



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Survey Says... School Gardens Thriving in California – Results from the California School Garden Survey.*

(SANTA CRUZ, CA) — Life Lab, in collaboration with the California School Garden Network, has recently finished conducting the California School Garden Survey. Previously conducted in 2010-11 with 496 responses, the survey aimed to collect data regarding school gardens in California. The information gathered will help those that are creating and supporting school garden projects across the state and nation to better understand how school gardens operate. It is estimated that there are close to 2,500 school gardens operating in the 10,000 plus schools across the state. “California has always been a national leader of the school garden movement and in the past few years interest in school gardens has been at an all time high. A main goal of our survey is to learn from as many school gardens in our state as possible so that we can better understand how school gardens are sustained” states John Fisher Outreach Director of Life Lab, a 35 year old non-profit organization.

One of the key findings of the survey was the amount of responsibility taken by teachers for instruction in the garden, in addition to management and care of the garden. This is impressive considering how much classroom teachers already take on. In terms of learning in the garden, the survey found that K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students most regularly visit the garden to learn a number of core and non-core subjects. The most commonly taught core subject in the garden is science, while respondents also indicated using the garden to teach non-core subjects such as health and nutrition, and environmental studies. Survey respondents reported observing many positive outcomes in their garden participants, including improvements in health, nutrition and environmental attitudes. Throughout the survey, respondents were able to indicate factors that would be most beneficial in supporting their garden programs. These factors include funding, outside support (in the form of a paid garden coordinator or volunteers), and help connecting the garden to the Common Core English/Language Arts Standards, and the Next Generation Science Standards.

The 2014 California School Garden Survey received 552 completed responses from schools across the state of California. The most well represented counties responding to the survey were Los Angeles, San Mateo and Alameda. Life Lab would like to thank the many school garden supporters that put in extra effort to encourage the schools in their counties to respond to the survey. Results from the survey and summary are available at [www.lifelab.org/schoolgardensurvey2014/](http://www.lifelab.org/schoolgardensurvey2014/)



### **About Life Lab**

Life Lab teaches people to care for themselves, each other, and the world through farm- and garden-based programs. A California non-profit organization founded by teachers, parents and volunteers at a Santa Cruz elementary school in 1979, Life Lab is a national leader in garden-based learning and youth empowerment. The Life Lab Garden Classroom at the University of California Santa Cruz Farm is a living laboratory for local pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade student programs, for training teachers, and for developing environmental, science and nutrition education curricula and resources. Life Lab's experienced trainers also provide workshops, networking and program support to garden-based educators across the state and nation. Life Lab programs directly serve more than 4,000 children and teachers each year and impact more than 20,000 students annually.

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