



BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE

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

Outdoor Writers Workshop Shows Benefits for Boston Literacy Instruction



The Boston Schoolyard Initiative released a report this week about the academic impact of the Outdoor Writers Workshop (OWW) program in Boston's public elementary schools. The evaluation, conducted by the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, found that the program offers benefits for both teaching and learning. Read the report executive summary [here](#).

In the October 2012 Issue:
[Report Shows Benefits of OWW](#)
[BSI Unveils New Schoolyards](#)
[Governor Visits The Mather School Outdoor Classroom](#)
[New Schoolyard Grantees Begin Planning](#)
[Good Idea Showcase: Power of Partnerships](#)
[New SSY and OWW Teacher Memos](#)
[Funds Available for Tree Planting](#)

Like us on Facebook 

**BSI HAS A
FACEBOOK PAGE!**

Click the button above to "like" us... and be sure to visit our page to post your schoolyard news and photos!

Specifically, the report includes the following key findings:

- Outdoor writing increases interest in writing for some students and shows promise for improving student outcomes.
- Outdoor Writers Workshop shows particular promise for improving outcomes among English Language Learners and students in special education.
- Outdoor writing activities provide valuable academic and enrichment experiences for urban students.

The professional development program trains teachers to use outdoor classrooms as a venue for writing instruction. Dr. Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, said, "Today's creative world demands that all our students become proficient writers, beginning at a young age, regardless of background, native language, ability or family income. As we work to strengthen writing instruction throughout the district, we are fortunate to offer teachers the Outdoor Writers Workshop as an innovative approach to improve writing skills and help close achievement gaps."

[Read more about the report here...](#)

BSI Unveils Three New Schoolyards!



Edison Principal Mary Driscoll, Mayor Thomas Menino, and BSI Executive Director Myrna Johnson cut the ribbon on the Edison K-8 School's new outdoor classroom

School spirit was on display recently as BSI celebrated the opening of three new projects. The new schoolyards and outdoor classrooms were created thanks to the hard work of the schoolyard planning committees at the Edison K-8 School in Brighton, the Young Achievers Science and Math Pilot K-8 in Mattapan, and the Elihu Greenwood Leadership Academy in Hyde Park. The creativity of the committees and their respective landscape designers-- David Warner of Warner Larson Landscape Architects, Kaki Martin of Klopfer Martin Design Group, and Clara Batchelor of CBA Landscape Architects--shone through in the finished products. Click [here](#) to read more the Young Achievers event which was featured on Boston.com!

Governor Patrick Visits the Mather Outdoor Classroom



YOUR DONATION HELPS TURN THIS:



INTO THIS:



**PLEASE CONSIDER
A GIFT TODAY!**

**COMING SOON TO YOUR
EMAIL INBOX...**

Hundreds of BPS teachers are now using Science in the Schoolyard and Outdoor Writers Workshop. In order to share best practices "from the field," we are launching a monthly **SSY and OWW Memo**. Teachers, if you've taken our training, keep an eye out for the first one coming soon- and get ready to share your favorite tips, lesson plans, and student work from the outdoors!

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR TREE PLANTING

Looking to green your schoolyard? The Grow Boston Greener program is announcing the next round of competitive mini-grants that provide \$500 - \$2,500 of funding for tree plantings in neighborhoods throughout Boston. The Deadline is Oct. 10. For more information, contact the Boston Natural Areas Network at 617-542-

BSI and the Mather Elementary School proudly hosted Governor Deval Patrick for a recent planting event in the Dorchester school's outdoor classroom. In conjunction with the Massachusetts Nursery and Lawn Association's "Plant Something" campaign, Governor Patrick braved the rainy weather to provide the schoolyard with new plant material and help students start seedlings. Many thanks to the Governor for helping to steward this beautiful space!



BSI Horticulturalist Neil McCarthy and Governor Deval Patrick help to green the Mather schoolyard

7686 or visit www.growbostongreener.org



 [Send to a Colleague](#)

 [Join Our Mailing List](#)

Boston Schoolyard Initiative
One Center Plaza
Suite 350
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
www.schoolyards.org

New Schoolyard Grantees Begin Dreaming and Planning

Congratulations to the most recent BSI schoolyard renovation grantees! Beginning this month, the **Higginson-Lewis K-8 School** and the **Mario Umana Academy** are gearing up to design new schoolyards and outdoor classrooms. The **Mission Hill K-8 School** will be using their BSI grant to design and build a nature play space at their new home, the site of the former Aggasiz School. The **Manning Elementary School** will receive technical assistance for a design/build project aimed at maximizing the existing natural areas on their schoolyard for teaching and learning. We look forward to working with each of these fantastic schools over the coming year.

Good Idea Showcase: Quincy School Shows the Power of Partnerships

In our Good Idea Showcase, Lai Lai Sheung, a teacher at the Josiah

Quincy Elementary School, describes how she leverages partnerships and resources to help their rooftop garden flourish:

For six years, the Quincy School has partnered with the nearby Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition. Tufts underwrites a grant to bring all of our third graders to Drumlin Farm to start off the school year. During the fall, a team of graduate students volunteer to teach three garden-related lessons to about 120 third graders. In the spring, another team of Tufts students teach an additional three lessons. The topics are decomposition, plant needs, parts of a plant, parts of a flower, planting vegetables from seed, and the food web.

Three years ago Maureen Beufeit, a Tufts Nutrition School graduate student, organized a one-time fall clean up event. Two years ago, I organized a perennials transplanting event and had 80 volunteers come on one Saturday to help with mural-painting, composting, transplanting, and building benches.

Last year Laura Held was our Tufts liaison. The Tufts students planted one of a pair of heirloom apple trees, donated by the Boston Tree Party, at the garden... [read more](#)



A partnership with Tufts University provides much needed volunteer support for the Quincy School's rooftop garden

[Forward this email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to maureenwhite@schoolyards.org by maureenwhite@schoolyards.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Boston Schoolyard Initiative | One Center Plaza | Suite 350 | Boston | MA | 02108