School of Public Health
Department of Environmental and Occupational Health

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctorate of Public Health

Sabina Malik
will defend her prospectus:

SCHOOL GARDENS AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE STUDENT HEALTH OUTCOMES
AND INCREASE PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Abstract
School gardens are used in student programming to help achieve many goals that include increasing academic achievement, improving nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, increasing physical activity rates, instilling eco-consciousness, and increasing student and community engagement. The ability of school gardens to influence student health outcomes related to diet and physical activity can affect determinants of chronic disease. Additionally, increased parent engagement has the ability to improve various school and health outcomes. The Clark County School District (CCSD) houses one of the largest school garden communities in the United States and pursues key goals to increase student happiness, wellbeing, and parent engagement. To date, garden programs have predominantly been evaluated by case control studies examining pilot or informal short term implementation without consideration of garden program longevity. This study will utilize a mixed methods approach to examine student outcomes and best practices for parent engagement. Three groups of student participants will be evaluated, those without any exposure to a school garden, students before and after the first year of implementation of a school garden, and students in a school with a well-established, long running, school garden program. A quasi-experimental design will be used to examine student nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, attitudes towards the school garden, and physical activity behaviors. Student group differences will be analyzed using an ANOVA and paired T-tests will be used to measure changes in students before and after the first year of garden implantation. To understand the role that school gardens play in parent engagement and perceived impacts to student health and educational outcomes, stakeholder interviews will be conducted with educators, parents, and volunteers. The survey tool will be developed within the socioecological framework and data will be analyzed through inductive thematic analysis.

Date: Thursday, December 12, 2019
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Location: BHS 131

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Committee In Charge:
Dr. Courtney Coughenour, Advisory Committee Chair
Dr. Francisco Sy, Advisory Committee Chair
Dr. Jennifer Pharr, Advisory Committee Member
Dr. Timothy Bungum, Advisory Committee Member
Dr. Tiffany Vo, Graduate College Representative