including the types of gardens, garden locations, and students impacted.

The second data collection tool developed was the School Garden Site Visit Form (Appendix C), which complemented the snapshot by providing more detailed information on school gardens. School garden site visit forms were completed between July and February from 65 schools, (all schools that completed the snapshot received site visits). Additional data was collected from existing data sets provided by the DC Schoolyard Greening Committee, public schools, advisory committee members, and the D.C. Department of the Environment RiverSmart Schools Program.

From these efforts, the first comprehensive list of DC School Gardens was created from which the following information was extrapolated:

- There are 104 school gardens in public schools, public charter schools, and private schools (Appendix D).
- There are 82 active school gardens (school gardens are considered active when host schools or organizations report their garden as active). Unless otherwise noted, reported data will reflect only the *active schools gardens* (Appendix D).
- School gardens are in all eight wards. Ward 6 has the most with 16, while Ward 8 has the fewest with 6. Garden locations (both active and inactive) are on the D.C. School Garden Map (Appendix E and Appendix F, Fig.1).
- Approximately two-thirds (53) of the school gardens are in public schools. The remaining school gardens are in public charter schools with 19 and private schools with 8 (Appendix F, Fig. 2).
- Fourteen new school gardens were constructed between July 2011 and May 2012.
- School gardens are more frequent in elementary schools than in high schools (Appendix F, Fig. 3).
- School gardens are utilized throughout the school day; the majority of activity occurs during in-class activities (Appendix F, Fig. 4).
- School gardens are maintained primarily by the school staff; however students and community members also play an important role in garden maintenance (Appendix F, Fig. 5).
- School gardens contain a wide array of features; the most frequent of which are raised beds containing edible produce. Other popular features include in-ground edible produce, outdoor classroom space, and native plantings (Appendix F, Fig. 6).
- There are approximately 400 raised beds in school gardens.
- School gardens have varied technical needs; the most frequent technical assistance request was school garden design and construction, followed by developing partnerships and horticultural support (Appendix F, Fig. 7).

Horticultural Guidance and Technical Assistance

Schools can request technical assistance from the School Garden Specialist through an on-line form that provides details about the type of technical support needed. These requests ranged from program management issues such as staffing and fundraising to infrastructure needs including construction and planting schematics (Appendix F, Fig 7). The School Garden Specialist responded to all 61 site-based technical support requests from 42 schools.

Training, Support and Assistance

The first district-wide school garden introductory training, “School Garden 101” was conducted in March. The training provided a roadmap for school administrators and staff to follow when developing new school gardens. Developed by the School Garden Specialist, the training included an overview of the school garden program, an introduction to starting and maintaining a successful school garden, and a panel discussion from experts in the field. The overall feedback from 40 participants (including teacher, parents, community members, and administration) was positive with 90% finding the training useful or very useful. The following materials were developed for this training:

- D.C. School Garden Service Provider List (Appendix G)
- D.C. School Garden Checklist (Appendix H)
- Checklist for a Successful School Garden Workday
- Garden Supply List
- D.C. School Garden Planting Calendar

Other training, support and assistance were provided at the Growing Garden Teachers Workshop, which took place March 23rd and 24th. This collaborative effort between community organizations, DC Greens, DC Schoolyard Greening, and OSSE trained 50 teachers and school garden coordinators through an intensive workshop that provided the tools to successfully engage students in garden-based learning. The goal of this workshop was to inspire teachers and school garden coordinators to embrace their school gardens as a meaningful outdoor classroom. Participants were also guided through the development of a garden-based unit, received curriculum materials, visited model youth gardens, and participated in both garden science and nutrition education demonstrations with lessons from garden partners, The Washington Youth Garden and City Blossoms (Appendix I).

This spring, OSSE began hosting after school monthly school garden meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to give school garden coordinators and teachers the opportunity to creatively problem solve as they work to infuse school gardens into their school culture. In collaboration with D.C. Greens, three monthly meetings (April, May, June) have been conducted and attended by an average of 10 participants. Topics have included: building community support, facilitating advisory board meetings, and pest management. Meeting locations rotate among model D.C. school gardens where the garden coordinator leads a tour at the beginning of each meeting.

Curriculum Coordination

The School Garden Program coordinated curricula for school gardens and related projects. Participants in the Growing Garden Teachers Workshop received standards-based garden curriculum. Teachers and school garden coordinators are provided recommendations based on the need for appropriate teaching resources that are consistent with the standards.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

OSSE assisted public schools, public charter schools and private schools in receiving certification as U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (GRS). The School Garden Program developed the District's application for the GRS program, facilitated a GRS application training, provided ongoing support to interested schools, convened an application review committee, and nominated four schools to the U.S. Department of Education. Two of these schools, Stoddert Elementary and Sidwell Friends Middle School were awarded Green Ribbon School certification (Appendix J).

Soil Testing

The University of the District of Columbia (UDC) is working towards assisting the OSSE with soil testing for school gardens. Currently the soil testing lab at UDC is not operational. Once operational, soil tests will be free to all D.C. residents and schools and will include nutrient and toxicity tests. In the meantime, all OSSE School Garden Program grantees are required to test garden soil using other laboratories to ensure that the produce grown in the garden is safe to consume. Materials were produced that provide support to schools interested in consuming garden produce. The School Garden Program works with these schools to ensure that established procedures are clearly understood and followed.

Demonstration Compost Pile Sites:

A composting pilot program has been developed by the District's Department of General Service in collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia Cooperative Extension Service and the School Garden Program. Pilot composting sites will be located at one school from each ward (Appendix K). Tubman Elementary will be the first pilot site to be developed and will be the training site where UDC provides technical support to schools.

School Garden Competitive Grants

Through the District's competitive review process, OSSE solicited applications to support school gardens. In this inaugural year of the program grants, up to \$10,000 each, were awarded to 22 public schools, public charter schools and garden-based organizations for a total of \$197,235 (Appendix L). Each grantee's project is monitored and evaluated by the School Garden Specialist through site visits and reports. The School Garden Specialist also provides technical support to grantees to ensure projects are successfully implemented.

Plans for Expanding Schools Gardens

- Reinvigorate inactive school gardens by supporting and strengthening partnerships between schools, garden-based organizations, and stakeholders.
- Develop one model school garden in each ward that can serve as hubs for teacher professional development, student field trips, and to promote D.C. school gardens.
- Support active school garden programs by providing four "Growing Garden Teacher" workshops, six monthly meetings and two "School Garden 101" trainings annually.
- Integrate Farm to School and School Garden Week into one week to further align the school garden and farm to school programs.
- Develop a set of Schoolyard Design Guidelines that will be integrated into existing DCPS facility guidelines and recommended to the Public Charter School Board as best practices when considering school garden construction.

Recommendations for Improvement – HSA School Garden Program

- Establish a D.C. Green Ribbon School Award as a component of the Mayor’s Sustainability Awards. Recipients of this award will be nominated for the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School.
- Collaborate with the Environmental Protection Agency Regional Office to provide resources to schools that align with the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School Program.
- Strengthen the existing support network for schools interested in applying for the Green Ribbon School program to ensure that four District schools are recognized as Green Ribbon Schools in school year 2012-2013.
- Ensure that every school garden is overseen by a School Garden Coordinator.
- Develop and facilitate a “School Garden 201” training to support well established school gardens.
- Combine the efforts of the Farm to School and School Garden Programs to provide comprehensive nutrition education to D.C. Schools.
- Return to service the six underused greenhouses in the public schools.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a centralized marshaling yard for wood waste, compost, mulch, and other bulk materials that can be accessible by school garden stakeholders.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a centralized tool shed for school gardens to access during garden build and maintenance days.

In conclusion, the OSSE will continue to implement and support the Farm-to-School and School Gardens Programs authorized by the Healthy Schools Act. With our many partners invested in improving the health and wellness of our students, we will continue to promote lifelong healthy eating habits.