



**Briargrove Elementary School
Parent Handbook
2011-2012**

Deborah "Debi" Russell, Principal
drussel1@houstonisd.org

Eden Jones-Hinds, Assistant Principal
Ejones16@houstonisd.org

**6145 San Felipe
Houston, Texas 77057
(713) 917-3600
(713) 917-3601 - Fax**

Briargroveschool.com

Mission Statement

The mission of Briargrove Elementary is to provide a nurturing environment that fosters educational excellence, strength of character, and a love of learning for all children.

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ACADEMICS

Programs and Contacts

The **Regular Instructional program** provides a thorough and complete academic foundation of essential grade level skills. Students are encouraged to pursue a love of reading. Classroom learning experiences include hands-on activities and lessons that require students to apply new learning and use critical thinking skills to solve problems, to research and write about many topics.

The **Vanguard program** (formerly called Gifted and Talented) is designed for children who benefit from an enriched and challenging curriculum. Learning is presented at an accelerated rate.

Contact person: Chloe Cook, GT Coordinator

ESL (English as a Second Language) classes are available for students whose home language includes a language other than English. All instruction is given in English. ESL teachers employ strategies to facilitate language learning throughout all subject areas. (Kindergarten through 5th grade)

Contact person: Assistant Principal, LPAC Chair

Special Education services are provided for students who have qualified under TEA guidelines. Instructional programs are designed on an individual basis for children experiencing learning difficulties. (Kindergarten through 5th grade)

Contact person: Debi Russell, Referral Chair

Speech Therapy is offered to students who have qualified under TEA guidelines for instruction in articulation and/or language development. Services are provided to all children who meet requirements and live in the Briargrove attendance zone. (Three years through 5th grade)

Contact person for initial referrals: Debi Russell, Referral Chair

Grades & Grading

All grades will be determined by regular attendance, consistent daily preparation, promptness in completing assignments and the quality of completed work.

Criteria for Grading Academic Subjects:

90-100	Excellent quality of work - thorough mastery of subject
80-89	Good quality of work - above average with consistent effort
75-79	Satisfactory quality of work -average achievement
70-74	Below quality of work expected - below average achievement
Below 70	Unsatisfactory quality of work - not passing

Criteria for Grading Conduct:

E	Excellent quality of behavior, totally self-disciplined
S	Satisfactory quality of behavior, cooperates readily
P	Poor quality of behavior, below average
U	Unsatisfactory quality of behavior, needs drastic improvement

Parent Student Connect (PSC)

PSC is an online service that allows registered users (i.e., parents and students) to log in to access a variety of student information, see class assignments and school calendars, and even communicate electronically with teachers. Users can also choose to have an e-mail or text message sent if a child's grades drop below a selected average or is absent or tardy to class. This is a great way to keep up with your child's grades at all times.

To get started, log in or register at www.houstonisd.org/PSC. Parents will need the following information to complete registration:

- Student ID number (HISD)
- Student date of birth
- Last five digits of student's Social Security number if on file with HISD. If not on file, use the last five digits of the "S-Number" provided to your child by HISD. Please call the school if you do not know this number.

Evaluation of Student Progress

Students will receive a progress report 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ weeks after the start of each 9 week reporting cycle. Report cards will be sent after the end of the 9 week grading period. If you have questions about your child's progress or grades, please contact their teacher through email or send a note with your child. Teachers cannot hold parent conferences at the beginning of the school day or during dismissal time.

Homework

Regularly assigned homework positively impacts academic progress and helps develop good study habits. Assignments are an extension of classroom work to provide extra practice on new skills, to maintain previously learned concepts, and apply to learning. In addition to nightly homework, all students are expected to read a minimum of 20 minutes each day.

Promotion Guidelines

- All students in grades 1-5 must meet current Texas course-averaged requirements: a 70 percent overall average in course grades, including 70 percent grade in reading, language arts, mathematics, and either science or social studies.
 - Students in grades 1 and 2 must earn a passing score on HISD's High-Frequency Word Evaluation.
 - All students in grades 3-5 must earn a passing score on the reading and mathematics sections of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).
 - More than 10 unexcused absences will result in retention.
- A complete explanation of the promotion standards can be found online at houstonisd.org.

Computer Usage

Students are expected to utilize technology in ways that enhance academic learning and adhere to guidelines set forth in the HISD Student Code of Conduct. Teachers will make every effort to carefully supervise students while using technology; however, students are expected to act responsibly and to follow the Acceptable Use Policy.

Classroom Visits

Parents of Briargrove students are welcome and encouraged to visit our school. Classroom visits should be restricted to the class in which your child is a member and scheduled at a time convenient for the teacher. Visits must be limited to not more than 15 minutes. Please do not bring preschool age children when visiting a classroom.

Parents must sign in at the office and secure a visitor's badge. We ask you to give consideration to the teacher and students when you visit by not interrupting instruction. Try to be as inconspicuous

as possible. You are free to read displayed work. This is not the time for a parent-teacher conference.

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged. A parent may request a conference by sending a written note with the child, by calling the school office to leave a message, or by e-mailing the teacher.

Supplies & Backpacks

School Supplies-School supplies can be purchased through the PTO before the start of the school year and through the first week of school. The sale of supplies is not a PTO fundraiser, but rather a service to both teachers and parents. The supply lists are recommended by the teachers and are specific to the learning objectives for each grade; therefore they will vary from the HISD list. It is suggested that all students purchase supplies through this PTO initiative. Supplies purchased early will be delivered to the student's classroom before the first day of school.

Backpacks-

1. Do not carry more than one textbook in a backpack.
2. Never load encyclopedias or dictionaries in a backpack.
3. Remove all items that are not necessary for school and leave them at home.
4. Carry extra books and large binders in your arms - not your backpack.
5. Always wear the backpack over both shoulders.

Parents: please check your child's backpack on a weekly basis for class work and school/teacher communication. Children should never have toys in their backpacks.

Rolling backpacks are not allowed at Briargrove.

After-School Activities

There are several fee-for-service after-school activities available to students. The activities vary every year but may include after school care, choir, Name That Book, art, Mad Science, Spanish, and scouts. Notices are sent in the Wednesday folders and information is available on the PTO website at bgroadrunners.org.

Textbooks

Students are responsible for the proper care of textbooks and must pay for lost or damaged books. Students are required to pay fines for damaged textbooks. Each student shall return all textbooks issued to him or her when leaving the school or at the end of the school year.

ATTENDANCE & REGISTRATION

Absences

Excused Absences

The following reasons are acceptable for an absence to be excused:

- Personal illness
- Medical, dental, or psychological appointments
- Death in immediate family
- Emergencies or other circumstances recognized by the principal
- Observance of religious holy days (written request must be sent in advance).

Parents should send a note to the teacher stating the reason for the absence within three days of the absence.

Extended illness or excessive absences may require a doctor's note.

Unexcused Absences

All absences not documented by a written note from the parent or for reasons other than those stated above are considered unexcused.

Excessive Absences

Extended Vacations

Student absences that are the result of family trips are not considered excused absences. Out of respect for the instructional program and our teaching staff we ask that family trips be scheduled during non-instructional days. We strongly discourage parents from planning out of town visits on school days prior to or following school holidays. We also request that parents not take children out of school to make early flights or "beat the traffic" as this is a disruption to the instructional program.

Out of State or Out of Country Travel

Students who leave the city, state or country during the school year will be withdrawn from school. They will be re-enrolled on a space available basis. Parents considering travel are required to make an appointment with the principal. Students must complete the entire school year to be considered for promotion. Students who are withdrawn prior to the last day must re-enroll as a new student the following year.

Compulsory Attendance

Students between the ages of 6 and 18 are required to attend school in the state of Texas. Kindergarten students are subject to the compulsory attendance laws if they are enrolled in school; however, if a child has not reached the age of 6 by September 1st, they may be withdrawn from school without being in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Procedures for Reporting Student Absences

Parents can help their students and school personnel by sending a note each and every time that a child returns to school after an absence. The note should include the following:

- Date
- Child's first and last name
- Date of the absence(s)
- Reason for the absence (Please bring a doctor's note if applicable)

Tardy/Early Dismissal Procedures

Tardies

School begins each day at 7:45 a.m. We have a full schedule and it important that children are at school on time in order to take full advantage of their day. Students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must be accompanied by a parent who must sign them in. Students should report to receive a tardy slip before going to class.

Scheduling Appointments

Official attendance time is 9:00 a.m. Students who are out of class at 9:00 a.m. because of medical appointments may be counted present provided they return with *an excuse from the doctor*.

Early Checkout

Students who need to leave school for an appointment must be checked out through the office. Parents should plan to pick up students before 2:45, or wait for them to be dismissed at 3:00. Students will not be called after 2:45. This plan is in place for the safety of all students.

Early Dismissal

There will be 5 early dismissal days during the school year. Please see the school website briargroveschool.com the dates. Students will be released at 12:30 and all normal dismissal procedures will be followed.

Sign-out Procedures

All visitors to the building must sign in and wear a tag each time they visit Briargrove Elementary. No visitors are allowed past the front desk without a nametag. If you see an adult without a nametag in the hallways or other areas, please direct them back to the front desk or have a teacher call the office for support.

Registration & Residency

Registration

The following items are required to register in an HISD school. All documents must be presented at the time of registration.

Proof of birth date: original/official copy of Birth Certificate or passport. Student must be five (5) on or before September 1st to enter Kindergarten or six (6) on or before September 1st to enter 1st grade.

Social Security Card: preferred, but not required.

Proof of immunizations: must be in English and signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in the U.S.

- Diphtheria and Tetanus
- Polio
- MMR
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox)

Proof of Residency in Briargrove attendance zone (two items required):

Current utility/phone bill with parent's name and address and/or a current lease agreement with both the parent's and child's name

Check-out Papers and report card from previous school, if applicable.

All registration documents must be complete before a child is considered enrolled. Classroom slots cannot be reserved until all documents are complete.

Residency

Student must reside in the Briargrove attendance zone in order to attend school at Briargrove. If a student moves out of the Briargrove zone during the school year, the student must enroll in his/her new zoned school. Students may not remain at Briargrove after moving from the zone.

EXPECTATIONS & DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Dress Code

Girls may wear:

- white uniform blouse, oxford, polo or turtleneck in red, navy, hunter green, yellow or white (must be tucked in)
- jumper, skirt, shorts, slacks, or culottes in Briargrove uniform plaid, khaki or navy
- sweaters or sweatshirts - navy, red or hunter green
- socks or tights
- belt (if garment has belt loops)
- athletic shoes - tie, Velcro, or slip-on

All skirts, jumpers and shorts must be no more than three fingers (the students) above the knee.

Boys may wear:

- white oxford cloth shirt, polo or turtleneck in red, navy, hunter green, yellow or white (must be tucked in)
- slacks or shorts - khaki or navy
- socks
- belt (if garment has belt loops)
- athletic shoes - tie, Velcro, or slip-on

Logos on shirts must be small enough to be covered by the child's closed fist.

In addition:

- An official Briargrove T-shirt must be worn on all field trips.
- Briargrove t-shirts may be worn on Spirit Days.
- Blue jeans may be worn on Spirit Days. Spirit Days are every Friday throughout the school year. *Blue jean shorts are not allowed.*
- Cowboy hats and boots may be worn on "Go Texan Day".
- Outerwear must be removed in the building. Only sweaters, sweatshirts and hoodies in the approved colors that are plain or have small (able to be covered by the child's fist) logos will be allowed at any time inside of the school building.

Please label all sweatshirts, sweaters, jackets, lunch kits and backpacks clearly with the student's name.

Discipline Management Plan-The PRIDE Program

Briargrove has set expectation for all public areas based on the PRIDE program. Our students are expected to show:

Persistence

Respect

Internal Control

Dependability

Excellence

Field Trip Expectations

Official field trip forms must be completed, signed and returned to the student's teacher before the date of the planned trip. Notes and telephone calls from parents cannot be accepted as a form of permission to attend a field trip. All students are required to wear a Briargrove t-shirt while on field trips.

A high standard of conduct is expected of students who participate in field trip activities. Any students who exhibits poor conduct in the classroom as reflected in his/her report card or conduct chart may be excluded from participation in a scheduled field trip. Exclusion from a field trip(s) may be used as a consequence for specific acts of misconduct. Any student whose behavior is unacceptable on a field trip will be excluded from field trips for the remainder of the school year. Parents will be notified of this decision.

*Parents must complete a background check and be approved prior to chaperoning a field trip. The background check form can be picked up in the office. The completed form and documentation should be returned to Mary Clare Ward in the office. Teachers will only be notified as to who has been approved.

Cell Phone Policies

Students are not permitted to use their cell phones during the school day. (7:15 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.) If your child needs to use a phone, he/she may use the school phone with permission from his/her classroom teacher. Inappropriate use of a cell phone will result in confiscation by school personnel. The first time a cell phone is taken the parent may pick it up from an administrator. If the cell phone is taken up more than once, parents may be charged a fee to retrieve the phone. Cell phones will not be returned to the student.

Parents: please do not use your cell phone in the school zone or in the carpool lane.

HEALTH & NUTRITION OF STUDENTS

Food/ Nutrition

Breakfast

Breakfast is free for all students. Any student who wishes to eat breakfast must be at school by 7:45. Cafeteria personnel will bring the food to the classrooms. If you do not wish for your child to eat breakfast at school, please send a note to their teacher.

Lunch

Lunch schedules vary by grade and class. Lunch is provided each day and costs \$2.25 inclusive of milk. Applications for free and reduced lunch are sent home with each student at the beginning of the year.

Students are welcome to bring their lunch from home.

A lunch card is issued to every student. The parents can credit their student's card as often as they would like. They can add credit through the front office or through the HISD website at www.parentonline.net. Parents may also use the website to exclude certain food choices for their child (like chips, ice cream, or snacks in general).

Parents are welcome to join their children for lunch during their assigned lunch hour. Parents must check in at the front office prior to entering the cafeteria.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value

By Texas law, the following food items cannot be provided to elementary students at any time during the school day:

- Carbonated drinks
- Popsicles and other types of frozen sweetened water with the exception of products that contain fruit or fruit juice
- Gum
- Candy such as: hard candy, gum drops, jelly beans, jelly like characters, marshmallow candy, soft mints, candy corn, licorice, cotton candy, candy coated popcorn

Please do not bring any of the above items for class snacks, treats, or parties.

Health & Medical Requirements

All illnesses or injuries will be reported to the classroom teacher who will then have the student report to the nurse. The nurse will contact parents if necessary. **Emergency phone numbers on enrollment cards are necessary and must be listed in case we are unable to contact the parents.** It is of paramount importance to the safety of our youngsters that parents' home, business, cell and emergency numbers be kept updated during the school year.

HISD policy states: "School personnel are not to administer medical treatment or medication, including over-the-counter drugs." If your child is on a short-term medication, such as an antibiotic, please schedule the dosage so that he receives a morning dose and the remaining doses when he returns from school in the afternoon.

Pupils on long-term medication may have medication administered at school only if the physician requests in writing that there is a need for stated medication. The appropriate form is available from the school nurse. It must be signed by both physician and parent and on file before any long term medication may be given. Children returning to school after an illness should be free of fever for 24 hours before they return.

PROCEDURES AND ROUTINES

Arrival & Dismissal

Traffic Safety System

Briargrove Elementary follows a Traffic Safety System to ensure a safe and orderly dismissal of students.

- Car pool drivers must display the car pool numbers issued by Briargrove Elementary on the passenger side of the front windshield. Children who ride in those cars are given specific place to wait in the hallways. At dismissal time, children will be walked to their assigned places to wait for their numbers to be called.
- As vehicles approach the driveways, a staff member will call the car pool number into the school via walkie-talkie. Staff members with the students call car pools by numbers and supervise the children as they load.

Responsibilities of Car Pool Drivers

When driving students to and from school:

- Be patient and alert. Please do not talk on cell phones while in car pool line. Young children may dart out into driveways and car pool lines.
- Pull as far down to the end of the lot as possible before stopping. Students should exit and enter the cars on the school side only.
- Instruct students to listen for their car pool number.
- Do not leave your car for any reason.
- Do not block driveways. Be a good neighbor!
- Parents are discouraged from using off campus pick up locations, as these cannot be properly supervised for safety.
- Do not use your cell phone in the carpool lane.

Reminders for Car Pool Drivers

- Notify your car pool driver if your child is absent or if your child leaves school during the day and will not be riding home in the car pool.
- Remember to notify your car pool driver if your child has after school plans that are not part of his/her regular routine.
- If your child is bringing a friend home, let the car pool driver know in advance.
- Parents must send a note for children in all grades (K-5) if they are leaving with an adult whose name is different than the names recorded on the enrollment card.

Reminders for Those Who Walk, Ride Bikes, or Scooters

- Cross streets with HPD safety officers/crossing guards whenever possible, and cross only at corners.
- Do not talk to or accept rides with strangers.
- Always use a prearranged route to and from school.
- Bicycles and scooters must be locked and in rack.
- Only one person may be on each bicycle.
- Students riding bicycles and scooters must wear helmets.

If your child is allowed to go home with a friend or by some other means than their normal routine (i.e. usually rides a daycare bus, but will be picked up in carpool) they must have a

note written by the parent to the teacher to give them permission for the change. If no note is presented, the child will be sent home by their usual method.

Severe Weather

In the event of weather so severe that there is a possibility schools may be closed, parents are asked to stay tuned to their radio or television station for information. In order to maintain open communication lines, you are asked to refrain from calling the school. If school is to be closed, the decision and announcement will be made prior to 6:30 a.m. If a decision is made by the district to cancel classes, it will be announced on the media. In emergencies, tune your radio to 740 AM.

Lost & Found

Briargrove students are asked not to bring toys or valuable items to school. The school will not be held responsible for toys or other valuable items if they are lost on school property. Please see that your child brings only the necessary clothing and supplies to school.

Jewelry, clothing, and other personal items may NOT be loaned, sold, bought, traded, or given away at school. Lunch items may not be bought, sold or traded.

All removable articles of clothing as well as other belongings should be clearly and securely labeled with the child's first and last name to prevent loss. Lost and found articles are kept in the cabinet next to the front door.

Lost and found articles will be displayed periodically in the front hallway so that students can claim these items. Encourage your child to check for his/her things. After one week on display, all remaining items will be donated to charity.

Parking

Parking spaces are available in front of the building and along San Felipe if parents have business inside the school. Parking is also available on the side streets around and behind the school. *Please do not park in the teachers' parking lot at the rear of the building.*

Parties and Celebrations

Class Parties

Students at Briargrove have two class parties a year. These occur prior to the winter holidays and at the last day of school. On other holidays, teachers devise classroom activities in lieu of parties.

Birthday Celebrations

Parents may bring cupcakes, cake, brownies, or cookies for the student's birthday. However, arrangements must be made with the teacher prior to treats being brought to school. Candy may not be handed out at any time.

Please do not plan to have a birthday party in the cafeteria or in the classroom. Party hats, favors, decorations, balloons, etc. should be reserved for off-campus parties.

Invitations to off-campus birthday parties are not to be distributed at school.

Please do not have flowers, balloons, gift baskets, singing telegrams, etc. delivered to school for individual students. Such items will not be delivered to the classroom or cafeteria.

Birthday Book Club

Celebrate your child's birthday and their love of reading through the Briargrove Birthday Book Club. Complete an order form from the front office and submit it with a \$20 donation to Mrs. Ward. Prior to the month of your child's birthday, they will be allowed to pick out a book to add to the library collection. A nameplate announcing the donation will be placed in the book which will be on display, along with your child's picture in the glass case outside of the library.

Lunch

Lunch on the Patio

Parents are invited to join their children for lunch on the patio. One friend may join you and your child for lunch. Students on the patio are expected to remain seated and to dispose of trash properly. Students are not allowed to play on the playground during lunch.

Safety & Security

Protecting Our Students

Everyone entering the school after 8:00 a.m. will need to come through the front doors. All visitors must sign the register in the office and pick up a nametag.

Because our teachers are not on duty before 7:15 a.m. or after 3:15 p.m., we request that you see that your child arrives and leaves the campus between these times. If you are in need of after school child care, please contact the front office for phone numbers of facilities in the area.

Safety

Elementary children need to know exactly what to do when the school day is over and should be reminded each morning just how they will get home. A message can be relayed to a child through the school office if an emergency necessitates a change in plans. A completed "Rainy Day/Emergency Plan" form should be in your child's permanent folder.

Children are discouraged from using the school phone except in an emergency. Parents should do all they can to help their children remember everything needed each day, including homework, library books, lunch or lunch money, school books, money, etc.

Security

We depend upon our parents and community to "keep an eye on" the school, especially on weekends and holidays. If you suspect vandalism or notice any unusual occurrences at the school, please call HISD police at 713-892-7777.

Severe Weather

In the event of weather so severe that there is a possibility schools may be closed, parents are asked to stay tuned to their radio or television station for information. In order to maintain open communication lines, you are asked to refrain from calling the school. If school is to be closed, the decision and announcement will be made prior to 6:30 a.m. If a decision is made by the district to cancel classes, it will be announced on the media. In emergencies, tune your radio to 740 AM.

PTO & PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Communication

The BG Buzz newsletter is sent via email once each month with a weekly update. If you do not have access to email, please notify your child's teacher that you require a paper copy to be sent home with your child. Please check your child's backpack every week for important announcements in the Wednesday folder. Additional information about school events and programs can be found on the school website, briargroveschool.com.

PTO

Welcome to Briargrove!

It is our desire that all parents feel a part of the Briargrove community right from the start. One sure way to do this is to volunteer! Parents, teachers and administrators working together promotes an excellent learning experience for our children. Briargrove Elementary's success is due, partly, to parent involvement. We have a great group of committed, dynamic and enthusiastic parent volunteers who give of their time as they can. Come be a part of the fun! If you have a skill or interest you might be able to share with Briargrove, please let us know! Don't worry; we are not looking for experts, but a little experience can be very valuable!

We look forward to getting to know you and working with you to enhance our children's experience and education at Briargrove Elementary. See you at school!

Respectfully,

Aimee and Ken Verheeck

2011-2012 PTO Presidents

Parent Involvement Opportunities

Name:

Email:

Phone number:

Please indicate your area(s) of interest and drop-off at the front office. You will be contacted to discuss your interest further.

Check Boxes

- CARNIVAL COMMITTEE:** Works with chairs in planning the Carnival. Event is held in late October. Areas of opportunity include: Food Services, Set-up/take down, Decorations, Underwriting, T-shirts, Bake Sale, and Publicity
- BOOKFAIR COMMITTEE:** Works with chairs to host the Bookfair. Event held in late Fall (after Carnival) or early Spring. Opportunities to help include set/take down, book sales, and decorations.
- SPRING FUNDRAISER COMMITTEE:** The PTO's Spring party and major fundraiser of the year. Many areas of need include: invitations, reservations, notifications of party items, underwriting, catalog writing, decorations, etc.
- OFFICE VOLUNTEER:** Answers the phone and assists the front office once a week or every other week. Approximate 2 hour shift. Will work around your schedule BUT attendance is vital to the flow of the front office so you must be able to find a substitute if you are not able to work your shift. If you are interested in this position, please fill out OFFICE VOLUNTEER FORM on upper right side of this page for shift preferences.
- ROOM PARENT:** Works with the teacher to determine any help needed in the class room. Solicits volunteers from the class roster to help in the classroom and cover shifts for PTO fundraising activities.
- LIBRARY VOLUNTEER:** Works in the Library directly with the Librarian 1-2 times month for approximately two hours. Flexible.
- DAD'S CLUB EVENTS:** The Dad's Club is a separate group from the PTO. Their events support both PTO endeavors and Dad's Club initiated events.
- DECORATING**
- FUNDRAISING**
- GRAPHICS DESIGN/COMPUTER DESIGN**

- BOOKKEEPING
- PARTY PLANNING
- PHOTOGRAPHER: Takes pictures of events and in the various classrooms throughout the year for inclusion in the yearbook and website.
- GROUNDS MAINTENANCE/GARDENING
- ART
- MUSIC/DANCE
- SCIENCE
- PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- READING
- HOMEWORK HELP: Assists students as they complete homework assignments. Club meets weekly from 7 to 7:45 a.m. This is a great opportunity for working parents or parents who have limited time for volunteering. Commitment is 1-2 times a month.
- JOGGING CLUB: Tracks students' progress as they walk/run school track. Club meets weekly from 7 to 7:45 a.m. This is a great opportunity for working parents or parents with younger children who can participate as well. Commitment is 1-2 times a month.
- GARDEN CLUB - Help with the planning, design and install of vegetable gardens and habitats on our school grounds. You do not have to be a gardener to participate. Time commitment will average one hour a week. If you have ideas for vendors or companies willing to donate supplies then please contact Ellecia Knolle - eknolle@yahoo.com.