Re-imagining the Outdoor Classroom:
Innovative Design Ideas
for Outdoor Learning

Presenters
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Learning Objectives
1. Learn about the current trend of educational schoolyards in the US.
2. Learn how educational considerations inform outdoor classroom design and increase impacts for teaching and learning.
3. Understand how maintenance considerations influence outdoor classroom design.
4. Examine the role of public and private partners in outdoor classroom design, construction, and maintenance.

Outline
I. Overview of the Boston Schoolyard Initiative: Context, History and Impact
II. Outdoor Classrooms: National trends in education; benefits of outdoor teaching; Critique of early designs
III. Evolution of the Idea and Design Concept
IV. Maintenance and Stewardship: Design Considerations
V. The Landscape Architect’s
VI. Lessons Learned
THE CONTEXT: 1995

TRANSFORMING SCHOOLYARDS INTO DYNAMIC CENTERS...

A PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

... FOR RECREATION, LEARNING & COMMUNITY LIFE

2013

18 years
$20 million invested
88 schools
32 outdoor classrooms
3 education programs
850 teachers
30,000 children/year
BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE

NATIONAL CONTEXT TODAY

- reducing childhood obesity
- connecting children & nature
- schoolyard gardening & healthy eating
- Green schools

EDUCATION CONTEXT TODAY

- STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
- Universal Design For Learning
- Common Core Standards
- Educating the Whole Child

early designs for learning

early support for teachers
THE CHALLENGE

DESPITE broad partnership of school district, city and private funders excitement of teachers, principals, families, and students direct connections to standards

ACTIVE USE DID NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW

LESSONS LEARNED

the key to post-occupancy use: beginning inside the classroom

SUPPORTING THE CURRICULUM

SUPPORTING THE LESSON STRUCTURE
BOSTON SCHOOLYARD INITIATIVE

SUPPORTING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

provided curriculum support & professional development through the district

all materials and training co-developed with teachers

consistency of design across the district

ASLA 2013 Annual Meeting and EXPO

Ross Miller

• Evolution of the design concept
• Designing for maintenance and stewardship

Kaki Klopfer Martin

A Landscape Architect’s Perspective

ASLA 2013 Annual Meeting and EXPO
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