



BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE

Transforming schoolyards into dynamic centers for recreation, learning, and community life.

Changes Ahead at the Schoolyard Initiative!

Since 1995, the BSI partnership among City of Boston (led by Mayor Menino), Boston Public Schools, and the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative, has renovated 88 schoolyards, invested more than \$20 M in schoolyard infrastructure, added 25 acres of green space (equivalent to the Boston Public Garden), and provided professional development to 850 teachers.

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Now that we have reached every feasible elementary and K-8 school in the system with a project, we are in a transition phase. The Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative and the BSI staff have completed their roles, and therefore the BSI office as we know it today will close its doors effective December 2013.

To prepare for this transition, we have been working with the City, BPS and our community partners for the last year to come up with a plan for sustaining the gains we have made together over the past 18 years, and we are pleased with the progress we have made. In the coming months, we will be reporting more of that plan to you, which we hope will include both continued public investment in schoolyard renovation and maintenance, as well as strategies to sustain the work. We will document best schoolyard design practices, create a new Outdoor Classroom User's Guide, and add additional education support materials to our website. In addition, an Outdoor Classroom Leadership Committee is emerging. We are encouraged that at a recent forum, all mayoral candidates agreed to continue schoolyard funding at current levels. BSI has laid a foundation on which the city can build for years to come.

We will also be celebrating our 18-year partnership through a beautiful new coffee table book and an [event at the Higginson-Lewis schoolyard on Oct. 16](#). We hope you will join us there! Look for more transition information this fall.



Professional Development Opportunities

BSI is offering free on-site professional development opportunities to BPS teachers this fall! Our *Introduction to the Outdoor Classroom* training will focus on outdoor classroom management, lesson planning, tips on structuring an outdoor lesson, connections between the BPS science & writing curricula, and research that supports outdoor education.

ATTEND OUR CELEBRATION

Please join us on October 16 at 10:00am for **Learn, Play, Grow: A Celebration of the Boston Schoolyard Initiative**. Honoring 18 years of schoolyard investment in Boston, this culminating event will feature a ribbon-cutting for the new [Higginson-Lewis K-8](#) schoolyard in Roxbury. Click [here](#) to register.

THE JOYS OF WRITING OUTSIDE

We just loved this recent blog post on the New York Times website titled "[Time to Write? Go Outside.](#)" We couldn't agree more about the benefits of writing outdoors, and are thrilled that over 150 BPS teachers have taken our [Outdoor Writers Workshop](#) training. Check out the article and let us know what you think!

GET READY FOR GREEN APPLE DAY OF SERVICE!

Join schools around the world to take action and clean up your schoolyard or expand your gardens as part of **Green Apple Day of Service on Sept. 28th!** The second annual Green Apple Day of Service, hosted by the Center for Green Schools, brings together advocates from around the world, including students, teachers, parents, and community members in support of healthy, sustainable schools through service projects in their communities. Visit [mygreenapple.org](#) to find or start a project at your school, or contact [Sebastian Downs](#) to gather support and ideas for projects.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

BSI is excited to be presenting at two upcoming conferences!

We are also available to meet with teachers on a one-to-one basis or in small groups to help you use your outdoor classroom to meet your learning objectives. We are happy to tailor professional development on outdoor instruction to the needs of your school!

This professional development is offered at no cost to your school on a first come first served basis. To arrange a training, please email jacksheridan@schoolyards.org.

Back to School, Back Outside

Going outside regularly, beginning early in the school year, is the best way to establish routines and procedures that enhance outdoor learning. Just as a class establishes indoor classroom routines and procedures, outdoor routines and procedures also need to be established. The more students go outside, the more they become accustomed to the routine. BSI has created a free resource, [Tips and Tricks for Outdoor Classroom Management](#), to help teachers in using the outdoors.



Fall is a great time to take students outside and document the many changes that are about to take place, from leaves changing colors to migrating birds. One idea is to take monthly pictures of an adopted tree and have the students write about their observations and the changes they see each month. By observing a tree over time students are learning about the life cycle of a particular plant, and can compare their tree to the structures and characteristics of plants they are studying in class. "Adopt a Tree or Plant" is an activity used in several Science in the Schoolyard Guides. For more help in getting started teaching outside, visit our [Teaching Resources](#) page.

We will be sharing the story of our work at the [International School Grounds Alliance's Nature School Conference](#) in Toronto this month. In November we will be conducting an education session and site tour for the [American Society of Landscape Architects Annual Meeting](#) here in Boston. If you are attending either of these events, be sure to stop by and say hello!

VISIT OUR BLOG

Teachers, be sure not to miss our [blog](#) about teaching and learning in the schoolyard. If you would like to write a guest blog post, let us know!

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORIES

Is your school using your schoolyard or outdoor classroom in interesting ways? Is outdoor play or learning part of your school's recipe for success? If so we want to hear about it! To be part of our Good Idea Showcase, send your schoolyard success story to Maureen White maureenwhite@schoolyards.org

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