
Green Schoolyards Steering Committee Meeting #2 - Nov. 10, 2022

Presentation - https://www.canva.com/design/DAFReVSkRSI/7IoLF_24EwVeLgiA1euPbg/edit

Agenda

1. **Introductions** - our roles
2. **Recapping the last meeting and TA visit** - Jane to review the summary
3. **A ha's from the last meeting**. Did something click for you? Something you are still chewing on?
4. **Reminder - What does it mean to be a steering committee member?** Norms - everyone has a voice, how best to contribute, collaboration, all ideas are welcome. We would love your attendance at all meetings to help get to the end goal. What can we all reasonably commit to?
5. **What is our charge collectively-- what are we prioritizing?** What is the basic understanding amongst the group about what is a GSY and why they are important? Where can we start together to build moving forward. Communications and awareness of benefits. Short and long term goals
 - a. How do we make GSY important to the various parties....how can this rise above the budgets and other competing priorities
 - b. Independent models to work to provide the education - like Lower Columbia School Gardens - he is a service provider, what are his gaps to success?
 - c. Relationship piece is a huge first step....who should be at the table and how to find mutually beneficial goals.
6. **Large group/smaller groups** / Themes and topics to dive-in on
7. **Next steps** - Forging long-term and sustainable connections

Steering Committee notes

11/10/22 on Zoom 3-4:30 pm

Present:

- Yasmina Aknin-Program Coordinator-Clark County Public Health
- Rainy Rau - Vancouver Water Resources Education Center
- Ian Thompson, Operations Coordinator & Founder - Lower Columbia School Gardens
- Bekah Marten, School Garden Coordinator for Clark Co Master Gardeners
- Erin Figy, School Garden Volunteer for Illahee Elementary & Shahala Middle School (Evergreen)
- Ashley Conley, Educator, Water Resources Education Center
- Andrea Parker K-12 Science TOSA (coordinator) in Battle Ground School District
- Matthew Solberg, former Science Teacher, lifelong Naturalist
- Sami Springs LeCain, Clark County Public Health, Clark County Green Schools program lead
- Rebecca Small, City of Vancouver WA (Climate team)
- Valerie Pufahl, education manager LCEP
- Chris Hathaway, community director LCEP
- Kris Potter, Outdoor Teacher, Battle Ground River HomeLink
- Mark Watrin BGPS school board member & volunteer school garden coordinator
- Jane Tesner Kleiner, Lower Columbia Nature Network program manager
- Michelle Sanow, Lower Columbia Nature Network, communications manager

Grounding in steering committee work - Share your “why”

Matthew Solberg, taught for 4 years at Frontier. In four years turned an unused green house and unusable space into a garden and habitat and native species return. Inquiry- based & project-based learning right on campus. Those opportunities are priceless. Continue to protect what we care about. Inclusion is important. Kids need to have green spaces that they can touch and interact with that they may not have access to at home. Reach as many kids as possible

Erin Figy, Forward thinking viewpoint, bulb project/analogy, having students get out of now and see the potential to think of the future. That “seed” can grow into something amazing.

Valerie Pufahl, How we can better synergize our programs to create more amazing nature opportunities for more students. The chance to collaborate with various expertise to make changes happen.

Ashley Conley, Importance of realization of nature close to home. Show them that nature is everywhere and successful field trips do not have to venture far. Especially for kids who do not have access to green spaces.

- **Green Schoolyards benefits** of nature wheel (Children & Nature Network)
- **Review of kick off meeting highlights** (refer to slides) - Leveraging momentum to engage leadership across city and school districts as well as activating schoolyards.
- **Padlet exercise**, adding to list of partners, activation ideas, ranking of short-term, medium-term long-term goals. Adding ranking of priorities and adding any comments. We will be using this padlet to gather information from partners over the course of the Committee work. https://padlet.com/helloLCNN/CCCN_GSY_SW_WA

Breakout Rooms #1 - What was your “a-ha” moment from the kickoff?

- **Forging connections and meeting partners to collaborate and multiply** our efforts. Especially from across disciplines and levels of organizations involved. Where can we pool resources to strengthen the impact. A diversity of experiences and expertise and ideas at the table.
- **Exciting to be part of a larger movement** across the country to get kids outside. Can pull from other communities, we don't need to start from scratch.
- **How the LCNN can pull together and speak with one voice** to further the effort.
- **The breadth of Green Schoolyards work in our region already** and the opportunities to do more. Build a sense of community that we can support each other. Very encouraging!
- **Strong participation from the COV and cross connection of opportunities**, including Climate Action goals, stormwater and urban forestry. How they may be able to help with removing asphalt and adding more green schoolyards.
- **The need to support and involve district leadership** and build relationships to engage and use Green Schoolyards. Build the message and share with the various leadership teams, including curriculum leaders.
- **Teachers need a forum to ask their questions** and then how can we package support for them to learn about and use Green Schoolyards.
- **An example of combined support is the goal for universal background check** system (get cleared once and then it is good for all of the districts). There are essentially two levels, depending on level of access to working directly with students. One level, submit to WA State Police background check system and get clearance. The more detailed level requires fingerprinting and a fee (at least \$60) that is burdensome and expensive. Mark W. talked with several leadership teams, as this is an HR issue for the districts. Some districts can meet with an organization to get a group clearance before the start of the school year and it is good (just check in at the office). VPS uses the WA Police and the check is good for 2 years. Longview/Kelso goes the more expensive route.

Breakout Rooms #2 - How do we identify GSY importance for schools/partners

- **Get the message to schools at multiple levels**, create something that is hard for them to say no, that an organized and collaborative approach is more cohesive. On site field trips are a

great stepping stone to more distant field trips, hands-on, every day and seasonal observations. All lessons can be taught.

- **Our community Environmental Educators (EE) organizations are a resource** to schools with expertise and enthusiasm to teach science and outdoor lessons. How to better centralize who and what they offer, get information to teachers, help fund getting their work into schools to minimize the burden to schools. Also to help coordinate other community resources, parent volunteers, etc.
- **Messaging that small steps are a great start.** LCNN partners can help provide content along the way. Can start with simple observations, like first frost. Need buy-in from teachers and curriculum leads, build relationships and trust.
- **Various models of Green Schoolyards support have pros and cons.** There is no one-fit model for all schools so the programs need to be flexible and adaptable. School leadership needs to contribute to make it part of their culture.
- **Offer trainings and professional development** - what it means to teach outside, programs for outdoors, get people comfortable being outdoors. Use personal outreach with face to face connections and follow up.
- **Work with staff outside of classroom teachers to address the multiple benefits from being outdoors**, such as behavior regulation, de-escalation, stress reduction, etc. New building designs are including safe rooms, outdoor spaces can provide similar benefits. Gain trust to create these unique and diverse outdoor spaces with keeping safety and security in mind.
- **Addressing the support and needs for special education students with equitable access to the outdoors.** Field trips can be challenging as some students may not be able to go without support staff or stay on the bus. This is not equitable. But using Green Schoolyards, kids can get acclimated and use all school year.
- **Use Green Schoolyards as a tool to bring cultural learning and understanding** to the school. Work with local / regional partners such as the Indigenous communities, LULAC Grows, Afghan refugees, and others. Learning about caring for the land and the food we grow for healthy & respectful diets, working with the land, soil and plants. Including native species.
- **Create a Resource Share / Lending opportunity** - local native seed sources, outdoor classroom / garden tending kits (sets of work gloves, hand tools, clipboards, magnifying glasses, etc.) that can be checked out, used and returned. So not every school has to invest in a lot of equipment to get started. Create a “library” of kits to check out for soils, working in the garden, water quality, animals/habitat, etc.
- **Seek sustainable grant resources to support** pulling these pieces together such as Apple Health <https://apples4ed.com/> (due Jan. 2023), Kaiser Health grants <https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/community-health/communities-we-serve/washington-community/grants> and others. Put together our ASK and seek local/regional funders.

Final thoughts as we wrap up

- Hear more about community gardens, cultural relevance/traditions/heritage, racial equity, check out kits to support gardens
- Reach out to insurance companies who are looking for organizations to provide funding to, they could contribute.

- Many spaces need activation. Kits available with gloves and tools, especially if they are propagating native plants. Planting yarro with kids, Camas lilies, acorns, significance of this to native tribes. If organization are propagating plants, how can we get these to schools. Get the outside doing play space projects.

End of summary