



# HOLLIN MEADOWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Hollin Meadows Elementary School (HMES) is a Title I school with 55% of its students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. While economic and cultural integration of the HMES community is beneficial to all of its students, there is always a need to further close the achievement gap.

Research demonstrates that regular access to the outdoors, in particular green spaces, helps to improve concentration, impulse control, and hyperactivity; and to reduce the mental and emotional fatigue that dampens school performance in all children.

In the spirit of the motto displayed in the HMES lobby, Excellence Through Equity, the mission of the Outdoor Education Program is to:

## 2004

Hollin Meadows parents initiate first school garden at HMES.

## 2005-2006

Classes begin grade-level curriculum planting.

## 2006

First Thanksgiving lettuce harvest.

## 2007-2008

Irrigation system installed and larger Community Garden established.

## 2009

First Lady Michelle Obama visits HMES garden.

## 2010

Hollin Meadows Partnership for Science and Math Education is established to bridge the funding gap for STEM education.

## 2016

Partnership and gardens go fallow during school renovation.

## 2018

Partnership is re-established as the Hollin Meadows Partnership for Outdoor Education.

## 2019

Learning Production Garden is built and Solar Drip Irrigation System is installed.

## 2022

24' x 30' greenhouse is installed for expanded production capacity.



- Ensure each student has access to the outdoors on a regular basis;
- Provide teachers with an outdoor space in which they can easily build lessons about science and the natural world;
- Foster independence and creativity through a connection to the natural world;
- Give each student the knowledge and opportunity to be environmental stewards in whatever capacity they are able;
- Connect students more closely to their food source;
- Explore food justice and multiculturalism through shared industry; and
- Reinforce core curriculum through experiential and project-based learning modules.

### OUTDOOR CLASSROOM – 14,000 SQ. FT.

*Acts as the hub of the HMES Outdoor Education Program and features...*

- A stainless-steel rainwater cistern;
- Landscaping that includes native plant species and bird, butterfly, and pollinator habitats;
- A designated teaching space with seating;
- A sensory garden with hands-on natural element stations that appeal to all five senses;
- Rain gardens surrounding the courtyard's three drains;
- A garden library that caters to each grade; and
- A 24' x 30' greenhouse that allows for year-round outdoor education.

### LEARNING PRODUCTION GARDEN – 8,000 SQ. FT.

*A space where HMES students can grow and harvest fresh produce and that is equipped with...*

- A stainless-steel rainwater cistern;
- 21 raised garden beds;
- A deck that serves as an outdoor classroom;
- A solar-powered irrigation system; and
- A large storage shed.



### ABOUT THE HOLLIN MEADOWS PARTNERSHIP FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION:

The Hollin Meadows Partnership for Outdoor Education is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with over a decade of service to HMES. The mission of the Partnership is to create immersive learning experiences for HMES students and their families through engaging garden spaces that enhance the school curriculum and create equitable opportunities for global and ethical citizenship.