

## McKinley School Foundation Resolution on Behalf of McKinley's Octopus Garden

The McKinley Octopus Garden was created 15 years ago by a dedicated group of McKinley PTC members, parents, teachers, and children who jack-hammered concrete, planted trees, constructed garden beds and arranged for well-known local artist Betsy Schultz to lead Mr Kenyon's 2nd graders in creating our precious Octopus mosaic.

Our Octopus garden is not just another enrichment program. It is an outdoor garden-science classroom inherited from past generations and that we, the McKinley School Foundation, are committed to maintaining over time. The McKinley garden prepares our children for global leadership in a New Economy that focuses on sustainability, renewable resources and mental health. Over the last 15 years, the McKinley community has built one of the most robust school garden programs in all of SDUSD. McKinley was certified in 2019 (and re-certified in 2022) to harvest from our school garden and serve the fresh produce on the salad bar, as part of the District's "Garden to Cafe" program. McKinley also created the highly successful cafeteria-to-compost program, with leadership opportunities for 4th and 5th grade students who share the responsibility as the 'Compost Crew.'

Each year, McKinley students participate in a hands-on environmental and agricultural curriculum that integrates Next Generation Science Standards with McKinley Specific International Baccalaureate Units. Research show that school gardens (1: see footnote, below):

- Promote healthy physical, psychological, social, and dietary behaviors
- Give students an opportunity to be outdoors, to be physically active and to build connections with other students, the school community, and the environment
- Improve students' academic performance in science, math, language arts, and writing
- Improve perceptions of well-being, quality of life, and social and cultural cohesion

Be it resolved that the McKinley School Foundation treat the Octopus Garden as a living organism that cannot be stopped and started intermittently, ensuring a yearly minimum level of commitment of care and instruction time. The recommended minimum level of commitment is one to four classes a month throughout the school year for each student to learn about gardening from seed to table, and support seasonal and cross disciplinary explorations that help maintain a pollinator habitat, investigate natural resources like water and native plants and help students develop confidence in important organic gardening skills such as composting and plant propagation.

In recent years, students participated in garden classes weekly for K-3, and monthly for grades 4-5. A garden teacher was hired by the foundation for approximately 20 hours per week during the school year (32 weeks), with roughly 15 of these weekly hours allocated for instructional time and daily setup activities, and the remaining hours to be utilized for lesson planning, collaboration with classroom teachers, outdoor classroom maintenance and events such as IB Fest, Green Day, and farm stands.

Be it resolved that Garden staff and volunteers be allowed to make a presentation to the Board at the beginning of each school year about the history and benefits of our Garden program as well as our intention to maintain this outdoor classroom and program over time.



Signed on this 7th day of June, 2023

Brijet Myers, President