**Living Schoolyards Act**

*Advocacy Letter Template - For the Public/Individuals*

Green Schoolyards America

Dear Senator/Representative Name

I am writing to urge you to support the **Living Schoolyards Act**. This bill would direct important federal resources towards upgrading school grounds into nature-based learning environments that help reduce the impacts of extreme weather while providing students access to shaded play, recreation, gardening and outdoor learning.

Across the country, more than 98,000 public schools serve 50.8 million PreK-12 students[[1]](#footnote-0) on more than two million acres of school grounds, every day.[[2]](#footnote-1) Much of that land is paved with asphalt and provides almost no shade, particularly in the hottest, lowest income, and under-resourced communities. The Living Schoolyards Act represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shift the paradigm for outdoor infrastructure at school from an outdated, 1940s model designed to produce acres of asphalt and empty grass—to a new model that is a future-ready, nature-rich environment for students of all ages.

School grounds play a central role in children’s lives and shape their perspective of the world around them. Transforming school grounds into living schoolyards provides equitable access to place-based, hands-on learning resources[[3]](#footnote-2) for youth of all ages; shade that protects students from extreme heat and reduces cooling costs in buildings[[4]](#footnote-3); improved learning outcomes in all subject areas[[5]](#footnote-4); nature that reduces stress, anxiety, depression, and bullying[[6]](#footnote-5); opportunities for varied types of physical activity to maintain a healthy body weight and improve health[[7]](#footnote-6); community green spaces outside of school hours[[8]](#footnote-7); collegial space for teachers to relax and connect; and exposure to STEM subjects and skills needed to drive our future economy[[9]](#footnote-8).

I live in City and State and wholeheartedly support the **Living Schoolyards Act**. It will help our state’s children be healthier and safer, build community resilience, and encourage our schools to design and manage their grounds for learning. **I urge you to support this bill.**

Sincerely,

Name

City, State

1. National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=84 [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Center for Cities and Schools: https://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Taking Curriculum Outside, Green Schoolyards America: https://www.greenschoolyards.org/curriculum-outside [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Schoolyard Forest Benefits, Green Schoolyards America: https://www.greenschoolyards.org/schoolyard-forest-benefits [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Cognitive and Learning Benefits, Green Schoolyards America: https://www.greenschoolyards.org/nature-benefits-cognitive [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Social Emotional Benefits, Green Schoolyards America: https://www.greenschoolyards.org/nature-benefits-social-emotional [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Physiological Benefits, Green Schoolyards America: https://www.greenschoolyards.org/nature-benefits-physiological [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Park Equity, Trust for Public Land: https://www.tpl.org/parks-and-an-equitable-recovery-parkscore-report [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Outdoor Education and Science Achievement: José M. Rios & Jessica Brewer (2014) Outdoor Education and Science Achievement, Applied Environmental Education & Communication, 13:4, 234-240, DOI: [10.1080/1533015X.2015.975084](https://doi.org/10.1080/1533015X.2015.975084) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)