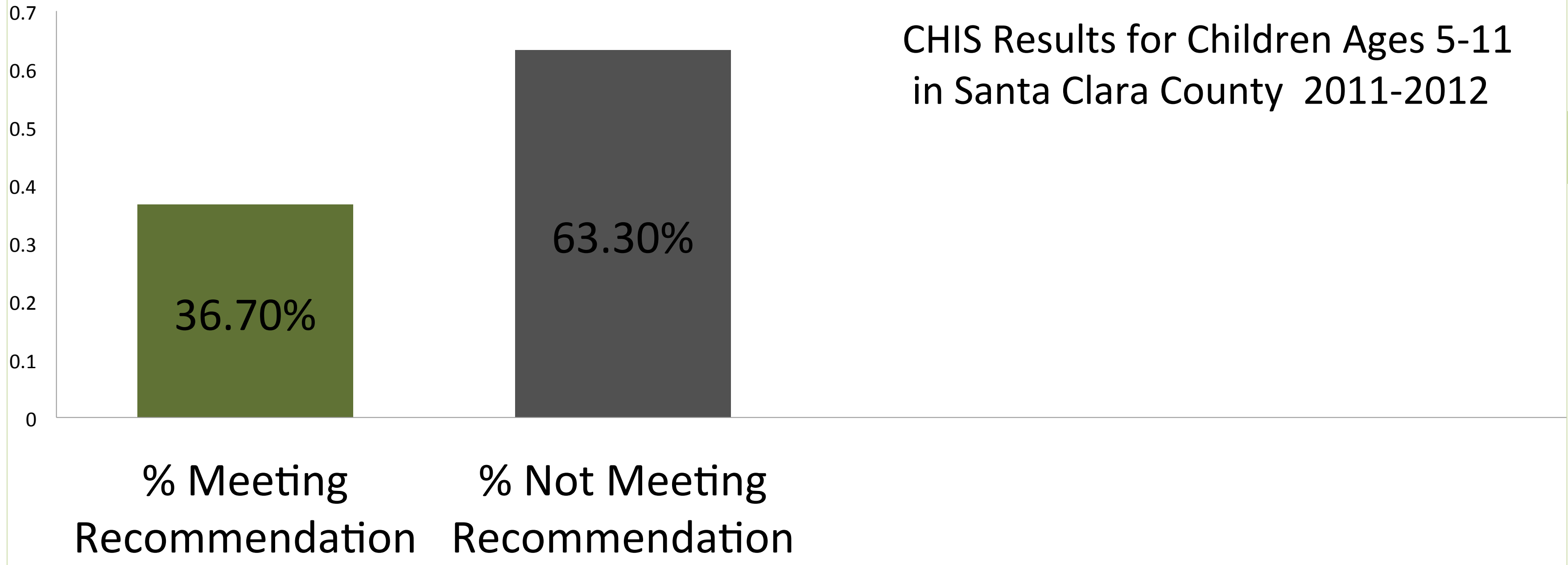


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Background

- The Health Council of the Palo Alto School District (PAUSD) recognizes the link between healthy students and academic success. The council’s focus is on the whole child, which includes the social, emotional and physical states as well as their engagement and motivation levels.
- Few spaces in a student’s academic day have a health component.
- PAUSD students reflect the national trend of children and adolescents falling short of the USDA daily recommended intake of 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables.



- As childhood obesity has become the leading national public health concern for this age group, school garden programs have increasingly become one of the antidotes. A National School Garden Movement has gained momentum as studies show increases in healthful eating habits, nutrition knowledge and academic achievement.

Objectives

- Assess, Support and Create Gardens at willing elementary schools
- Evaluate current state of school gardens at local, district and national level
- Use results to inform a sustainable support system

Method

Local: Contacted principals of all 12 elementary schools to gauge interest in support or creation of a garden.

- 3 robust existing programs
- 3 existing
- 6 non-existent
- 3 schools at varying levels of need participated in internship

Barron Park- needs were instructional support in existing program

Created teacher survey to gauge involvement interest
Stanford service learning undergrad assisted in class

Fairmeadow- attended parent interest meeting, presented at PTA meeting

Nixon- researched garden bed dimensions, secured plantings, held garden meeting, posted information in newsletters, led K-2 classes in garden

District: Researched robust existing programs, collected qualitative data through key informant interviews

- Attended district functions related to social/emotional learning, healthy food Initiatives

- Held Edible Education Community Brunch to organize key stakeholders

National:

- Reviewed previous School Garden Intervention results
- Attended 4 conferences related to school gardens and children’s health

Results and Conclusions

Local

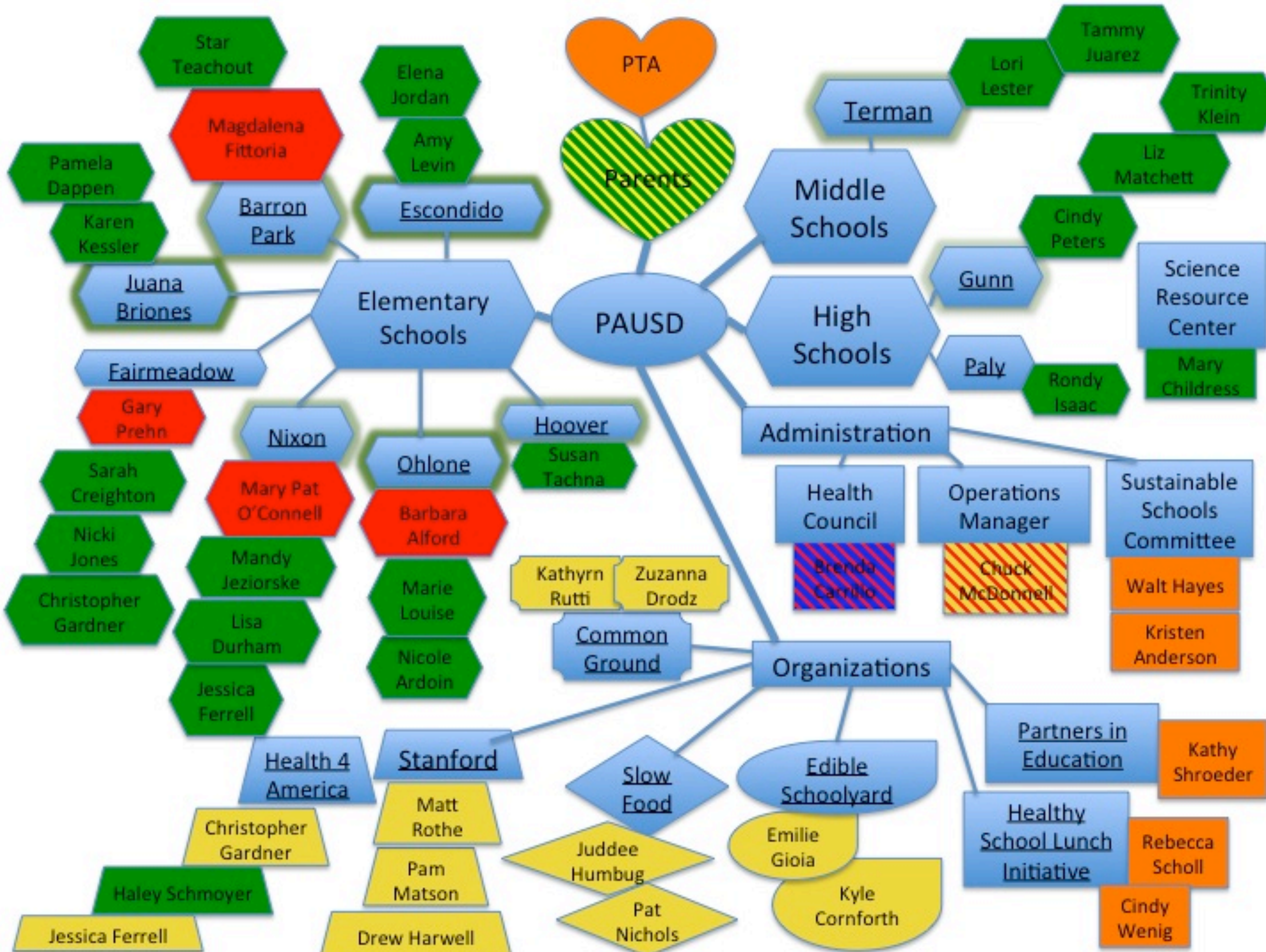
- Barron Park- teacher survey unable to go out before end of year, in the process of working on support measures through creation of a central website and service learning interns
- Fairmeadow- PTA approved financially supporting garden beds, awaiting approval of incoming principal



Nixon’s New Garden

Barron Park	Fairmeadow	Nixon
Interested principal	Transitioning principal	Interested principal
Single parent volunteer	Large parent interest group	Large parent interest group
PTA supported	PTA agreed to support	PTA supported
Existing garden beds	Desire for garden beds	Installed 6 garden beds

District :



National:

- Conferences
- Childhood Obesity Bay Area Conference
- PHA’s Building a Healthier Future
- Farm to Cafeteria
- Farm to Table

Key Learnings

- Regional School Garden Models that organize across school districts have most comprehensive and successful support plans
- Garden education is most impactful when integrated within school day
- Most effective healthy behavior change programs include kitchen and garden education alongside healthy school lunch offerings

- At the district level what emerged from the qualitative data collected was a network of key stakeholders that play diverse roles in the subsistence of school gardens.

The RASCI model defines these roles as

RESPONSIBLE- those responsible for working on the garden, leading classes, volunteering

APPROVER- those necessary to approve of the work being done Principals, Student Services Dir.

SUPPORTIVE- those supporting work being done. Community organizations, operations manager, parents, PTA

CONSULTANTS- those included in work activity. Similar interests groups, funders, PTA

INFORMED- those notify of results Health Council, Ops. Manager

- PAUSD is a district of schools with very individual personalities governed by protective principals.
- Knowing contributory roles leads to a structured support system, greater communication, effective collaborative efforts

Recommendations

- District level support in the form of
 - a Full time Garden Education Specialist
 - funding programs, teacher training, website
- Inclusion of community partners in an organized system
- Increase Farm to School involvement
 - more local procurement in school lunch
 - further healthy eating education