



Best Practices for Watering: School Gardens and Grounds (Trees, Native Plants)

February 2024



EVANSTON/SKOKIE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes



Water

- Develop best practices for watering at school gardens and grounds (new trees and native plants).

Ongoing:

- Monitor water usage at schools and identify water leaks, partnership and collaboration with D65 Maintenance.



D65 Supports Watering of our School Gardens, New Trees and Native Plants.

Guidance is intended to balance watering with being good stewards of water usage & costs to the district.

We just need to be aware and monitor the water usage, for example someone at a D65 school left a hose on for 5 days and used over 6000 gallons of water per day.

Best Practices for Watering



1. Recommend water timers when possible to schedule regular waterings. Adjust timers as necessary according to the season, rainfall, water needed for type of planting.
2. If using an irrigation system, recommend putting on a water timer or monitoring.
3. Recommend using a soaker hose with a water timer.
4. Recommend avoiding watering during school hours. Helps D65 differentiate normal school water usage vs outdoor water usage.
5. Consider using tree bags for watering new trees.
6. Seasonally anticipate watering to start in April and stop by the end of October.
7. If you find any water leaks, shut off the water right away to isolate the leak. Periodically check hoses and watering equipment for leaks.

Best Practices for Watering (continued)



Safety Considerations

1. Running hoses across an area that creates a tripping hazard for students and staff (ex: hoses draped a school or city sidewalk). Safety precautions for this can be routing hoses in cracks of the sidewalk or using hose ramps.
2. To avoid potential cross contamination of drinking water from hoses left on or open 24/7, require all outside water spigots to have a backflow anti-siphon vacuum breaker (minimum dual check valves). [Example here](#). Install between the outside water spigot and water timer / hose.
3. Prohibit use of chemicals, fertilizers or weed killers on school grounds.

District Support



If outside water spigot(s) are leaking or not functioning, please contact the Head Custodian at your school.

District to Provide:

- Water
- [School Garden Mulch or Wood Chip Delivery, Compost Delivery or Yard Waste Pick-Up \(D65 pilot for 23-24 School Year\)](#)

District projects that require water shutoff will take priority. School leaders to notify school garden teams regarding any water shutoffs.