Summary

- Initiated by PTO
- Designed to be built in two phases
- Designed to serve as a garden/outdoor-learning center
- Grade appropriate curriculum developed by staff
- Families involved in care and maintenance of garden area
- Used a variety of funding resources

Photos

Details

General Information:
The school garden/outdoor learning center is in its initial stage of development and projected to be completed by 2015. The Rosemount Elementary PTO initiated the development of the outdoor classroom at Rosemount Elementary School (RES). The fundamental goal for the outdoor classroom was to make use of existing, neglected garden space, which can ultimately be used for cross-curriculum integration. The RES PTO, along with the support of the school principal and members of the faculty, established the plan. In addition to the obvious educational benefits, they are working on developing a stronger sense of community between the PTO, the school staff and families of students.

Garden Site:
The outdoor classroom/garden is located in a 100ft x 100ft area between Rosemount Elementary School and Rosemount Middle School. The area is walled on 2 sides by the elementary school. When fully completed, the area will include a Butterfly Garden, Pioneer Garden, a pond-less waterfall structure, composting and outdoor seating to accommodate up to 40 students. Water is available from an adjacent school wall, and they plan to incorporate underground sprinklers for ease of maintenance.

Garden Product:
During the school year the produce will be used by the school for healthy snacks. In the summer, the produce will be offered to the volunteer families who help maintain the garden while school is not in session. Any excess produce will be donated to a local food shelf.

Education:
The school staff was consulted, and a number of teachers worked on developing grade appropriate curriculum to take advantage of the outdoor classroom/garden. In addition to using the classroom for science learning the garden will be used as a place to display art sculptures created by students, a space for music and concerts, incorporating math lessons and teaching of life skills.
**Student Involvement:**
As an outdoor classroom, the students will be involved in learning through the use of the natural environment created within. Student volunteers, along with their families were involved in the construction and maintenance of the garden. During the summer months, volunteer students and their families helped maintain the garden. Since the outdoor classroom is located along the main sidewalk to the entrance of the school, no special access is required for students with disabilities.

**Supervision and Maintenance:**
Ultimate responsibility for the supervision and maintenance for the outdoor classroom will be with the RES PTO. The current team is made up of members whose children span the entire range of grades K-5. They have a succession plan as new parents join the PTO to ensure that it is maintained for many years to come. A key part of the plan was to construct it in a way to minimize maintenance efforts. During the summer they enlist volunteer families to sign up to help on a weekly basis, with supervision from the Garden Committee. Since their outdoor classroom is bordered by two school walls in a highly visible area, vandalism has not been a major concern.

**Source of Grant Funds/Assistance**
Jeffers Foundation, Rosemount PTO, School fundraisers, in-kind donations from local businesses and community members

**Sustainability:**
Rosemount Elementary has the support of the school principal, as well as numerous members of the staff. They see the undertaking of this project, as well as its ongoing success, as a chance to help forge a stronger community bond between parents, administration and teachers. A succession plan and strategy have been discussed so that the current garden committee ensures that it can provide an appropriate hand-off to the next generation of parents entering the PTO in future years. They have reached out to other schools in the district that have developed similar programs in order to share best practices.

**For more information contact:**
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