

# Ontario-Montclair

## School District

---

950 West D Street, Ontario, California 91762 • (909) 418-6445 FAX: (909) 459-2542

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Samuel Crowe  
Michael C. Flores  
Maureen "Moe" Mendoza  
Elvia M. Rivas  
Alfonso Sanchez

James Q. Hammond, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent*

October 14, 2015

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Jennifer Gateley, Principal  
Telephone: 909-984-2306  
#2015

#### **Vineyard STEM Magnet School Opens School Wide STEM Learning Gardens "Learn to Grow. Grow to Learn!"**

Real world learning is the cornerstone of STEM. At Vineyard STEM Magnet School, staff is committed to giving STEM students the opportunity to explore the world around them through hands on learning projects that support the school focus areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. What better way to explore our world than through hands on garden study projects? And with that, the idea of STEM Learning Gardens was born!

What started with a simple idea soon turned into a large scale school wide STEM project. With the ongoing support of the Ontario-Montclair School District Operations, Business, Learning and Teaching Departments, and the Board of Trustees, Vineyard STEM broke ground last spring on what would be four large garden areas. The youngest STEM learners will begin with a Study Garden in the Kindergarten playground. Here, the Transitional Kindergarteners and Kindergarteners will be able to plant, observe, compare, and contrast the growth cycle of a variety of plants, flowers, and vegetables. Next, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will work in the Inquiry Garden. Students will continue to engage in scientific study of plant life, but they will now begin to explore research based questions such as the impact of the climate, composting, and basic animal life such as worms on their growing plant projects. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will transition to a Technology Garden theme as they explore the topics of recycling and composting and how these processes can work to support or hinder the living environment. Finally, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will finish the project study by focusing on a Research Garden. Middle School students will be working to develop relevant research based questions that explore their ideas in a real world context such as the California drought, sustainable food sources, hydroponics, and environmental studies across other countries and space. From kindergarten through eighth grade, Vineyard STEM students will be learning to grow and growing to learn!

As work began to launch the Vineyard STEM Learning Gardens project, the Middle School student would be working with his fellow students, classroom teacher, and our STEM Magnet Coordinator on a similar STEM project. It was a wonderful surprise to receive the notification at the beginning of the school year that 6<sup>th</sup> grade student, Skylar Petrolite-Durbin, had won the garden design contest sponsored by Kellogg Garden Organics and the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes baseball team. As a result, a fifth learning garden was developed- The California Garden. Through the generous donations from the Kellogg Garden Organics team and the Quakes baseball organization, Skylar's California Garden design was built as a model of drought tolerant plant varieties and organic planting and building materials.

**"Our Community, Our Children, Our Commitment"**

Board President Maureen “Moe” Mendoza stated, “The Board of Trustees is very proud of Skylar and Vineyard STEM Magnet School. This is a wonderful example of a student applying his STEM education to improve his school environment. Congratulations to Skylar and the entire Vineyard STEM Magnet School”.

**On Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 Vineyard STEM Magnet School students and staff will welcome members of the community, school board, district cabinet members, and supporting STEM partners to join us at Vineyard School for our STEM Learning Gardens launch event.** An all school assembly is planned where students will recite gardens poems and songs as well as recognize and congratulate those people who have supported Vineyard STEM in developing the STEM Learning Gardens project. The assembly will conclude with a ribbon cutting ceremony for each of the STEM Learning Gardens. Following the assembly, teachers will lead students in their first STEM Learning Gardens lesson. Lessons will continue throughout the school year as teachers guide students in exploring their world through STEM learning skills and their grade level Next Generation Science Standards.

Please join Vineyard STEM students and staff on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> as we celebrate STEM learning and thank our STEM supporters for helping us with this exciting new project.