EDUCATION. COLLABORATION. EQUITY. INNOVATION.

Learning Landscapes is a program of the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center

Learning Landscape schoolyard-design reflects the unique culture and history of the people, the school, and the neighborhood it serves while providing opportunities for physical activity, socialization & creative play. The distinctive elements of Learning Landscape schoolyards include:

- Community gateways and gathering spaces
- Public art works
- Age-appropriate play equipment
- Grass playing fields
- Colorful structured & unstructured asphalt games
- Custom shade structures
- Vegetable gardens
- Habitat areas/nature play

On Learning Landscape schoolyards, students interact with educational elements such as fractions, historical timelines, common words, and quotes to help students learn as they play.

DESIGN APPROACH

To ensure innovation and affordability, Learning Landscape schoolyards are collaboratively designed by graduate students at the University of Colorado, College of Architecture and Planning, the school district, local elementary schools and communities. Elementary school students participate in the design process by creating drawings that illustrate their vision for a new playground.

We involve the community in all phases of development, building stewardship of the Learning Landscape. The many people participating in Learning Landscape projects sends the essential message to the children and families of each community: “We believe in you!”

ASLA Field Session Learning Objectives

1. Learn about how schoolyard can be designed to serve educational needs and urban communal spaces
2. Learn how an urban agricultural model can support school cafeterias, elementary education and community food needs
3. Learn how a landscape architect founded a schoolyard redevelopment movement resulting in a city-wide transformation
4. Learning Landscapes research on the impacts of these urban places will be provided

What is a Learning Landscape?

Learning Landscapes are more than a playground; they are the core of urban communities.

Our Impact

Every elementary Denver Public School yard (96) has been transformed into a vibrant & healthy play space.

Learning Landscape schoolyards are neighborhood parks used by the community on weekends and after school.

Learning Landscape schoolyards challenge the existing concept of traditional schoolyards.

Studies show Learning Landscapes increase physical activity and socialization skills in children.

For More Information

Visit our website: www.active-environments.com
Or contact us by phone 303.724.9185

Anschutz Health and Wellness Center
12348 E Montview Blvd
Aurora, CO 80045
SCHMITT SCHOOLYARD PROGRAMS

HKHS: Exploring the Potential of Sustainable School Farms

Can Denver Public Schools (DPS) implement and sustain a replicable, economically viable urban agriculture model, focused upon supplying the majority of its own fresh fruits & vegetables?

- $93,000 Grant from the Colorado Health Foundation
- District-wide feasibility study
- Identifying the capital improvements and land needed for DPS to grow as much local, seasonal produce as possible within the District
- Builds upon DPS school garden and garden to cafeteria program

To access our Economic Feasibility Study for Healthy Kids Healthy Scores, please visit:

http://goo.gl/YyWZKD

Learning Garden Opportunities

Unique Learning:
- Self-exploration
- Independent interactions
- Imaginative play
- Self-discovery
- Inviting environment

Built in One Day

Our Learning Garden is built by the whole school community – principal, teachers, parents, students & volunteers – in one day. It’s modular, fits any schoolyard and can be built on any surface.

Strong Political Support

Kimbal Musk, co-founder of The Kitchen [community], with Governor John Hickenlooper at the Schmitt Elementary ‘Community Build Day’ in Denver, CO.

Youth Farmers’ Markets

“Feeding the Community”

2012 Market Totals:
- 114 Markets
- $24,466 total sold
- $8,535 Profits
- 21,102 pounds sold
- $3,257 sales
- 900 students involved

Garden to Cafeteria Program

“Feeding Fellow Students”

Produce is used in salad bars at each school. Over 119 salad bars in DPS!

2012 totals:
- 1208 pounds grown
- $1065 paid to gardens
- 29 types of fruits and vegetables
- 15 schools
Our Impact

As of 2012, 96 Denver public elementary schools have a Learning Landscapes schoolyard.

Learning Landscapes schoolyards serve as neighborhood parks throughout Denver.

Learning Landscapes are open to the community on weekends and after school.

Learning Landscapes schoolyards challenge the existing concept of traditional schoolyards.

Studies show that Learning Landscapes schoolyards increase physical activity and social skills in children.


Want to Learn More?

For more information, contact us:
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Reversing trends in childhood obesity and improving academic performance by creating Learning Gardens in schools across the U.S.

Learning Gardens have irrigation built into the frame of the garden beds. Schools run basic irrigation piping to the beds. Irrigation lines then run inside the beds to reduce accidental damage or vandalism.

Created in Two Days

Schools simply choose how many beds they can fit into their space and set them out as desired.

Strong Political Support

Kimbal Musk, co-founder of The Kitchen Community, with Governor John Hickenlooper at the community build day for Schmitt Elementary, in a food desert area of Denver. Schmitt Elementary is 97% Hispanic and 97% of the students are on the federally subsidized food program.
Barnum Elementary Learning Landscape

Master Plan
School Description

Barnum Elementary School is a widely diverse urban school located in the Barnum neighborhood in west Denver. Presently enrolled are 480 students. Educational services are offered for students Early Childhood (ECE) through fifth grade in a self-contained setting. Included in these services are English Language Acquisition (ELA), Technology, Library Media, Art, Physical Education, Music, Special Education (mild, moderate), Challenge, Title I Math and Conflict Resolution Intervention. Also, there are a variety of after school programs for both students and their families.
Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment Learning Landscape
Denver, Colorado
History of the School

Montclair Elementary sits in one of Denver’s historic neighborhoods established in the late 1800’s by Baron VonRichthofen, the uncle of the Red Baron. Montclair has been a neighborhood school since opening its doors at its original location, not far from where the school currently sits. Innovative instruction has been a hallmark of Montclair. The first kindergarten program in the state of Colorado debuted at Montclair over 100 years ago.

Design Narrative

The concept for the site is based on imagination and learning. For a child, the process of these two concepts begins in the playground where their imaginations run wild. They explore their environment through games and play. They discover new challenges through climbing. They record their journey by creating stories of their own. The process continues in the classroom where children apply and transfer their imagination and playground skills. The main organizing element of the site is a spiral pathway. The unifying theme of the site is storytelling and geography. Stories are used to teach students the subjects of literature, reading, writing, geography, and art.

Construction Cost = $450,000

Acreage = 2.3 acres

Learning Landscape Elements

Storytelling Outdoor Classroom & Plaza at Shelter

As a student or visitor enters the site, the spiral walkway includes images of 6 continents, including Europe, Australia, Asia, North America, South America and Africa, along with a quote. Each quote references a story originating from that continent. These images lead the student or visitor to the plaza under the shade shelter. The continent images help the students to learn how to identify each continent and find its geographical location within the world map located at the outdoor classroom. At the plaza, the student or visitor can also match the story title to the corresponding continent and quote. For example, the quote, “There once was a speedy hare who bragged about how fast he could run”, corresponds to Europe and the story “The Tortoise and the Hare”.

Other

- United States Map
- Number grid
- Circumference & Diameter Tetherball
- Timeline
- 4-square
- Bioswale (The bioswale is located on the north end of the site between the parking lot and the multi-use field collects and filters water.)
- School Gardens
- Kinetic Sculpture
High Tech Elementary & DSST at Conservatory Green

Denver, Colorado
Design Narrative

Conservatory Green Focuses on Animals, Insects and Patterns of Nature on the Shared School Campus of Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST): Conservatory Green Middle School and High Tech Elementary School.

The theme for this Learning Landscape combines colors, patterns and textures of animals, insects and patterns found in nature. Special design features include integrating fun and colorful educational symbolism like a butterfly lifecycle walkway, the US map painted on asphalt, nature-themed play equipment with dragonfly-like patterns, abstract insect forms embedded into play pits, a flight path of a bee integrated into an outdoor adventure area, and QR codes etched into a maze providing an integrated learning component.

The animal and nature theming is interwoven throughout the site. An outdoor discovery area is themed around plant life and includes an outdoor classroom with a tactile discovery walk. At the main entry plaza, etched water patterns provide a visual progression typically found in a watershed. And in the student garden area, natural materials make up the site, with plentiful native materials and plantings: a buff sandstone amphitheater sits in dappled shade formed by leaf cutouts in the shade structures, a large cottonwood stump creates a picnic table and seats, a footbridge bridge crosses a cobble stream bed, etched stepping stones are imbedded in the crushed gravel walkways, and a pathway of tree stumps form an adventurous balance walk. The Kitchen Community designed and installed whimsical, macaroni shaped garden beds intended for hands-on learning experiences.

The landscape design includes amenities appropriate to a school site including outdoor recreation and play fields, open spaces and plazas to embrace the community, along with carefully planned parking and student drop-off and pick-up zones for both parent and bus access. The parking lot contains a Porous Landscape Detention island to help clean surface runoff before entering nearby drainage ways.

Learning Landscape Elements

- Insect and Plant Themed ECE Play Area
- Synthetic Turf Play Mound
- Wavy ECE Trike Track
- Art Plaza
- Butterfly Shaped Primary Play Pit
- Bee Flight Path Across Playground
- Shady Playground Gathering Area
- Butterfly Life Cycle Educational Area
- Native Species Themed Four-Square
- Fish Shaped Intermediate Play Pit
- Turtle P-I-P Surfaced Mound
- Custom Leaf Themed Gateway Structure
- QR Code Educational Maze
- Water Themed Main Entry with Confluence Plaza
- Nature Play Exploratory Area
- Footbridge Over Dry Creekbed
- Natural Log Table and Seating
- Log Balance Course
- Interpretive Stepping Stone Path
- Mushroom Table and Seating
- Soft Surface Track Loop
- Student Garden Beds
- Natural Outdoor Classroom with Custom Leaf Shade Structure
- Large Multi-Use Athletic Field
- Porous Landscape Detention Parking Lot Island