Green Schoolyards
for Better Health & Learning
The state of schoolyards today:

One word: ASPHALT

- Not enough play area to engage all children during recess and PE
- Not designed for hands-on learning outdoors
- Does not excite, motivate kids to want to come to school
- Lack of green space = increased temps outside & higher cooling costs inside the school
- Asphalt replacement and repair costs
- Increased costs for snow plowing
- Increased flooding & inability to use the space for periods of time
The potential of green schoolyards

- Ample play area to engage more children during recess and PE for increased physical activity
- Outdoor classrooms areas for hands on learning help meet Environmental Literacy Plan goals
- Reduction in stress levels, enhanced mental health
- Improvements in academic performance
- Increase in enrollment
- Increased student attention and attendance
- Increase in family and community engagement
- Lower energy costs for cooling buildings
- Reduction in schoolyard and local area flooding
- Schoolyard is available for use throughout the year and in different weather conditions
The Children & Nature Network defines green schoolyards as multi-functional school grounds *designed for and by* the entire school community.

Green schoolyards include places for students, teachers, parents and community members to play, learn, explore and grow.

Green Schoolyards can include:
- Outdoor classrooms
- Native and pollinator gardens
- Storm water capture
- Traditional play equipment
- Nature play areas
- Edible gardens
- Trails and walking paths
- Trees, shrubs and more

*During out of school time*, green schoolyards are ideally open for community use.
What if all schoolyards were green schoolyards?

Vancouver, Canada

SPARK! Houston, TX
How would you feel if this was your schoolyard?

Grun Macht Schule, Berlin, Germany

Openlands, Chicago
Nature can improve health & wellbeing

Spending time in nature provides children with a wide range of health benefits.

Infographic available at www.childrenandnature.org
Nature can improve academic outcomes

Spending time in nature improves educational outcomes by enhancing academic performance, focus, behavior and love of learning.

Infographic available at childrenandnature.org
Benefits of Green Schoolyards

- Community
  - Community Cohesion
  - Family Engagement
- Mental Health
- Physical Activity
- Social Emotional Learning
- Play
- Beneficial to Children, Schools & Communities

- Environment
  - Wildlife Habitat
  - Urban Heat Island Reduction
- Environmental Literacy
- Academic Performance
- Increased Attention & Attendance

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Building & sustaining green schoolyards

GETTING STARTED
- Make the case
- Secure funding
- Identify policies
- Build partnerships

MOVING FORWARD
- Design the schoolyard
- Activate for learning
- Use in out-of-school time

SUSTAINING IMPACT
- Manage the space
- Evaluate the impact

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Using green schoolyards as outdoor classrooms

With a few tools and some training, there is no limit to what can be taught outside...

Science  Math  Literature
Writing  Social Studies  Art
Music  History

OutTeach
Grun Macht Schule
Just about anything can be taught outside…

…and in doing so, green schoolyards:

- Improve mental health by enhancing mood and decreasing stress for better learning;
- Increase cognitive function and performance on standardized tests through improved focus, attention and executive function both during and after outdoor learning
- Enhance social-emotional functioning and pro-social and cooperative behaviors.
Green schoolyard programs across the U.S.
The #NYCPlaygroundsProgram

High Level Impacts:

• 200 playgrounds across NYC’s five boroughs
• 4 million New Yorkers within a 10-minute walk
• 18.5 Million gallons of storm water captured every year
Space to Grow transforms Chicago schoolyards into vibrant spaces to play, learn and be outside.
We create students who:
-are excited by and engaged in DOING science
-have an enduring bond with the natural world
By combining our field-tested professional learning program with exciting outdoor learning labs, Out Teach equips elementary school teachers to go outside—beyond the classroom—to create transformational learning experiences and measurable results.

*On a 5-point scale measuring knowledge, skills, and attitudes*

- 94% of teachers report students are more engaged
- 93% of teachers could apply training immediately
- 90% report feeling better prepared to help their students succeed

For more, visit out-teach.org or email info@out-teach.org
SPARK helps public schools develop their playgrounds into community parks.
Denver, CO
More information

Green Schoolyards Resource Hub

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
Nature-filled school grounds where children and families play and learn outdoors enhance community health.

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS RESOURCES

EVENTS  RESEARCH  BLOG  NEWS

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