



# SAMPLE SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY: SCHOOL GARDENS

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## Introduction

As society becomes more aware and concerned about the health of children, communities are turning to schools for solutions. Schools are one of the most powerful influences in the lives of students, and can significantly help to create and promote healthy habits and behaviors in children. Schools with a healthy nutrition environment foster improved student health. School gardens can promote a healthy nutrition environment, which fosters improved student health. Research shows that children who plant and harvest their own fruits and vegetables are more likely to eat them. School gardens are outdoor laboratories, and can be applied to curriculum in natural sciences, mathematics, languages and fine arts. Freshly harvested garden produce can contribute to a student's nutrition, especially if it is integrated into school meals and snacks. The Minnesota School Boards Association ("MSBA") has a model school wellness policy that many school districts use as a guide when developing their individual school wellness policy. The MSBA model policy does not address school gardens. Therefore, the Public Health Law Center developed the following, more detailed language to insert into a school wellness policy.

## School Garden Sample Language

### *School Gardens*

- 1. The school district will support the use of school property to promote nutrition, physical activity, and curricular and co-curricular activities through school gardens. The school district will support the sustainability of school gardens through activities including, but not limited to, fundraising, solicitation of community donations, use of existing resources, and allocation of school district funds.*
- 2. School gardens ensure students have the opportunity to experience planting, harvesting, preparing, serving, and tasting self-grown food that reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the student population. The school district supports the incorporation of school gardens into the standards-based curriculum as a hands-on, interdisciplinary teaching tool to influence student food choices and lifelong eating habits.*
- 3. The superintendent has the authority to designate school property as a school garden and negotiate the terms of the agreements and licenses needed to create and maintain a school garden. The superintendent will ensure that the development of a school garden includes necessary coordination with appropriate representatives of the school buildings and grounds department.*
- 4. The superintendent, with the assistance of the School Health Council [aka School Wellness Committee], will develop guidelines for school gardens. These superintendent guidelines will include:*

- a. *Explanation of how the school garden program fits the standards-based curriculum and curriculum guidelines of the school district;*
  - b. *How the costs of the school garden, including materials, supplies, water, and personnel, will be funded;*
  - c. *How the school garden will be maintained during and outside of the school year, including identification of school staff who will supervise and maintain the garden; and*
  - d. *How the school garden will be used and how the harvest of the garden will be distributed.*
5. *The superintendent or designee will review existing school board policy and recommend updates to any other school board policies to incorporate the goals and objectives of school gardens, including school grounds, curriculum and community use policies.*

### **Other Policy Options**

In the majority of the school districts around Minnesota, the superintendent has the power to implement and enforce existing school board policy. Therefore, a superintendent can issue protocols/procedures/guidelines to implement the school wellness policy. The above language can be used by the superintendent to implement the overall goals of most school wellness policies. For an example, please refer to our School Health Council Policy Reference Guide, located at [www.publichealthlawcenter.org](http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org).



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