



Green Schools for All: Equitable Funding and Expansion of Green Spaces Across District Campuses

For Action September 13, 2022

(Res -002-22/23)

Whereas, The Los Angeles Unified School District has committed to providing equitable access to green spaces for its students through various projects, including the Sustainable Environment Enhancement Developments for Schools (SEEDS) Program and the creation of Nature Explore classrooms at our Early Education centers;

Whereas, Campuses can be greened through a variety of approaches, including, but not limited to: planting new grass fields, replacing paved surfaces with permeable surfaces that incorporate native and drought tolerant planting areas, installation of trees, creation of school gardens, and incorporating features that reduce the heat island effect;

Whereas, The District has expanded on these efforts to ensure family and community access to green schoolyards by partnering with the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks (RAP) to open Community School Parks, with four sites already established and the City of Los Angeles' commitment to build 30 Community School Parks by 2023;

Whereas, The District has \$276 million in bond-funded projects that include greening underway and completed, with an additional \$5 million for future greening projects from Measure RR;

Whereas, The District anticipates additional funding for these efforts following Governor Newsom's launch of the "Outdoors For All" initiative last year, which invested \$548.3 million in state grant funding (in addition to the \$1 billion-plus investment in the 2021 state budget for expanded park access) to build 112 parks in communities across the state and provide equitable access to outdoor spaces to all Californians;

Whereas, Many equity gaps remain; according to the District's 2022 Greening Index of Schools, only 22% of the aggregate square footage of all school sites are considered "green" or natural space, with 235 elementary schools having 10% or less of their campus footprint considered green;

Whereas, the District's Greening Program officially recommends that at least 30% of each school site be dedicated to green or natural space, but only 16% of our District campuses (106 out of 671 sites, based on the Greening Index) meet that threshold;

Whereas, Based on these measures, 85% of our students attend schools with little or no tree canopies for shade, asphalt-laden playgrounds,, and minimal outdoor learning opportunities - well below the District's recommended greening ratio, indicating a need for the District to accelerate our existing progress significantly;

Whereas, Research has shown that green spaces on or around a school campus are positively associated with reductions in chronic absenteeism (MacNaughton et al., 2017), increased academic achievement (Wu et al., 2014), restored attention capacity, decreased stress levels (Li & Sullivan, 2016), as well as reduced mental fatigue and aggression (Schulman & Peters, 2008);



Green Schools for All: Equitable Funding and Expansion of Green Spaces Across District Campuses

For Action September 13, 2022

(Res -002-22/23)

Whereas, Rising temperatures caused by climate change have necessitated responsive greening policies to urgently address conditions such as extreme heat and ensure that students across the District have access to shaded outdoor areas that provide cooler and greener spaces for students to learn, engage, and play every day; and

Whereas, Equitable access to green spaces aligns with the Board-approved Strategic Plan and its goal to identify \$50 million in projects to create outdoor learning spaces and other landscaping and greening upgrades, as well as the Board's approval of the resolution "Creating New School Gardens and Campus and Community Shared Green Spaces to Provide Outdoor Learning Opportunities and Create Sustainable and Healthy Environments (Res 042-19/20); now therefore, be it;

Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District recognizes the proven benefits of green spaces for students' academic, health and social-emotional outcomes and commits to a long-term effort to ensure all school facilities have adequate green spaces, such as square-footage of grass, appropriate shade via tree-canopies, learning gardens, developmentally appropriate outdoor classrooms (e.g. Nature Explore Classrooms), and naturescapes;

Resolved further, That the Board adopts the current recommendation for 30% green/natural space on campuses as the minimum standard for all District schools and directs the Superintendent to develop a plan within 90 days to ensure all schools meet the 30% standard by 2032. The plan must:

- Include an analysis of how current and planned bond projects will help meet this standard,
- Prioritize schools with the lowest green spaces/access to green spaces as determined by the District's 2022 Greening Index and in communities most affected by extreme heat and climate change,
- Prioritize efforts in Early Education Centers, Primary Centers, and Elementary Schools, where the need for green spaces is highest, and outdoor play is an essential feature of the instructional program, and
- Include a strategy for ensuring that all elementary schools with 10% or less in green space reach the minimum standard by no later than 2027;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to establish a separate category in the existing bond program to specifically fund campus greening at a level adequate to achieve the districtwide minimum standard ratio by 2032;

Resolved further, That any facilities projects that necessitate the disruption of existing concrete, asphalt paving or other hardscape, including asphalt replacement/repaving, portable building removal projects, and future Major Modernizations, also include the addition of green space or a natural space with the requisite shading to ensure measurable progress towards the district's adopted aforementioned minimum green space standard;

Resolved further, That the Board commits to ensuring that all future bond measures shall include similar, distinct greening programs as part of its effort to ensure the aforementioned minimum green square standard is met and maintained;



Green Schools for All: Equitable Funding and Expansion of Green Spaces Across District Campuses

For Action September 13, 2022

(Res -002-22/23)

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent's office to deepen the partnerships with City and County officials to expand the community school parks program, significantly increasing the number of community school parks in the schools with low green space based on the District's 2022 Greening Index and in communities most affected by extreme heat and climate change; and be it finally,

Resolved, That the Board directs the Superintendent's office to work with the Office of Government Relations to ensure that the adequate funding for greening efforts and community school parks are a continued pillar of the District's advocacy efforts at all levels, including advocating that the legislature increase the State's allocation to school greening beyond the current \$50 million in this year's proposed budget.