

6. Do you know how safe your garden is? Check if:

___ You have you had your soil tested for lead

___ There are any raised beds that are using treated lumber to grow food

7. Do you have a convenient and secure storage space for tools, hoses and carts?

___ Yes

___ No (how close) ___ feet

8. How does or will the school use the garden?

___ Integrated into the curriculum

___ Individual lessons

___ After-school group

___ Community gatherings

___ Used by various teachers as an outdoor classroom, but not related to gardening

9. How could or will the garden be used in the summer or by after-hours staff programming?
Please explain, giving times, days, details. _____

Some other things to consider when starting a school garden:

Does your school garden have a history? Ask around and look for clues: are there tools or structures (like raised beds) that you could use for your school garden? Sometimes gardens exist at schools that all of the staff does not know about. Also consider asking neighbors, older residents, retired teachers or older students' families.

There are many people to cultivate relationships with for a successful garden.

Imperative

- Administrator. Support from your principal is key. With it, you can make your garden incredible!
- Engineer. This person may be your greatest ally in the school for maintenance and enthusiasm (and it affects his/her job!). Talk to them and involve them in planning!
- At least 2 other school staff. This will keep you from being overwhelmed, ensure that the garden is used by more than one person, and will be your safety net if some of the original coordinators leave the school.

Suggested

- LSC. May provide some small financial support for the garden.
- Parents. Can help work with you and your students in the garden.
- Surrounding community. By knocking on some doors, this group may offer the protection from vandalism and summer maintenance help that you will need.
- Local organizations, businesses, schools, Aldermen, block clubs and garden clubs for assistance in funding, installation, and maintenance.

The Green Teacher Network is a collaboration of Openlands, Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance and Chicago Botanic Garden. GTN is comprised of four workshops, two newsletters and a listserv over the school year. For more information or to join, please call 312-863-6270.