

“Soil is the foundation of a garden; kids are the foundation of the future.”

Chris Larson, Director of Environmental Ed
Paramount School of Excellence, Indianapolis

Soil Health Hero

Paramount has grown its garden farm from a few raised beds to a multi-faceted educational resource raising and selling a wide variety of crops, keeping and milking goats, raising chickens, composting and more. Chris and his team have worked with the MCSWCD to incorporate many soil health principals, to improve growing conditions for improved drainage, moisture retention and weed reduction.



Chris and the PSOE team have been planting cover crops in the fall and allowing them to overwinter, keeping the roots in the soil to continue to

feed the earth. In spring, he “chops and drops” the cover crops for use as mulch to retain moisture. He is patient and builds the soil to ensure the long-term success of the farm.

PSOE Farm

Size: 5.5 acre farm; 1.5 acre garden, including 36 wood-framed raised beds (9' x 3' and 30' x 3')

Type: School garden

Practices: Cover crops, mulch, reduced-till, composting, pollinators, crop diversity, crop rotation, greenhouse, organic methods

Benefits: Enhanced soil health, moisture retention and weed control



Left: Cover crops are planted in the fall. Middle: Cover crops overwinter; Right: Cover crop mulch with transplant



Paramount School of Excellence's 700 kindergarten through 8th graders learn gardening, science, financial literacy and more, working on the farm and selling produce at the school market.

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