

Boston Schoolyard Initiative

Science in the Schoolyard

Students are surprised
to discover that
air moves,
seeds germinate,
earth materials erode,
organisms seek shelter,
water pools and flows, and
magnets stick to some things
but not others—just outside
the school door.

Science in the Schoolyard (SSY) helps teachers use their schoolyard or Outdoor Classroom to support regular science instruction. The program helps teachers expand the walls of their classroom by moving instruction outdoors. Learning outdoors enriches students understanding of science concepts and their applications to the real world.

Professional Development in-service courses include 1) *Science in the Schoolyard – an Introduction to Teaching FOSS & STC Outdoors*; 2) advanced grade-level courses on using the *SSY Guides* grades K-5; 3) content-specific courses, including *Teaching Outdoors in Winter*, *Outdoor Science for ELL's*, and *Outdoor Learning for Special Needs Students*; and 4) specialized workshops and trainings upon request. All courses are posted on mylearningplan.com.

Curriculum Guides to FOSS and STC provide step by step information on *when* and *how* to take students outside for each of the FOSS and STC kits used in the BPS Science curriculum. *SSY Guides* are available for purchase at Delta Education (deltaeducation.com), can be downloaded from FOSSweb.com and can be obtained by BPS teachers from the Science Department.

The *SSY Guides* offer simple, practical ways for science teachers to take kit investigations outdoors. The Guides also provide activities that teachers and OST staff can use to integrate science into other content areas.

Helps students learn to ask questions, observe closely, collect data, transfer knowledge, build vocabulary, develop science process skills and apply concepts.

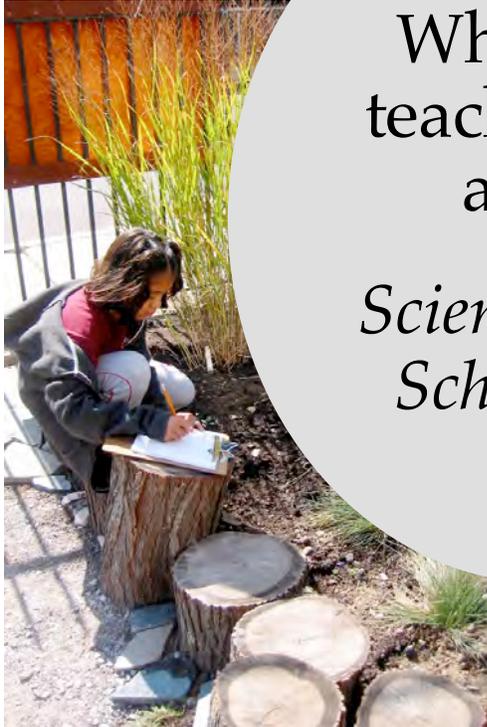


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The observing never stopped. Every day students brought in creatures they were finding outside.

If you were there you would have heard things like “Look what I have!” and then a sudden rush of students around that person.



What BPS teachers say about Science in the Schoolyard

I realized that I may be assuming my students understand a concept, when they don't. It was a really useful assessment of whether students could recognize a slope, and use the term when they saw one.

The vocabulary was so much richer outdoors. The words I heard students using were words they hadn't used indoors: absorption, channeled, flow, pooling.

I was amazed at the language that was forthcoming from my English Language Learners.

Outside I noticed much more “accountable talk.”



Kid who had spoken only ten words all year were using sentences to describe what they saw outdoors. Fantastic sentences.

My students were able to compare structures across all sorts of animals: millipedes, beetles, worms, spiders, ants. It really reinforced their understanding that living things have different structures that they use for different reasons.



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