



BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE

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

Teachers Take the Lead on *Science in the Schoolyard*

This spring our Science in the Schoolyard™ (SSY) program was taken to a whole new level, as BPS teachers stepped up to lead two six-week professional development courses for their peers. A course on "Developing Life Science Ideas Using the Schoolyard" was taught by Sarah Colella of the Conley Elementary School and Jose Rosa of the Mason Pilot Elementary School, while "Developing Energy Concepts Using the Schoolyard" was presented by Luis Arroyo of the Taylor Elementary School and Holly Rosa of the Russell Elementary School. All four teachers are part of a cohort of teacher leaders who have helped pioneer the use of outdoor teaching at the Boston Public Schools. The courses had previously been co-taught by Jack Sheridan, BSI's Science in the Schoolyard Program Manager.

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UPCOMING WEBINAR



Led by teachers Sarah Colella and Jose Rosa, course participants learn how to teach the life science curriculum using the outdoor classroom.

Colella was asked to lead a course due to her enthusiasm for outdoor learning. She remarks, "There is so much science going on outside in our schoolyards. I want teachers to help students make connections between the life science concepts we are teaching indoors to the life science happening outdoors." Reflecting on her experience leading the course, she said, "I learned so much from the teachers taking this course. It was wonderful to visit all the different schoolyards and outdoor classrooms. Seeing other outdoor learning spaces and hearing how teachers use them helped me plan new outdoor lessons for my students."

"We are excited to see BPS science teachers step up to take the lead on these courses, deepening the expertise and involvement of teachers in the BSI/BPS Science in the Schoolyard partnership," said Myrna Johnson, Executive Director of the Boston Schoolyard Initiative.

Thank you to all of the teacher leaders who contributed to SSY this semester and fostered a feeling of collaboration, support, and encouragement for taking students to outdoors.

Manning Schoolyard Gets a Makeover

On June 14, volunteers from the local biotech company Boston Scientific braved the rain to build garden beds and plant apple trees at the Manning Elementary School in Jamaica Plain. Working enthusiastically and without break, the crew also dug drainage ditches to divert rainwater from entering the gymnasium, mixed mulch into soil to fortify new garden beds, and relocated a green house behind the school.

BSI will be presenting a free webinar titled **"Outdoor Learning and Play for School Age Children: The Boston Experience"** on **June 20 at 3pm**. The webinar is part of a series hosted by the American Society of Landscape Architects and will focus on BSI's pioneering work in designing educational urban schoolyards. For more information or to register, visit the ASLA's [website](#).

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. It's not too early to start planning your project and reaching out to BPS for support. Visit mygreenapple.org to find or start a project at your school, or contact [Phoebe Beierle](#), Green Schools Fellow at BPS, to gather support and ideas for projects.

MASS AG IN THE CLASSROOM CONFERENCE

Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom is hosting their annual summer conference on July 18 in Holden MA. All workshops will offer connections from the garden to the classroom. For more information visit their [website](#).

VISIT OUR BLOG

Teachers, be sure not to miss



Staff members from Boston Scientific help revitalize the Manning Schoolyard last Friday.

This volunteer effort, coordinated by Boston Cares and overseen by BSI design consultant Ross Miller, is part of a larger plan facilitated by the Boston Schoolyard Initiative to help the Manning improve the outdoor space around the school for therapeutic and educational use, and create a sustainable garden for vegetables and herbs.

These goals are part of many years of creative educational efforts led by the school's teachers, parents, and principal. "Connecting with nature and the outdoors can bring calm and focus to students suffering from emotional stress", says special education teacher Marty Mitchell, who has championed the use of the outdoors at the Manning for over 18 years.

In addition to the help from Boston Scientific and Boston Cares, the work has progressed thanks to support from Wentworth Institute of Technology, Whole Foods, and Faulkner Hospital.

U.of Chicago Studies Outdoor Science Education in Boston

The University of Chicago's Center for Elementary Mathematics and Science Education (CEMSE), is conducting a study that will help us better understand what Science in the Schoolyard™ (SSY) contributes to science teaching and learning in Boston, and provide recommendations for adapting, improving, and sustaining SSY innovation in Boston and beyond.

All elementary BPS principals and science teachers were invited to share their perspectives on outdoor science instruction through a survey, and ten schools have been randomly selected to participate through a combination of student surveys, classroom visits, focus groups, and interviews.

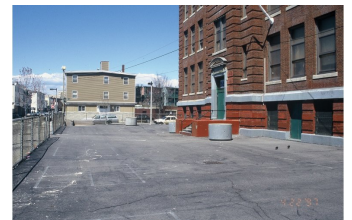
our [blog](#) about teaching and learning in the schoolyard. If you would like to write a guest post, let us know!

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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Boston Schoolyard Initiative
One Center Plaza

BSI wishes to thank all of the principals and teachers who took the time to participate in the study. We look forward to learning more about how outdoor instruction contributes to science education in Boston and to sharing the findings of the study with you next fall. For more information about the study or about CEMSE, please visit their [website](http://www.schoolyards.org).

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Budding Poets Find Inspiration in the Schoolyard

Third grade teacher Michelle Bourque shared this poem written by her class at the Henry Grew School, which recently unveiled its brand new schoolyard:

WE ARE...

We are the outdoor classroom discovering new things.

We are the plaque giving information.

We are the life cycle transforming ourselves.

We are the tree stumps and rocks sitting and exploring nature.

We are the plants growing at the Grew.

We are the logs listening to the teacher.

We are the path leading the way to a bright future.

We are the American Elm tree growing safe and healthy, respectful and responsible.

We are the 100s chart solving our problems.

We are the sundial learning to tell time.

We are the alphabet singing the abcs.

We are the months of the year celebrating life.

We are the thermometer watching the weather change.

We are the field zooming, exercising, playing football, soccer, tag with friends.

We are the benches taking a rest.

We are the slide having fun with each other.

We are the monkey bars going back and forth and getting up when we fall down.

We are the pole pretending to be firefighters.

We are the rock-climbing wall going on an adventure.

We are the tic tac toe scoring three in a row.

We are the track running around until we are tired.

We are the checkerboards learning a new game.

We are the Cougar Paws being confident in ourselves.

We are THANKFUL for our new schoolyard!!!

Thanks Ms. Bourque for sharing!



The new schoolyard at the Henry Grew Elementary School.

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