

Utilizing Outdoor Spaces for School Reopening



Photo credit: Green Schoolyards America



Photo Credit: Boston Schoolyards Initiative

Today's Goals

- Center equity in school reopening plans
- Provide overview of the potential for using outdoor spaces for school reopening
- Share tips and strategies for using outdoor spaces for teaching
- Connect and problem solve with peers facing similar challenges and questions
- Share resources for additional learning
- Identify needs and opportunities for continued learning

Today's Speakers

Liz O'Gilvie
Springfield Food Policy Council



Jennifer Feller
Mass. Audubon

Simca Horwitz
Mass. Farm to School

Rachel Harb
Mass. Farm to School



Setting the Space

Who's in the Audience (Via Chat Box)

Please share: Name, role, school/affiliation

Centering Equity (Liz O'Gilvie)

Can I Teach Outside? How? (Jennifer Feller)

Breakout Discussions

By topic area



Tech Prep for Breakout Topics:

1. How can I use our school grounds in our lessons?
2. School gardens
3. Realities of the natural environment (weather, bugs, etc)
4. Supporting students with special needs
5. Infrastructure & Materials
6. Classroom management
7. School program integration (academic & other school functions)
8. Food & nutrition

Instructions:

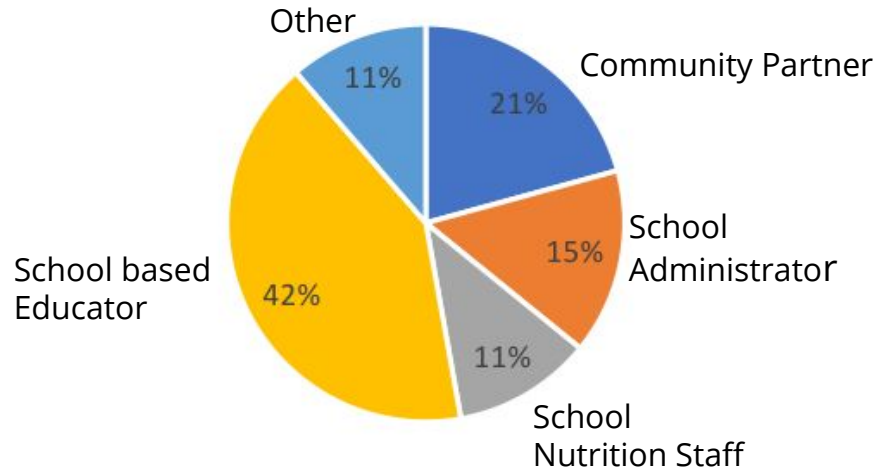
1. Choose a Breakout Topic
2. RENAME on Zoom to include your Breakout Group number
 - **Ex. "2-Rachel Harb"**

How do I rename on Zoom?

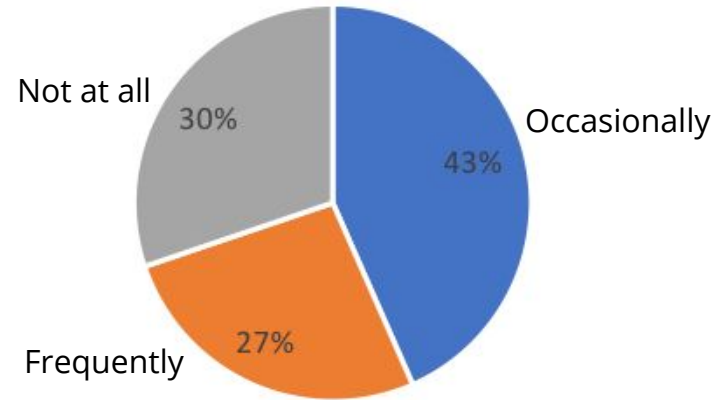
1. Click on the "Participants" button at the bottom of your screen.
2. Hover mouse over your name in the "Participants" list. Click on the three dots and then click "Rename".
3. Type in the # of the group you'd like to join alongside your name.

Who's Here?

What is Your Role?



How Often Do You Use Outdoor Space for Education?





Why Outdoor Spaces?

- More space to accommodate students so more students can return to school more frequently
- Less risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the outdoors
- Hands on learning opportunities
- Physical and mental health benefits of being outside

BIG CITY

Schools Beat Earlier Plagues With Outdoor Classes. We Should, Too.

A century ago, children in New York City attended classes during a pandemic. It seemed to work.

Centering Equity



All photos courtesy of Springfield Public Schools

Teaching Outside

Practical Tools for Successful Lessons



Jennifer Feller

08.19.20

Why Go Outside to Teach?

- Covid-19 has a lower transmission rate outdoors
- Mental health benefits for teacher and students
- Easy access to engaging lesson options
- More room to move as part of the lesson





What prevents you from teaching outside?

- Weather worries
- What about bugs? Sun? Poison Ivy?
- My principal doesn't like it
- The parents won't like it
- Behavior management
- Too many distractions
- It's too far to walk from the main door

Tips 'n Tricks

- Set up materials ahead of time
- Establish expectations early in the year
- Delineate clearly between recess and class time
- Make routine your friend
- Communicate early with parents
- Use the space – encourage movement
- Take advantage of the natural world



But we
only
have a
parking
lot!





Additional Resources



[National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative](https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside)

(<https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside>)

Features official guidance and policies, tips on outdoor classroom infrastructure, school program integration, and case studies. Join a Working Group to contribute to the Initiative.

[North American Association of Environmental Education - eeGuidance for Reopening Schools](#)

More Additional Resources

Upcoming Trainings:

MA School Garden Skillshare (details coming soon!)

[School Garden Support Organization Network](#)

- COVID-Friendly Outdoor Classroom Infrastructure and Design Webinar
- Distance Teaching and Learning Virtual Gathering
- Bringing Social Emotional Learning & Mindfulness Education to Your Work

[Working Document of Additional Resources](#)
(feel free to add!)



Breakout Topics:

1. How can I use our school grounds in our lessons? [Padlet \(Group 1\)](#)
2. School gardens [Padlet \(Group 2\)](#)
3. Realities of the natural environment (weather, bugs, etc) [Padlet \(Group 3\)](#)
4. Supporting students with special needs [Padlet \(Group 4\)](#)
5. Infrastructure & Materials [Padlet \(Group 5\)](#)
6. Classroom management [Padlet \(Group 6\)](#)
7. School program integration (academic & other school functions) [Padlet \(Group 7\)](#)
8. Food & nutrition [Padlet \(Group 8\)](#)

Identify one challenge that you'd want to go deeper on

Starter Prompts:

1. Who else should be involved? Who might you partner with?
2. Do you need approval for this? How will you engage decision-makers?
3. Is this challenge likely to impact different students differently? How will you center equity in your plans?

👤 rachel491 • 1m

1. How can I use our school grounds in our lessons?

What is the dilemma or challenge?

In 1-2 sentences, describe the dilemma or challenge:

♡ 0

👤 Add comment

What if..

Add SUGGESTIONS and CONSIDERATIONS below:

♡ 0

👤 Add comment

I wonder..

Add QUESTIONS below:

♡ 0

👤 Add comment

Resources

Have resources to share? Upload them or share links here:

♡ 0

👤 Add comment

Optional: Would you like to be reachable by other participants afterwards?

Share your Name, School/Affiliation, and email below:

♡ 0

👤 Add comment

Consider using these prompts to help guide conversation:

1. Who else should be involved?
Who might you partner with?
2. Do you need approval for this?
How will you engage decision-makers?
3. Is this challenge likely to impact different students

