

February 13, 2017

Dear Representative Clem and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to ask you to support HB 2038- to minimally preserve and I hope expand funding for School Garden programs

I am a teacher at Memorial Middle School, Albany; I have the most rewarding opportunity as part of my teaching duties to have two Garden Classes daily.

Our principal, Mr. Ken Gilbert gave us the "go ahead", six years ago with an initial 6 covered raised beds- an OSU hoop design! With help from OSU students, volunteer work parties and faculty involvement we have grown! The MMS students participate in all phases of gardening in our Orchard, Community Garden, Courtyard Garden Patch and unheated Greenhouses.

Students love to harvest, wheelbarrow mulch/compost/soil/gravel, dig trenches/holes, and even weed. The students sample the fruits and vegetables from the gardens and so many times I hear something like, "I never liked carrots before.", or "Fava beans are fun to eat." I know there is good research on kids enjoying food much more if they help grow it and our classes are the living proof of this phenomenon.

Being outdoors, raising food and nurturing plants, plus learning where food comes from and how good it tastes fresh are all so important facets in a child's development. We share produce with our cafeteria, our Home Ec classes, and we donate to other schools especially around Thanksgiving time when Food Baskets are prepared for community members in need of food.

Please support school gardens and students health!

Please feel free to contact me or come visit our Gardens. Students will happily give you a tour. I am sorry that I could not deliver this in person and bring students with me.

Mallory Marquet  
Memorial Middle School Teacher

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