

PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

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\$30,000 Grant Will Fund Edible Schoolyard Project

Study will also be used to help shape environmental policy

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard joined Project School Principal Tarrence Banks and community leaders today to announce the beginning of an edible schoolyard pilot project.

The City's Brownfield Redevelopment Program, in partnership with the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), is awarding a \$30,000 grant to the Project School, 1145 E. 22nd St., to transform 1.5 acres on the school's property into a sustainable urban garden, containing primarily edible plants. The pilot will also be used to guide development of future urban farming policy and projects.

"This entire area of the city is in the middle of a transformation that promises to revive entire neighborhoods at a time, with a focus on sustainable living," said Mayor Ballard. "This playground is a reclaimed brownfield site, and in step with the renewal happening around this school, this site will be developed into an edible school yard. It is truly a signal of the new direction this entire area of the city is heading."

The grant will be used for a safe soils investigation for the school's 1.5 acre back lot. Once the soil condition is determined, remediation can begin if any is needed. This will ensure that any food grown in the soil will be safe to eat. The soil study should be complete within the next three months, and project planning will follow. The Project School is also working with other partners to help fund the urban garden.

Once the program begins, the produce grown will be used for school lunches. If there is a surplus, the students may sell the remaining produce it at a farmer's market.

This project is a pilot that will also help create guidelines and protocols to share with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management in future policy decisions about urban farming activities.

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