



News from the Delta Garden Study

Addressing Childhood Obesity in the Central and Delta Regions of Arkansas
Headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas

June/July 2011



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Congratulations! The 2011-2012 Comparison Schools Have Been Selected

Four demographically-pair matched comparison schools have been selected for the 2011-2012 school year. Trumann Intermediate will serve as the control for Harrisburg Middle School, Clinton Intermediate and Junior High will serve as the control for Searcy County School District

schools, Manila Middle School will serve as the control for Highland Middle School, and Wynne Junior High will serve as the



Mabelvale Garden Update

This past week, Karl Heinbockel and fellow Delta Garden Study interns have had the opportunity to escape the fluorescent lights of the office and work in the bright sunshine at the Mabelvale Magnet Middle School gardens and greenhouse. In spite of the oppressive heat, there is still much to do to prepare for the coming school year at Mabelvale Magnet Middle School. We are removing the residue from last year's crops (and weeds!) and replacing them with a buckwheat cover crop to revitalize the soil. The buckwheat cover crop suppresses weed growth and once tilled in will add important organic material back into the soil. This allows new plants the ample nutrients necessary to blossom with great vigor. Healthy soil has been our focus this summer. In the fall, we will concentrate our efforts at producing a variety of food crops with the help of our

control for Monticello Middle School. Each of these four comparison schools was selected as a demographic pair-match and will participate in Delta Garden Study measurements throughout the school year. Comparison schools receive a \$2000 stipend to be used towards any academic program of their choice, as well as assistance with their state-mandated collection of students' BMI measurements. Many thanks to these four new schools for their participation and support of the Delta Garden Study!



Back to School for the Delta Garden Study School

begins August 15th for most students across the state, including our DGS garden schools. After completion of the baseline data collection, students will be ready to go to the garden. Science, while fascinating in its complexity, can sometimes be

difficult for students to grasp in the classroom. This fall, however, the Delta Garden Study will literally "bring to life" concepts learned in the classroom, as students go beyond the textbook to interact with plants, chickens, and even earthworms during their science lessons. The participating middle schools will each receive an original garden-based science curriculum to use in their twice-weekly 45-minute garden sessions. This curriculum, which will familiarize students with their new vegetable garden, also aligns with the Arkansas state science standards. Each lesson has been tailored to help teachers cover required science material. What better way to learn about our atmosphere's greenhouse effect than to step into an actual greenhouse? Cell reproduction will be taught while gathering chicken eggs, and anatomy will take on a whole new meaning as the students dissect an earthworm. So whether the day's lesson is focused on the water cycle or on organ systems, students will engage in fun, hands-on learning that also prepares them to succeed when test-taking time rolls around. - *Many thanks to Emily Deitchler, DGS Summer Intern, for help with this article.*



Agriculture and Food

Research Initiative With \$4.78 million dollars from USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Dr. Weber and colleagues from the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and the Arkansas Center

for Health Improvement, will be working to develop obesity prevention strategies for at-risk children in preschool through first grade (ages 2-8). Over the course of the project, Dr. Weber's team at Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute will conduct a

students at Mabelvale!
In the coming weeks, we will be continuing to clean up and organize the garden and greenhouse spaces so that this school year will be a great one for Delta Garden Study's showcase garden - Mabelvale!



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statewide foodshed assessment and design and implement an aggregation center for fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables. This center will increase the capacity for serving local produce in Arkansas schools. Andrew Carberry is currently planning visits with schools, producers, processors and those who are already working on, or interested in, farm to school programs in Arkansas. If you would like to participate please contact him at 501-364-6555 or ancarberry@uams.edu.



Visit [Our Website](#) to See Progress on our New Gardens! Don't forget to visit our website for pictures and stories about the progress of our new gardens. Liana, Kevin, Ryan and Cale have been busy developing their sites, planting a late summer garden, and getting to know their communities. Many thanks to all of their community members who have donated materials, equipment and labor!

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