

Spring 2026

Dear SGN Community,

Thanks to donors like you, the School Garden Network (SGN) has quietly and consistently kept outdoor learning alive in Sonoma County schools for 20 years — **and today, that role is becoming even more essential as needs increase.**

For many students, the school garden is the one place in the school day where they can slow down, reset, and reconnect before returning to learning. **Today, that space is under increasing strain.** Federal funding cuts and district-level budget reductions are eliminating garden educators and other essential student supports, including counselors and classroom aides.

SGN works alongside more than 100 educators who keep these living classrooms active every day. We know that **garden-based learning is not an enrichment activity — it's a Tier 1, evidence-based student support** that helps students regulate emotions, reduce stress, recover from trauma, and return to learning ready to engage.

As schools lose staff and capacity, SGN is already serving as a stabilizing partner — keeping garden-based programs running during widespread budget instability. Instead of placing additional burden on already stretched schools, SGN manages gardens, delivers hands-on instruction, coordinates programming, and sustains the partnerships that make these spaces possible during the school day.

We need to raise \$75,000 this Summer to sustain this work — and we're asking our community to help make that possible. Every dollar helps keep school gardens active and accessible for students:

- **Year-round garden management** - keeping school gardens safe, maintained, and ready for learning
- **Hands-on instruction** - including seasonal lessons, Harvest of the Month tastings, and social-emotional learning
- **Nature-based small group therapy** - in partnership with the Center for Nature-Based Therapy
- **Full program coordination** - aligning garden learning with district curriculum and goals
- **Grow Kits** - supporting year-round food production with locally sourced seeds and plants
- **SchoolYard Habitat projects** - strengthening ecological literacy through native plants and outdoor learning
- **Workshops and educator learning opportunities** - including community science, nutrition, and botanical arts

For example, Sebastopol Union School District recently eliminated its garden educator position. Rather than allowing those well-established gardens to go unused, SGN is working directly with the district to ensure its 500 students continue to have access to outdoor learning and garden-based education.

More than 5,000 students are now at risk of losing access to outdoor learning spaces — and the educators who make those experiences possible. Please consider making a gift today and becoming part of the community that keeps school gardens thriving for students.

Help us continue providing the stability schools rely on as they navigate budget instability — and ensure students continue to have access to spaces where they can learn, regulate, and feel connected at school.

With deep gratitude,

Susan Davis

Sue Davis
Executive Director, School Garden Network

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