

Legislation Text

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Calling on the Public, Private, Charter and Parochial Schools of Philadelphia to explore and investigate the value of urban school gardens.

WHEREAS, Urban school gardens can be created by mandating the preservation of existing gardens in schools, promoting the use of school garden produce in school cafeterias and developing and evaluating school garden pilots to facilitate a more systematic roll out of a garden in every school; and

WHEREAS, To develop, establish and promote urban school garden pilot programs which link school gardens and community health and food system change, to evaluate logistical issues, shared resources, cost factors and community engagement with schools will help to assess the capital resources needed and ultimate value of an urban school garden program; and

WHEREAS, In the 2004 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act school districts were required to adopt wellness programs; and

WHEREAS, On March 2, 2006, then Councilman Michael A. Nutter introduced a resolution authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings on the dramatic increase in childhood obesity nationally and locally, and to evaluate and make recommendations on the actions that local government, in conjunction with public and private partners, can take to help reduce and eliminate this public health epidemic; and

WHEREAS, In March 2009, First Lady Michelle Obama planted a vegetable garden at the White House to educate children about health, locally grown fruit and vegetables at a time when obesity and diabetes have become a national concern; and

WHEREAS, On February 12, 2010, City Council of Philadelphia authorized the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings to investigate the emergence of national and local adult and childhood obesity as an epidemic, the causes of obesity; the racial and ethnic disparities in the prevalence of obesity and obesity-related illnesses; and how the high availability of unhealthy foods and beverages contributes to the obesity of many in Philadelphia and to evaluate obesity prevention and reduction initiatives in order to reduce the rates of childhood obesity; and

WHEREAS, A July study from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service found that students eat fewer servings of vegetables, fruits and whole grains and more servings of sodium and saturated fat; and

WHEREAS, School gardens can provide children access to fresh, healthy food and provide physical activity, which might not otherwise available to them; and

WHEREAS, Gardens also provide opportunities for family and community involvement in schools, academic achievement, environmental stewardship, science education, work preparedness and appreciation for the world; and

WHEREAS, School Gardens can provide connections to farmers' markets and other healthy sources of produce that promote community solutions and eating local sources of food; and

WHEREAS, Urban school gardens started becoming more common about a decade ago as a way to introduce children to more local and organic produce. One early pioneer was chef Alice Waters, who began her Edible Schoolyard program in Berkeley, California; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby call on the Public, Private, Charter and Parochial Schools of Philadelphia to explore and investigate the value of urban school gardens.