

BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE

BSI's impact on Boston's neighborhoods and schools has been profound:

- **75 schoolyards revitalized**
- **25,000 school children reached**
- **Hundreds of teachers trained**
- **125 acres of asphalt reclaimed**
- **Neighborhoods all over Boston touched**

"The finished schoolyard was fantastic. I was surprised at the extent of the whole schoolyard process...It was one of the best executed experiences I'd ever seen."

COMMUNITY MEMBER

"The schoolyard created enormous pride in the school. Do we care enough about the kids to give them what they deserve? I didn't realize how much symbolic value there was."

PRINCIPAL

Since 1995, the Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI) has been transforming Boston's schoolyards into dynamic centers for recreation, learning and community life. School-by-school, neighborhood-by-neighborhood, BSI has reached children, families, community members, administrators and teachers with vibrant outdoor spaces and creative new approaches to using the schoolyard for teaching and learning.

The BSI model continues to evolve. New outdoor classroom designs, included in every schoolyard renovation, bring teaching outdoors. Green practices, including green roofs on tool sheds and recycled rubber surfaces are now often a part of schoolyard design and construction. And BSI teaching resources and professional development help teachers revitalize instruction and motivate students to learn. Over 150 teachers from 46 schools in the Boston Public School system have taken Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI)-designed Science in the Schoolyard™ or Outdoor Writers Workshop™ training. In addition, our on-site training is reaching whole faculties, creating teams of teachers within schools and across the district who incorporate the schoolyard into teaching and learning.

The Boston Schoolyard Initiative is a public-private partnership between the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools and the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative.

TOP 3 IMPACTS OF BSI-RENOVATED SCHOOLYARDS:

- Increased physical activity for students (100%*)
- Improved student behavior (63.2%*)
- Improved relationship with parents and community (73.7%*)

* 2009 BPS Principal Survey





BUILDING COMMUNITY

- >> Over three-quarters of principals* say their BSI schoolyard is used before and after school, by programs, neighborhood children and residents.
- >> Over half* say that schoolyard renovation led to increased use of the schoolyard for teaching and learning.
- >> Over one-quarter* say their BSI schoolyard is used for summer school or other summer programs.

* 2009 BPS Principal Survey

GOALS

The Boston Schoolyard Initiative was launched by Mayor Menino in 1995, with these goals.

- Touch every neighborhood in the city and every Boston Public Schools student
- Create attractive public spaces for recreation, education and civic activity
- Support meaningful and innovative educational use of schoolyards
- Cultivate significant public participation, including many community-based organizations, in both the design and stewardship of the schoolyards

PROGRAMS

Capital Projects: In 2010, the Boston Schoolyard Initiative will improve 6 schoolyards in Boston: 3 full campus projects (full schoolyard with outdoor classroom) and 3 Outdoor Classroom-only projects. In addition to providing resources for recess, recreation and play, BSI has pioneered outdoor classroom designs that support teaching and learning and that explicitly support the Boston Public Schools curriculum. *As we enter our 15th year, our capital program is within striking distance of reaching every elementary and K-8 school in the Boston Public School system.*

BSI schoolyards are designed through a community process that builds school and community buy-in. Our maintenance support includes a BSI-funded landscape management expert and a BPS horticulture team that maintains the outdoor classrooms and other landscapes on renovated schoolyards. BSI also works with youth from summer jobs programs to provide additional summer maintenance.

Education Program: The Boston Schoolyard Initiative works with Boston Public Schools (BPS) to support teachers in using their schoolyard and Outdoor Classroom to motivate and excite students; increase students' range of first-hand experience in the world; and improve student achievement. To help teachers use the outdoor space in their instruction, BSI has developed two programs: Science in the Schoolyard™ (SSY) and Outdoor Writers Workshop™ (OWW), both developed in collaboration with BPS teachers, staff and administrators. All BSI professional development is based on recent research on how students learn, and uses an inquiry approach with teams of teachers focusing on grade-level strategies, differentiated instruction and on-site practice.

In addition, BSI has worked with national curriculum publishers to develop resources for teaching in the schoolyard. Through our partnership with the developers of the Full Option Science System (FOSS), BSI's Science in the Schoolyard Guides to teaching the FOSS science curriculum outdoors are now available to teachers and school systems across the country.

For more information on how you can help us transform Boston's schoolyards into dynamic centers for recreation, learning and community life, contact Myrna Johnson at myrna.johnson@schoolyards.org.



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