

# A CULTURE OF INNOVATION AND ASSESSMENT

To succeed, a venture of this size and complexity needs to balance creative imagination with rigorous realism. Every feature of design and programming must meet the needs and interests of the children who come to us, or be rethought.

To achieve, then, the highest standards of educational efficacy and fiscal accountability requires a robust culture of assessment. Although specific protocols cannot be developed until details of design, staffing, systems, and daily operations are established, some points are already clear.

## EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

*Short-term instruction offered in the facility will be assessed according to its nature:*

- **EIGHT-WEEK GROWING SESSIONS**

Alliance teachers who bring classes to the facility will assess and report outcomes for their own students, under guidelines established by the Executive Director.

- **AFTER-SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Adult participants will be evaluated using end-of-session response forms, and children with similar forms gathered from parents and day-camp personnel.

- **DISTANCE LEARNING**

Teachers in schools outside the Alliance who become formally involved through school tours, use of borrowed equipment, and engagement with on-line curricular and video resources will assess student outcomes using on-line surveys.

Long-term outcomes will be assessed by tracking the most deeply engaged Alliance children as they progress through their elementary schools to high school, college, and later careers. Metrics will include minority participation, science grades and test scores in relation to the entrance standards of local colleges and universities, and matriculation, graduation and employment rates.

As a first step, a professional assessor will be retained to evaluate the after-school Ambassadors Program for children from the four Alliance schools beginning in the fall of 2016.



# OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PERSONNEL

**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** will be a university-level professional in elementary education, one who is skilled in:

- Establishing rapport with local teachers, administrators, and volunteers
- Scheduling year-round use of the facility imaginatively and productively
- Reaching out to the community and to donors
- Bringing regional and national visibility to the Venture.

**THE CHIEF GROWER AND THE SYSTEMS ENGINEER** will be selected for their skills in carrying out five very different methods of cultivation, including those needed for the children's growing areas, the production greenhouse for school lunches, and the pollinator, butterfly, and native species garden.

Annual assessment of such key personnel, the volunteers they recruit, and the success of the children's monthly Saturday sales and the food-for-schools program will be a top priority.

# OPERATIONAL COSTS OF THE FACILITY

Detailed records on the operating and maintenance costs of the facility and its physical and growing systems will be kept and reviewed monthly by the Board of Directors.