

Implementing the Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!

Program for School, Community and Family Engagement

School gardens have arrived as a “must have” popular project to encourage student interest in science and nutrition. The Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! (LGEG) Program has multiple components including a garden, classroom curriculum, vegetable tasting & recipe demonstrations, student journal, books, family stories and Walk Across Texas! The LGEG classroom curriculum is designed for 3-5th grades with a focus on science, math, language arts and health. The WAT! Program is appropriate for all grades and has supporting activities for a variety of subject matters. The hands-on learning within the program has been shown to engage all students! These components can foster connections across the campus, district and within the community. Schools, students and families get the most benefit when LGEG and all components are fully implemented!

Start with a Campus Team

The Campus LGEG Team will determine strategies to implement the various components of LGEG in a way that will fit the school’s needs and capacity. Develop this team by bringing together people from key positions in the school. Potential team members include:



Identify your campus team on the next page. This group will use the LGEG Planning Worksheet to guide the planning process. Team members can assume lead roles on the implementation tasks, adding community partners as needed.



<http://jmgkids.us/lgeg/>



WALK
ACROSS TEXAS!

<http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>

Build Community Partnerships

Once the Campus LGEG team has been formed it will be important to establish local community partnerships to ensure project success. This is essential for sustainability of the program and will build ownership within the school and community setting. Here are a few examples of possible community partnerships and the assets they can bring:

- Media outlets to promote events such as the garden build and WAT!
- Community volunteer groups may assist with the garden, nutrition demonstrations, or physical activities.
 - Some potential groups include Master Gardener, Master Wellness, Senior or Faith Volunteers.
- Community service organizations (ex. Junior League) may provide financial assistance for building school gardens or to help improve outdoor recreation spaces.
- Involve After-School Clubs like Boys and Girls or Kids Klub to help support garden maintenance, harvest, or participate in physical activity opportunities.
- City or County departments (ex. Parks and Recreation and/or Health), Councils of Government, United Way, Health Care Organizations (ex. Hospitals or clinics), and Elected Officials may help provide additional access to funding opportunities.
- Fitness or healthy lifestyle businesses can donate prizes and/or send volunteers to lead physical activity demonstrations.
- Vegetable producers and farmers can assist with garden or supply materials such as seeds, transplants, etc.
- Building and garden supply stores may donate materials for the garden build.
- Grocery stores may provide supplies for vegetable tasting and recipes.
- Restaurants may send a celebrity chef to judge a food contest or host a profit share dinner in support of LGEG.
- Faith groups may support additional family education or serve as a source for volunteers.



*Community & school
join in 5K run*

*Students sample wares of
local vegetable producers*



Involve Families

Dr. Steven Constantino, author of Engage Every Family: Five Simple Principles™ (Constantino, 2015), has developed a model to help engage families in the school to promote and achieve improved student learning outcomes.

The **Learn, Grow, Eat & GO! Program (LGEG)** has a high potential for engaging families and their children. Specifically, LGEG program components support Constantino's Five Simple Principles™. Community Engagement was covered in the last section, but the other four engagement principles are listed below.

A Culture That Engages Every Family

- **Welcome Entry**—School gardens and open-to-all activities can create an opportunity for families and community members to be involved
- **School Culture Shows Value Toward All**—Openness and Acceptance—LGEG garden, nutrition and physical activities at home and school create volunteer opportunities in a safe environment for every family.



Parents, teachers and children build a school garden

Communicate Effectively and Build Relationships

- **Translated for Inclusion and Link Families to Learning Opportunities** —LGEG materials include **bilingual** weekly letters to families, “Joseph Plants a Garden” family stories, recipes and *Walk Across Texas!* Family Newsletters.
- **Family Bulletin Boards / Social Media**—LGEG garden, nutrition, cooking and physical activities can feature pictures of student and his or her family.

Empower Every Family

- **Connect Families to School Improvement**—School gardens are a great way to bring families onto the school grounds to build relationships with teachers and administrators and serve as a functional learning tool.
- **Develop a REAL Compact for Learning**—LGEG offers numerous components where families are partners in the student's learning.

Engage Every Family in Decision Making

- **Front and Center with Families**—LGEG bilingual materials can be used in both the child's school and home. These materials can also be used in “Family Resource Centers” for English as a Second Language classes.
- **Every Event is a Takeaway for Learning**—LGEG materials include multiple pieces designed to for children to take home and complete with family members.



Students share nutrition knowledge with parents

The *LGEG Planning Worksheet* provides an initial guide to implementing the program for the greatest success. Initiating planning in the late fall or early spring prior to a fall kick-off provides adequate time to engage key school personnel and partners in planning for sustainable implementation. It also allows adequate time to plan for media enthusiasm and engagement.

Learn, Grow, Eat and GO! can expand strategies for effective learning for all students. It can gather family and community support for improving educational and health outcomes at your school!