



## Outdoor Learning, Austin TX



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## AISD by the Numbers

80,100+

Students



130

Campuses



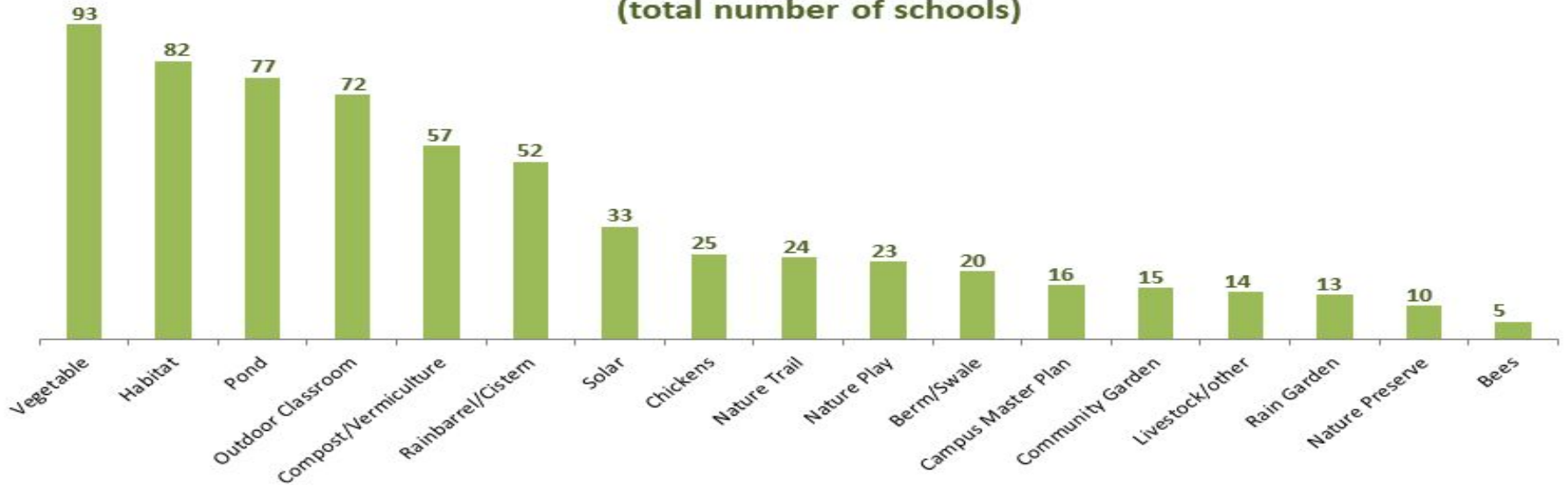
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Community



# 2019-2020

**AISD SCHOOLYARD HABITAT FEATURES**  
(total number of schools)



## Schoolyard Improvements Projects



[Home](#) / [Schoolyard Improvements Projects](#)



# Curriculum Connections

## Explore (20 min.)



### Write to Learn



### Outdoor Connection

Brainstorm: What does the natural world around you mean? *¿Qué significa el mundo natural alrededor?* Take students outside for 10 min. and ask them to name the things they see around them in the world. They should see trees, plants, buildings, cars, etc. Once back inside, what do they see?

Provide each group of 4 students with a box of science materials\* (rock, leaf, food, etc). Have students draw a picture on an index card of an example of the natural world (tree, soil, insect, etc.) and label it. Have them pair-share their drawing with the other students at their table. Say: *These are things we are going to be studying about this year.* Have students write any questions they have about the natural world or the things they observed in their world. Post on your Class Inquiry Board for future investigation.

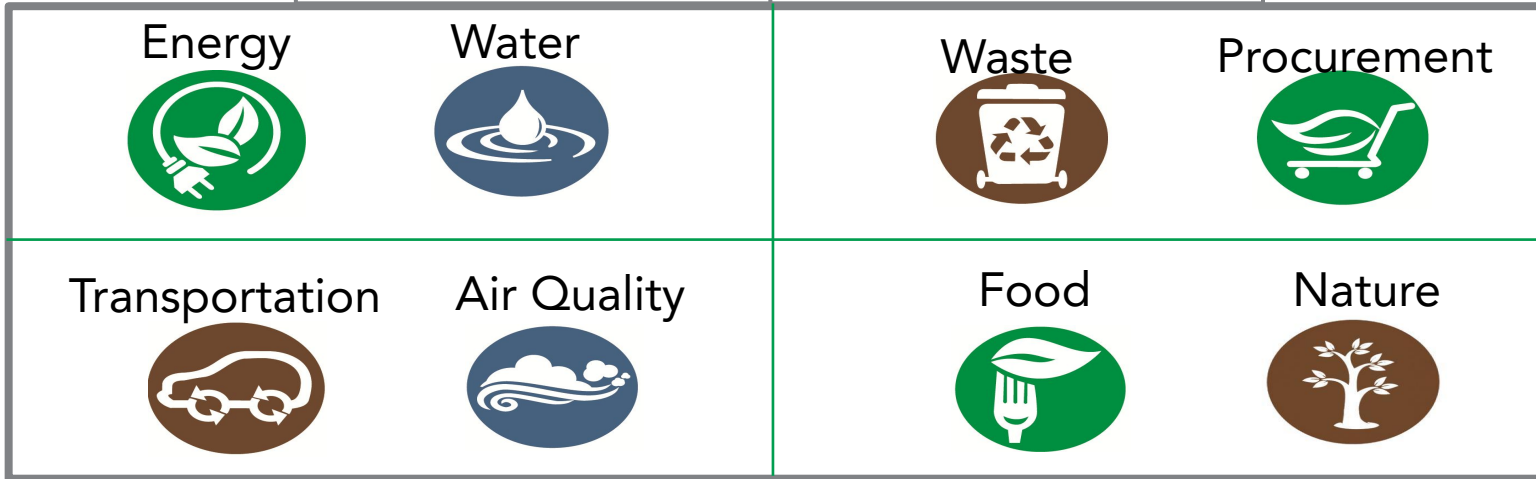


# Sustainability @ Austin ISD

Teaching & Learning

Infrastructure & Operations

Community Engagement



# AISD Sustainability Plan: Nature

*The intent of the Nature Action Area is to provide the Austin ISD community with nature-based learning benefits, opportunities, and experiences; enhance resilient ecosystem services on Austin ISD property; improve social, emotional, health, and academic outcomes for students; and nurture an appreciation for the environment in the next generation of environmental stewards.*

## Goals

- Embed nature into district policies and procedures
- Infrastructure: Support access to nature
- Activation: Increase student time in nature
- Sustainable land management and carbon sequestration





# EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

FOR MODERN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS  
*Approved by AISD Board of Trustees, Nov. 27, 2017*



## Outdoor Learning

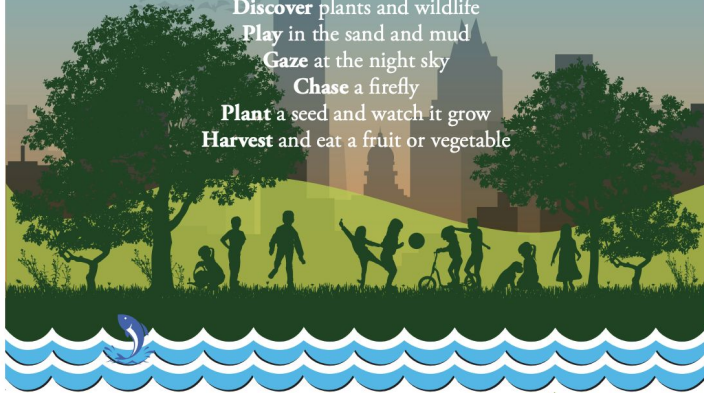
- Outdoor classroom
- Nature loop trail
- Green stormwater infrastructure & cisterns
- Wildlife habitat
- Trees
- Vegetable & pollinator gardens
- Nature play areas
- Community artwork



AUSTIN CHILDREN'S  
**OUTDOOR  
BILL of RIGHTS**

In which every child has the right to:

- Climb a tree
- Catch a fish
- Picnic in a park
- Hike a trail
- Ride a bike
- Splash in a creek or river
- Discover plants and wildlife
- Play in the sand and mud
- Gaze at the night sky
- Chase a firefly
- Plant a seed and watch it grow
- Harvest and eat a fruit or vegetable



Understanding that research shows children who learn and play in nature are healthier, happier and perform better in school, we enthusiastically support this Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights.

Learn more at [www.austintexas.gov/ccn](http://www.austintexas.gov/ccn)



AUSTIN CHILDREN'S  
**OUTDOOR  
BILL of RIGHTS**

**WHEREAS:** Studies show that children who learn and play in nature are healthier, happier and perform better in school.

**WHEREAS:** Children who have safe access to parks, zoos, nature centers, lakes and rivers, and other public outdoor spaces are more resilient, have higher self-esteem, are more confident, are better problem solvers and are more creative.

**WHEREAS:** All children should feel welcome at all of Austin's parks, pools, trails, waterways and open spaces.

**WHEREAS:** Communities in disadvantaged areas with access to nature benefit from greater health equity with lower rates of mortality and disease.

**WHEREAS:** Children who develop a positive relationship with nature are more likely to become tomorrow's stewards of our natural heritage.

**WHEREAS:** Through its parks, trails, waterways, open spaces, and other natural spaces, Austin provides a wide variety of quality outdoor opportunities.

**THEREFORE:** We support this Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights in which every child has the right to:

- Climb a tree • Catch a fish • Picnic in a park • Hike a trail • Ride a bike
- Splash in the creek or river • Discover plants and wildlife
- Play in the sand and mud • Gaze at the night sky • Chase a firefly
- Plant a seed and watch it grow • Harvest and eat a fruit or vegetable

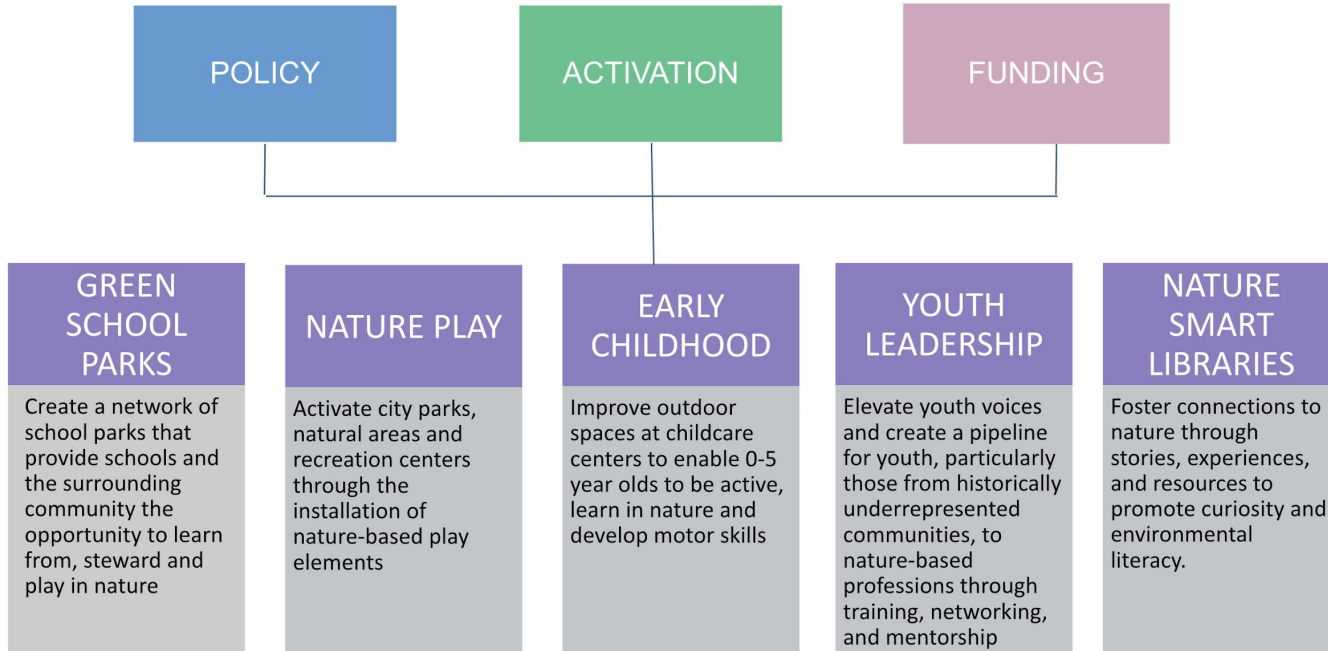


Children in Nature  
Collaborative of Austin



Learn more at [www.austintexas.gov/ccn](http://www.austintexas.gov/ccn)

# Cities Connecting Children to Nature



# Outdoor Learning and COVID-19

## Austin:

- [Austin Public Health](#)



## Austin ISD:

- Professional Learning
- [District Reopening Plan](#)
- Identifying School Need
- [Outdoor Learning Environments Checklist](#)



# COVID-19 Response

- District tree removals
  - Mulch and stumps
- Austin Parks Foundation outdoor classroom support
- Austin ISD limestone blocks- 29 campuses



# Some teachers at McCallum High School move classrooms outside in effort to reduce stress



 **MCCALLUM HIGH SCHOOL MOVES CLASSES OUTSIDE**  
AUSTIN



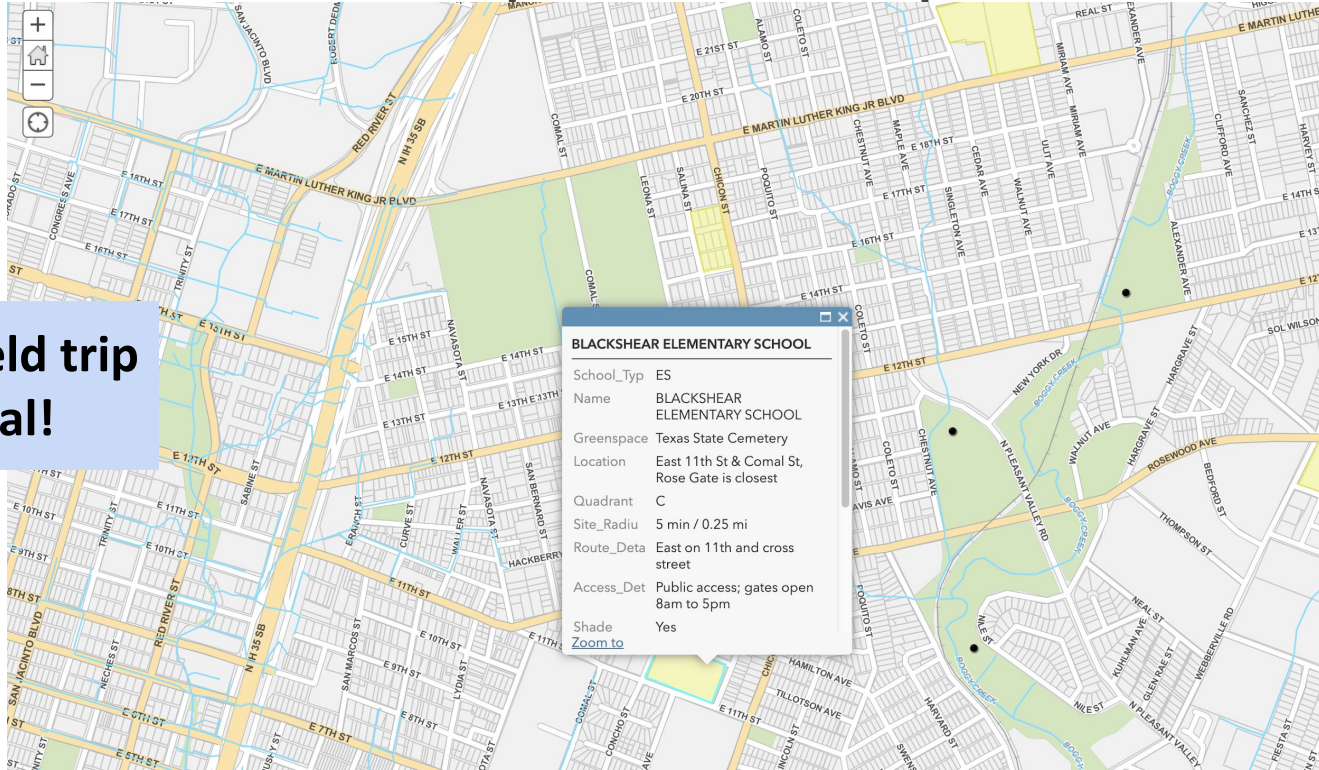
# Outdoor Learning Features Mapping



- Habitat Garden
- Vegetable Garden
- Livestock
- Ponds
- Rain Garden
- Rainwater Collection
- Outdoor Classroom
- Solar



# Off Campus Green Spaces



**Walking field trip approval!**





# Garden Maintenance Support



Austin ISD

## Volunteer Support During COVID-19 2021

Outdoor learning is strongly encouraged by Austin ISD and [Austin Public Health](#) as gardens, outdoor classrooms, ponds, etc. are a great opportunity for teachers and students to engage in hands-on learning while reducing COVID-19 transmission risk. Below are guidelines as they relate to AISD properties that are shared with or next to City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) parkland.

**Non PAR/AISD Joint Use Sites:** Volunteers are allowed on campus grounds and it is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that the proper safety guidelines listed below are being followed.

**Schools Adjacent to PAR Parkland:** During City of Austin COVID-19 Stages 1-4, volunteers will be allowed and should follow the safety guidelines below. During Stage 5, no volunteers are allowed on the neighboring PAR parkland areas due to City of Austin Parks and Recreation limitations on volunteers on City parkland during Stage 5. Check [this map](#) to see if your school is adjacent to City of Austin PAR Parkland.

**PAR/AISD Joint Use Sites:** During City of Austin COVID-19 Stages 1-4, volunteers are allowed during out-of-school time following the safety guidelines below. During Stage 5, volunteers are allowed on the grounds during school hours if principal/campus protocols allow. No volunteers are allowed on site during out of school time due to City of Austin Parks and Recreation limitations on volunteers on City parkland during Stage 5. Check [this map](#) to see if your school is a PAR/AISD Joint Use Site.

### Volunteer Safety Guidelines:

- Group size should follow the [City of Austin Risk-based Guidelines](#). Staggered arrival/departure times or multiple project locations are encouraged, especially if more than 10 people are interested in participating.
- Individuals need to be socially distanced and masked. Family members from the same household may work in close proximity to each other.
- Volunteers should be encouraged to bring their own tools or the campus needs to have enough tools on hand that they will not be shared. If you need additional tools, they can be [checked-out](#) from the Austin ISD Science and Health Resource Center or by contacting [kathy.pulido@austinisd.org](mailto:kathy.pulido@austinisd.org).
- Ensure that hand sanitizer is available or provide access to running water and soap.

Check [here](#) for additional Standard Operating Procedures for Outdoor Learning.

If installing new projects (gardens, tree plantings, ponds, little free libraries, etc.), please be sure to submit a Schoolyard Improvement [application](#) for district approval before arranging any on-site volunteer workdays.

# Spring Volunteer Support



# Green Campus Principal Cohort

## Green Campus Administrator Cohort

2021-2022 PILOT COHORT



EcoRise is excited to work with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department and Austin ISD to launch the first Green Campus Administrator Cohort. Funded by a catalytic grant from Cities Connecting Children to Nature, the cohort will consist of administrators from all communities within Austin ISD. Principals from Title 1 schools are encouraged to apply. Administrators will participate in extensive learning opportunities to understand the research and benefit of incorporating nature, outdoor learning, and green school yards into academic learning. Administrators will collaborate to build a campus mission and plan to incorporate this learning and network with like-minded principals from across the district.

### WHO SHOULD APPLY?

The goal of this cohort is to support campus administrators in effectively leading a green campus. We are seeking principals interested in increasing their capacity to incorporate green campus features and outdoor learning into the teaching practice and culture of the campus to increase students' engagement and the social and emotional benefits of experiential learning.

### COHORT SCOPE:

- Cohort Selection & Meet and Greet: Spring 2021
- Knowledge Building Convenings: June 2021
- Campus Planning Convenings: July 2021
- Monthly Check-ins: Fall and Spring 2021-2022
- Coordinated Campus Visits: 2021-2022
- Campus Showcase Opportunities: Spring 2022

### GOALS AND OUTCOMES:

- Administrators will increase understanding and access to research, local resources, and tools to support green campus teaching and learning
- Administrators will create a campus mission and plan to share with staff to support green campus initiatives.
- Administrators will give and receive feedback on progress towards their green campus initiatives goals.
- Administrators will receive targeted professional development for their staff to implement campus goals.
- Administrators will share the work of the campus with parents and the community.

### HOW CAN A CAMPUS APPLY?

The Green Campus Administrator Cohort selection process will begin in March of 2021. Campus teams must consist of the campus principal and one other member of the administrative staff such as Assistant Principal, Academic Dean, or Counselor (not to include instructional coaches or teachers). To submit your application please use the link below:

Apply today at <http://bit.ly/AdminCohortSurvey>



*"[The most important thing I learned is] the number of easy ways an individual can make a difference for the environment just by changing small parts of their life."*

AKINS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT



# Thank you so much!

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