



Common Threads Farm and School Garden Collective

VISIONING YOUR SCHOOL GARDEN

WHY ENGAGE IN THE VISIONING PROCESS?

Vision development is an important tool for discovering common values, developing a shared sense of purpose, and fostering communication. This process:

- Provides focus, purpose, and direction — something the community can strive to achieve.
- Aids in identifying and mobilizing assets and resources.
- Generates enthusiasm and excitement about the direction the community is heading.
- Unites participants and helps cultivate a sustained level of commitment to the project.
- Gives participants the courage to tackle issues that seem insurmountable by breaking them down into actionable steps.

PART 1: COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Part I should be an inclusive process - invite parents, teachers, staff, and community members to participate. The Garden Committee will use this input to formulate a master plan and delegate tasks in Part II.

Values: Why we are doing this work right now.

- Build a Concept web – Start by considering, “Why is a school garden important to you? How does it fit within existing school values?” Ex: healthy food source, peaceful environment, hands-on learning, academic tie-ins, etc.
- Common Values – Every participant receives 3-5 stickers to place next to the areas/ideas on the concept web most important to them.
- Identify the top 3-6 values.

VALUES:

Vision: Where We are headed.

- Use the top values to formulate 3-4 broad Vision Statements about how the garden will contribute to the school/community.
- Ex: “The garden supports student understanding across academic curriculum,” or “Students have access to a healthy food source,” or “The garden provides connections between the school and the greater community.”

VISION STATEMENT:

Goals: How We Are Going To Get There.

- Once we have values and a vision to fuel and drive our work, it's time to narrow the focus to the specific goals that will help us make strides and recognize progress along our journey.
- Examine each Vision Statement:
 - What results will inform us that the Vision Statements are being successfully carried out?
 - What changes will we see in the short term? In the long term?
 - What obstacles stand in our way? How can each obstacle be met?
- Transform each Vision Statement into a SMART Goal(s):
 - Specific

SMART GOAL #1 Action item: Action item: Action item:

SMART GOAL #2 Action item: Action item: Action item:

- Measureable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely
- Ex: “Every 1st-5th Grade student will have at least one food prep and eating experience with garden produce each year.”

Identify the Committee

- Thank everyone for participating in this visioning process and emphasize that it takes a strong core of dedicated individuals to carry forward and implement the vision set forth. Solicit volunteers for ongoing commitment.
- This is an opportunity to recruit new members to the Garden Committee. If a Garden Committee has not yet been established, identify individuals willing to serve in an ongoing leadership role. A strong garden committee will have at least 6 members, ideally a combination of parents, teachers and administrators.

PART II: COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT

After completing Part I of the visioning process, one member should draft the input into a comprehensive document outlining goals, objectives and action items. This document should be brought to Part II of the visioning process for group review and editing.

Establishing Committee Norms

- What are the responsibilities of the Garden Committee? How often will we meet?

Review Goals and Objectives

- Review goals, objectives and action items set forth in Part I of the visioning process.

Asset Inventory

- Who are we? What perspectives comprise our committee? Who isn't on this committee who should be?
- What is our plan for recruiting individuals to represent the “missing voices”?
- What assets do we have on our committee and in our school community to help the garden thrive?
- Create a needs list - What do we need to help our garden grow towards our goals and objectives?

School Garden					
Asset	Asset	Asset	Asset	Asset	Asset

Task Groups

- Assign individuals or task groups to the objectives outlined in the action plan. Make sure there is a clear timeline and set check-ins to ensure follow-through.