

## New York City Council

### Memorandum in Support of Legislation

*This memorandum is authored by the sponsor and explains the need for the legislation referenced below, in accordance with Rule 6.00(d) of the Rules of the Council.*

#### **Introduction Number:**

Int. No.

#### **Prime Sponsors:**

Council Member Marte

#### **Bill Title:**

A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to the establishment and development of school gardens.

#### **Submitted by:**

Council Member Marte

#### **Justification:**

In a summary of research findings on several key benefit areas of garden-based learning, Cornell University found several benefits of “garden-based learning” for children, youth, adults, and families including greater nutritional and environmental awareness, higher science test scores, and more. Students’ attitudes towards fruit and vegetable snacks improved, and it has been proven that access to a garden can improve food security in low-income communities. A 2011 study by the American Journal of Public Health found that neighborhood aesthetics, social involvement, and community garden participation were significantly associated with fruit and vegetable intake.

Community gardeners consumed fruits and vegetables 5.7 times per day, compared with home gardeners and non-gardeners (3.9 times per day). Moreover, 56% of community gardeners met national recommendations to consume fruits and vegetables at least 5 times per day, compared with 37% of home gardeners and 25% of non-gardeners. Aside from better eating habits, gardening can also teach valuable life skills, especially in urban communities where farming is foreign. A 2010 study by Farming Concrete measured total vegetable yields and produce from 110 gardeners in 67 community gardens in NYC. These 110 gardeners, collectively only using a total of 1.7 acres, grew 87,700 pounds of produce worth more than \$200,000. Adjusted for inflation, that’s almost \$300,000 today. With all this in mind, this bill would establish an interagency school community garden team which would include various representatives from City agencies responsible for developing initiatives and practices to promote the use of community gardens in schools.