



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# NEWS RELEASE

**JACK O'CONNELL**  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

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## **STATE SCHOOLS CHIEF JACK O'CONNELL HELPS KICK OFF FIRST MEETING OF GARDEN ADVISORY GROUP**

SACRAMENTO – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell today attended the inaugural meeting in Sacramento of the School Garden Advisory Group. He appointed members to the Advisory Group earlier this year to provide support and guidance to schools wishing to start or expand existing instructional school gardens. The list of members is attached.

“Children are learning that you are what you eat and you can eat what you grow,” said O'Connell. “This is a valuable lesson for students because they learn about agriculture in hands-on instructional settings; tend to eat the fruits and vegetables they grow; learn the link between them and the environment; and get exercise to boot.”

Assembly Bill 1535 (Núñez) was signed into law last year and authorized O'Connell to establish the School Gardens Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is designed to support program efforts through technical assistance, resources, in-kind support, site visits, and other related efforts, to promote instructional school gardens in California's public schools. Strong anecdotal evidence shows that children who participate in school garden or outdoor classrooms are more excited and enthusiastic about learning. As they plant and harvest their own fruits and vegetables, they are more likely to eat them. Also, as their knowledge of nutrition increases, so does their preference for fruits and vegetables that leads to healthier eating patterns. Healthy, active, and well-nourished children are more likely to attend school and are more prepared and motivated to learn that are all factors in helping students achieve academically.

“As a strong advocate of school gardens, I specifically designed my legislation to include stakeholders that would effectively promote the school gardens and provide accountability,” said California Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez. “We hope to leverage More...more...”

their expertise in areas such as food production, nutrition, obesity prevention, and recycling. I'm excited about the lifelong lessons that California schoolchildren will be able to take with them as they participate in the reborn School Gardens program.”

AB 1535 also provides \$15 million in seed money for schools to develop a school garden or to expand existing ones for academic instruction. The California Department of Education will soon award 72 percent of that amount to schools that have requested funds. The remaining money will eventually be offered to schools on a competitive basis once the criteria have been established with the help of the Advisory Group.

There are 26 members of the Advisory Group representing diverse occupations from around the state, and all have experience in instructional school gardens. For more information on California’s School Gardens Program, please visit

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/78719>.

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**Attachment**

**School Garden Advisory Group**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation/Employer</b>	<b>County of Residence</b>
Alderson, Tim	California School Garden Network; AgriGator, Inc	Los Angeles (Kern)
Bartholomew, Cassie	StopWaste.Org, Alameda County	Contra Costa
Bishop, Sylvia	48th District Agricultural Association	Los Angeles
Borges, Don	Modesto Junior College	Stanislaus
Boynton, Christine	Alameda County Office of Education Nutritional Learning	Alameda
Burns, Helga	Del Norte Unified School District	Del Norte
Chappell, David	Self-employed	Placer
Culbertson, Judith	California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom	Sacramento
D'Agostini, Daniel	Self-employed	Sutter
Emery, Pamela	California Fertilizer Foundation	Yolo
Hamilton, Bonnie	Kaiser Permanente	Solano
Hayden-Smith, Rose	UC Cooperative Extension	Ventura
Kerkman, Mike	Huntington Botanical Gardens	Los Angeles
King, David	The Learning Garden	Los Angeles
Lewis, Andrea	California Environmental Protection Agency	Sacramento
Lewis, Briana	Western Growers Charitable Foundation	Orange
Mandl, Tonya	Los Angeles Unified School District Nutrition Network	Los Angeles
Marholin, Jan	Fillmore Unified School District	Ventura
Maynard, William	City of Sacramento Parks Department	Sacramento
Nolan, Mark	San Mateo County Office of Education	San Mateo
Ohmart, Jeri	UC Davis Children's Garden Program	Yolo
Pernell, April	Descanso Gardens	Los Angeles
Preschel, Lisa	Occidental Arts & Ecology Center	Sonoma

Sherk, Bonnie	Life Frames, Inc. & A Living Library	San Francisco
Skerrett, Mary	Gladstein, Neandross & Associates	Riverside
Watkins, Justin	UC Cooperative Extension	Alameda

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