

SLUG (Students Learning through Urban Gardening) Pilot Program

Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN), an urban open space preservation and stewardship organization has started a new program of urban school-based vegetable gardening. The model, called "Students Learning through Urban Gardening" (SLUG), will provide participants with training and support, a SLUG Handbook (that contains garden guidance and timing cues, journal prompts related to learning standards, supplemental garden-related activities, and more), and some garden materials and supplies.

The SLUG program will provide teachers and students with the tools to achieve step-by-step "seed to harvest" vegetable gardening. Teachers will be provided with periodic training (PDPs available) in short-duration garden-related activities. SLUG components will include growing vegetables indoors under lights, indoor worm bin composting (vermiculture), growing vegetables outdoors under weather protection, and outdoor composting.

Teachers at SLUG sites will lead the activities, with SLUG staff providing timely delivery of garden materials and supplies. Support for outdoor vegetable garden sites may be provided during the summer, per prior confirmed arrangement with BNAN.

BNAN has formed an Advisory Committee to oversee the development of the SLUG program, gathering together a group of classroom teachers, teacher trainers, gardeners, greenhouse growers, and members of organizations already implementing gardening curriculum in schools. This committee is meeting once every three months to review components of the SLUG program.

Schools are required to complete an application process. The Advisory Committee will guide BNAN/SLUG staff in adding sites to the program. When a school site is approved, the site leader is required to serve on the Advisory Committee, and teachers are strongly encouraged to attend a SLUG teacher training session. A SLUG Handbook and other curriculum materials will be provided to each Teacher Training participant.

If you and other teachers at your school would like to participate in the SLUG program, please contact: SLUG@bostonnatural.org. Contact Jo Ann Whitehead, BNAN Garden Educator, with any questions at (617) 542-7696 extension 15 or joann@bostonnatural.org.

Thank you for your interest in the SLUG program!

