

BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE

December 31, 2013

Dear Friends:

After 18 years, 88 schoolyards, 32 outdoor classrooms, creation of two nationally-recognized schoolyard education programs, and 850 teachers reached with professional development, the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative (BSFC) is closing our doors. It has been an amazing run, with outstanding support and unique partnerships with Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools and *you*.

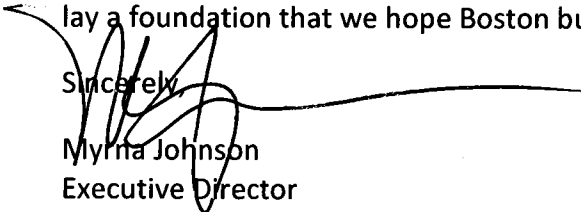
Together we completed a schoolyard project at every feasible BPS elementary and K-8 school in Boston. We brought nature and opportunities for increased physical activity to Boston's children. We improved teaching and learning at Boston Public Schools. *We changed the face of Boston*. In one of the longest-running and most successful public-private partnerships Boston has ever known, the Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI) made a big impact, for which you should be incredibly proud.

As we wind down BSFC, we have documented key learnings and shared them with others so they can benefit from what we have learned. Members of the BSI team presented at the International School Grounds Alliance and American Society of Landscape Architects conferences, and a group of BPS teachers will present BSI's Science in the Schoolyard program at the upcoming National Science Teacher Association conference. In addition, we will be leaving school and schoolyard leaders with education, stewardship and schoolyard design resources as well as a new on-line report on BSI's pioneering Science in the Schoolyard program. You can find all of these resources on our website at www.schoolyards.org.

While we are closing our doors, this is not the end of schoolyard work in Boston. As we step aside, others are stepping up. Boston Public Schools is set to fund the landscape management consultant who serves as the chief BPS outdoor classroom steward; an Outdoor Classroom Leadership Committee has emerged; Science in the Schoolyard professional development programs are likely to continue; and we are hopeful that the next mayoral administration will step up to revitalize BSI-renovated schoolyards on a 12-15 year cycle.

It has been an honor to work with a talented BSI team and dedicated partners to create vibrant and engaging learning and play spaces for Boston's children. Together, Mayor Menino, the Boston Schoolyard Funders Collaborative, Boston Public Schools and each of you have helped us lay a foundation that we hope Boston builds on for years to come.

Sincerely,


Myrna Johnson
Executive Director