**Living Schoolyards Act**

*Advocacy Letter Template - For Outreach to Members of Congress by Organizations*

Green Schoolyards America

*Please put this letter on your organization’s letterhead.*

Dear Senator/Representative Name

Organization Name is writing to ask you to support the **Living Schoolyards Act.** This legislation will enable schools to completely re-envision their outdoor spaces with the goal of providing more hands-on learning opportunities, strengthening local ecological systems and community resilience, and giving every child a place where they can engage in hands-on learning and play outside.

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Act represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shift the paradigm for outdoor infrastructure at school from an outdated, 1940s model designed to produce acres of asphalt and empty grass—to a new model that is a future-ready, nature-rich environment for students of all ages.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).

Our organization, along with our NUMBER constituents/members in STATE, wholeheartedly support the **Living Schoolyards Act** and have signed on as an endorser of this legislation. This bill will help our state’s/nation’s children be healthier and safer, build community resilience, and encourage our schools to design and manage their grounds for learning. **We urge you to support this bill.**

Sincerely,

Organization Name

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)