

DRAFT: Oakland Unified School District's Garden-to-Cafeteria Protocols

The Garden-to-Cafeteria (GTC) program is a unique opportunity for OUSD students to grow fresh vegetables, herbs, and fruit in their school gardens with the aim of supplying some of their harvest to the school cafeterias to be used at lunch service. We expect this program will increase student consumption of healthy produce.

The following protocols have been put in place to assure the food safety of school garden produce harvested by students. These protocols have been adapted from Denver Public School's GTC program protocols which have been in place in Denver since 2011. Items in italics in the following paragraphs are safety protocols that have been adapted from Federal and State guidelines for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP):

The following protocols are divided into three sections:

I. Joining the Garden-to-Cafeteria Program

II. Harvest Protocols:

- Preparation
- Harvesting with students
- Post-harvest handling in garden

III. Kitchen Protocols for School Garden produce

I. Joining the Garden-to-Cafeteria Program

1. Please contact the OUSD Garden-Education Specialist.
2. The Garden-Education Specialist will contact your GTC Leader about the upcoming schedule of training classes.
3. A representative of your school garden, preferably the school GTC Leader, must attend a training class to learn about the protocols for harvesting with students. This training will cover basic food handling, food safety, and sanitary harvesting procedures.
4. The school GTC Leader needs to obtain the necessary harvest materials for the program. Harvest materials include harvest baskets, harvest shears, and a clipboard to hold the Harvest Record Sheet. Harvest baskets must be made of hard plastic that is not porous. Items that are acceptable are food-grade Lexan containers, plastic bus tubs, and plastic shopping baskets. Not acceptable are wicker baskets, cloth or burlap bags.
5. Only potable water will be used to grow and rinse the school garden produce used in the school kitchens.
6. No pesticides will be used to grow the school garden produce used in the school kitchens.

7. If annual vegetables are grown in in-ground beds, the soil must have been tested for contaminants. Soil in raised beds should either be tested or come from a source designated for edible plant production (for example, commercial nursery planting mixes).

II. Harvest Protocols:

i. Preparation

On the day of a harvest, the GTC Leader should follow these steps to prepare for the harvest.

1. GTC Leader checks in with Kitchen Manager.
2. GTC Leader gets the harvest baskets and shears and Record Sheet from kitchen.
3. The harvest baskets and shears must have been washed in a dishwasher or washed, rinsed, and sanitized in a three bin sink.
4. If there is a garden sink, the GTC Leader will pick up a sanitizer bucket and a clean cloth from the kitchen staff with which to sanitize the garden sink.
5. If there is a garden sink, the GTC Leader sanitizes the sink with the provided sanitizer bucket.
6. The GTC Leader prepares the Record Sheet for the harvest.

ii. Harvesting with students

Once the GTC Leader is prepared for the day's harvest, he/she should follow these steps with the students:

1. GTC Leader gets a small group of students from classroom. Be sure to verify that none of the students are showing any signs of illness or have just missed school because of an illness. If a student was absent for an illness at any time in the previous two weeks, he/she can't participate in the harvest.
2. Students and GTC Leader wash their hands with soap and water in classroom sink or bathroom.
3. GTC Leader takes students out to the garden.
4. GTC Leader shows the students what fruits and vegetables are ready to be picked.
5. The harvest baskets and harvest shears are passed out and the students harvest.

iii. Post-harvest handling in garden

1. The harvested crops are washed in the harvest baskets, under potable running water in the sanitized garden sink or under a hose. The purpose of this first wash is to remove the large visible signs of dirt.

2. A student records the following information on the Record Sheet:

- a. Type and amount of the produce harvested
- b. Names of GTC Leader and students involved in the harvest
- c. Date and time of harvest

3. Students and GTC Leader take produce to the Kitchen Manager. Kitchen Manager signs the Record Sheet to acknowledge the receipt of the school garden produce.

III. Kitchen Protocols with school garden produce

When the Kitchen Manager receives the school garden produce, he/she needs to:

1. Sign Record Sheet to acknowledge receipt of the school garden produce.
2. Wash produce to remove all visible dirt. (Some produce such as root crops may need scrubbing). Produce should be washed according to existing protocols in a sanitized vegetable prep sink.
3. The school garden produce is placed in a separate clean and sanitized storage container (kitchen staff can use any of their existing food grade storage containers) that is labeled "School Garden Produce" and the date of harvest.
4. The vegetables are stored in the cooler/refrigerator to reduce their temperature to below 41°F.

References:

1. US Food and Drug Administration-

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/ProduceandPlantProducts/ucm064574.htm#iii>

2. Colorado Department of Agriculture- <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?c=Page&cid=1219832881143&pagename=Agriculture-Main%2FCDAGLayout>

3. United States Department of Agriculture-

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&leftNav=GradingCertificationandVerification&page=GAPGHPAuditVerificationProgram&acct=freshgrdcert>

Links:

(1) Denver Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services

<http://foodservices.dpsk12.org/> Slow Food Denver www.slowfooddenver.org

(2) Denver Urban Gardens

www.dug.org

(3) Learning Landscapes

<http://www.cudenver.edu/Academics/Colleges/ArchitecturePlanning/discover/centers/LearningLandscapes/Pages/index.aspx>