

Board Office Use: Legislative File Info.	
File ID Number	18-2504
Introduction Date	12/12/18
Enactment Number	19-0250
Enactment Date	2/13/2019 lf



# Memo

**To** Board of Education

**From** Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent  
Tim White and Michelle Oppen

**Board Meeting Date** February 13, 2019

**Subject** Board Policy – Facilities – BP 7110.1 Development of Living Schoolyards

**Action Requested and Recommendation** Approval by the Board of Education of Oakland Unified School District Board Policy BP 7110.1 Development of Living Schoolyards.

**Background and Discussion** OUSD has been working with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Green Schoolyards America (GSA) to propose a Policy about Living Schoolyards at OUSD schools, as well as to develop and construct Living Schoolyards on OUSD campuses. The three groups signed a “Donation Agreement for Development and Construction of Living Schoolyards on Oakland Unified School District Campuses” on December 7, 2017. This Agreement outlines the process and roles and responsibilities for this work. Additionally, the Board approved a resolution on June 6, 2018 to develop a board policy for the development and maintenance of Living Schoolyards in OUSD.

Over the past three years, The Trust for Public Land has secured over \$2 million to fund the develop and construction work of Living Schoolyards on OUSD campuses, and has secured public and private donations to fund the development of the Policy:

- \$566,000 – State Coastal Conservancy Prop 1 Grant awarded to TPL (Nov 2017)
- \$1,186,977 – CA Natural Resources Urban Greening Grant (Oct 2018)
- \$500,000 – State Coastal Conservancy Climate Ready Grant awarded to TPL (anticipated Jan/Feb 2019)
- Additional support from Kaiser Permanente Northern California and Hellman Foundation

Additionally, other organizations, such as the Rose Foundation, have secured significant funding for improving Oakland schoolyards.

TPL and GSA have convened a working group and researched existing OUSD policies. The working group includes OUSD Departments—such as Facilities, Buildings and Grounds, Custodial Services, Risk Management, Community Engagement, and Health and Wellness—and nonprofit



partners with expertise in green schoolyards, stormwater management, urban forestry, and play environments—such as the Watershed Project, Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, Growing Together, and the Center for Ecoliteracy. Since May 2018, the working group has met four times, convened one workshop with approximately 50 participants, hosted one professional development workshop about maintenance of living schoolyards, and led one tour to visit examples of OUSD schoolyards. The working group established the goals, outline, and provided feedback on the proposed Policy. Other OUSD leaders reviewed and provided feedback on the policy language, such as Curtiss Sarikey, Tadashi Nakadegawa, Rebecca Littlejohn, and Herberta Zulueta.

Simultaneously to drafting the policy, TPL is leading the implementation of living schoolyard pilot projects at: Melrose Leadership Academy, Markham Elementary School, International Community School/Think College Now, Ralph J. Bunche High School, and Emiliano Zapata Street Academy School. TPL is leading a participatory design process for improvements at all five schools, and managing the design and construction. OUSD will own and maintain the pilot projects. TPL completed the first set of improvements at Melrose Leadership Academy.

The policy outlines OUSD’s vision to transform asphalt covered school grounds into living schoolyards that promote children’s health and well-being, and create green and ecologically rich community parks that connect children and their neighborhoods to the natural world outside their classroom door, every day. The policy also provides a roadmap for implementing this plan, to create a successful transition to implement living schoolyards in all schools across the District by 2035.

The attached policy has been updated for the second reading.

**Fiscal Impact**

Below are the anticipated fiscal impacts that this Policy implies:  
Estimated \$510,000 annually in staffing, professional development  
Estimated \$250,000 one-time for assessments, baseline studies, guidelines and standards development  
Estimated \$1,000,000 per site for capital improvements relating to living schoolyards  
Funding Source: To be developed from private funds, grants, and potentially future bonds or parcel taxes.

**Attachments**

BP 7110.1 Development of Living Schoolyards

# OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Board Policies

### Facilities

#### BP 7110.1

#### Development of Living Schoolyards

### 1. DEFINITION, VISION AND GOALS

The Board defines living schoolyards as rich outdoor environments that strengthen local ecological systems, provide hands-on learning resources, and foster a wide range of play and social opportunities while enhancing health and well-being. These living schoolyards include trees, gardens, and spaces designed by and for the students and the surrounding community.

The Board's vision is that all OUSD's school grounds will have living schoolyards that support 21st Century education, promote children's health, well-being and joy and function as ecologically rich community schools that connect children and their neighborhoods to the natural world right outside their classroom door, every day.

Through this *Board Policy on Living Schoolyards* and related policies and administrative regulations, the Board seeks to ensure that OUSD's school grounds support and strengthen the District's commitment to children's well-being, environmental resilience, community engagement, and equity. This vision is supported by the following goals:

- 1.1 Create Outdoor Environments Optimized for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education.** *OUSD living schoolyards will provide hands-on learning environments for students of all ages, to support standards-based curricula, as well as development of physical and social skills that prepare students for 21<sup>st</sup> century life and careers.*
- 1.2 Increase Children's Joy.** *OUSD living schoolyards will foster children's happiness by providing nurturing, engaging, and comfortable spaces where children can experience joy, curiosity, wonder and adventure, build friendships, and feel cared for.*
- 1.3 Improve Students' Health and Wellness.** *OUSD living schoolyards will promote health and well-being by increasing physical activity, deepening understanding of nutrition, fostering social-emotional and mental health, and optimizing environmental health through grounds design and management.*
- 1.4 Create Vibrant Play and Social Environments.** *OUSD living schoolyards will provide engaging, adventurous and challenging play and recreational opportunities for youth, as well as spaces for small and large group gatherings to support students' social development.*

- 1.5 Increase Access to Park Space.** *OUSD living schoolyards will support the District’s vision of community schools by exploring the potential for public access after-hours and on weekends.*
- 1.6 Strengthen Community Engagement.** *OUSD living schoolyards will be designed and developed with meaningful participation and collaboration from students, families, school staff, and neighbors of each school.*
- 1.7 Prioritize Equity.** *The living schoolyard initiative shall prioritize schools and neighborhoods with the highest need to advance equity.*
- 1.8 Strengthen OUSD’s Environmental Resilience.** *OUSD living schoolyards will contribute to the ecological health of their neighborhoods by planting shade trees to improve climate resilience and air quality, capturing, infiltrating and treating stormwater on site, and creating wildlife habitat by using native plants.*

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION**

This section is an overview of the overall steps required to implement this Board Policy on Living Schoolyards.

### **2.1 Accountability and Oversight**

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the Policy, subject to funding. The Superintendent shall provide periodic updates to the Board regarding fiscal impact, funding resources, implementation, evaluation of stated outcomes, timelines, and progress of projects. The Superintendent may elect to work with a group of key stakeholders and community partners (“the Living Schoolyard Working Group”) to support implementation of the Policy.

### **2.2 Supporters**

The Board recognizes the critical importance of collaboration with nonprofits, funders, and individual school communities to advance this Board Policy on Living Schoolyards. Supporters can help the District with fundraising, advocacy, design, construction, long-term stewardship and maintenance, and curriculum integration. The Board is committed to developing and supporting beneficial collaboration that support living schoolyards.

### **2.3 Living Schoolyards Guidelines and Standards**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop Administrative Regulations and Living Schoolyards Guidelines and Standards that include the following:

- Schoolyard assessment standards that take into account environmental, educational, health, wellness, and community benefits
- Living schoolyard planning and design approval processes

- Community engagement guidelines
- Design standards including approved details, materials, and plant species
- Maintenance and stewardship responsibilities template
- Guidelines on how to integrate living schoolyards into the school’s curriculum
- Funding strategy
- Any additional information that will support funding, planning, design, development, and stewardship of living schoolyards

## **2.4 Facilities Planning and Management**

To the extent funding permits, assessment of existing schoolyards and planning for living schoolyards shall be incorporated in the District’s regular Facilities Master Planning process (BP7110-Facilities Master Plan). The assessment of schoolyards shall take into account environmental, educational, health and wellness, and community benefits and follow the standards developed as part of the Living Schoolyards Guidelines and Standards (see above).

Equity shall be a guiding principle to ensure that students from disadvantaged communities have priority access to the benefits of living schoolyards.

## **3. MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP**

### **3.1 Planning for Long Term Program Resilience**

The Board recognizes the importance of ongoing management of living schoolyards and expects that maintenance protocols and resources may need to be adapted to support long-term sustainability of living schoolyards.

Maintenance/management and stewardship of living schoolyards is a shared responsibility between Buildings and Grounds, school custodians, teachers, site garden liaisons, school and parent volunteers, and nonprofit partners. The Superintendent or designee shall determine how to implement a plan for long-term sustainability and stewardship and include it in the administrative regulations to this policy.

### **3.2 Joint Use Agreement**

The Board recognizes the benefits that living schoolyards bring to the surrounding community. In addition to their role in children’s education, schools are community hubs where families and neighbors connect. Through an appropriate joint use agreement, schools may be able to serve as community resources after hours and on weekends, providing access to nature and recreational opportunities.

The Board supports the development of a cost-neutral, mutually beneficial joint use agreement between the District and the City of Oakland that creates terms under which living schoolyards may be open to the public after hours and on weekends. The joint use agreement shall establish mutually agreed goals, roles and responsibilities, hours of operation, financial commitments, indemnification, scheduling protocols and address property improvements and maintenance.

#### 4. FUNDING

The Board recognizes the need to develop and secure sustainable funding to implement this policy and manage living schoolyards across the District. The implementation of this policy is expressly contingent upon receipt of such funds.

In order to develop sustainable funding sources for living schoolyard implementation, operations and management at a district-wide scale, District staff shall develop a funding strategy for the design, construction, and maintenance of living schoolyards. This strategy shall identify ways to provide financial support (either private or public) to Buildings and Grounds, the Living Schoolyard Coordinator, and other financial impacts of this policy.

In addition, the Board may explore whether the Living Schoolyard program should be part of a future capital bond proposal. To the extent funding permits, every Facilities Master Plan shall include an assessment of the external areas of schools based on the assessment standards outlined in the Guidelines. Any identified needs for repair, modernization, or construction of living schoolyards shall be incorporated into the District's facilities planning process.

The Board shall approve a working list of priority school sites to receive living schoolyards, based on the facilities assessments and community equity, as part of the project identification and engagement mechanisms outlined in the Bond Prioritization Process (BP 7112- General Obligation Bond Prioritization).

The Board may also explore a parcel tax and/or create a maintenance fund to ensure the long-term sustainability of operations and maintenance of living schoolyards.

*(cf. BP 1330- Use of School Facilities)*

*(cf. BP 3285- Vegetation (to the extent that this Board Policy on Living Schoolyards conflicts with BP 3285, BP 7110.1 prevails)*

*(cf. BP 3511- Environmental and Water Conservation)*

*(cf. BP 3511.2- Integrated Pest Management)*


*(cf. BP 5030- Wellness)*

*(cf. BP 6142.5- Environmental and Climate Change Literacy)*

*(cf. BP 7110- Facilities Master Plan)*

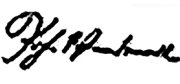
*(cf. BP 7155 Community Engagement for Facilities Projects)*

2/13/19 (if adopted)

  
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Aimee Eng  
President, Board of Education

2/13/2019

**Enactment Number: 19-0250**

  
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Kyla Johnson Trammell  
Secretary, Board of Education

2/14/2019