GREEN SCHOOLYARDS AMERICA PRINCIPALS’ INSTITUTE

2020 LOS ANGELES AREA PROGRAM

The Green Schoolyards America Principals’ Institute supports school administrators in their pivotal role as leaders of their school community and champions of a healthy and dynamic school environment. The Institute is a year-long program that provides resources, advice, professional development, and a peer network that helps principals and school district leaders to adopt and sustain comprehensive, high quality, green schoolyard programs at their schools and in their districts.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Los Angeles Area program will run from January to December 2020. It includes a series of four quarterly professional development seminars, four schoolyard Learning Walks (site visits), and individualized support as each participant develops their own project idea to expand the green schoolyard program at their school or district.

The Institute is designed to serve school district teams that include at least two school principals and one leader from the school district’s administration. This team-based model is designed to help build robust, collaborative support within each district.

Quarterly Seminars: The heart of the Principals’ Institute is a series of four professional development seminars that focus on discussion topics led by an expert in the field. Discussion topics will explore: international research and best practices; place-based education and environmental literacy; strategies to improve health and well-being using school grounds; and techniques to connect environmental principles and concepts taught in the curriculum with real improvements to a school’s ecological footprint. As the year progresses, participants will also identify additional topics that we will address in our group discussions.

Independent Projects: Each participant will identify a school ground-related independent project they wish to work on, and will develop that idea over the course of the program with input from the Institute’s staff and team members from their district. Each of the quarterly seminars will include time to develop ideas, share them, and receive feedback from peers and Institute staff.

Schoolyard Learning Walks: The Institute also includes four one-day tours of participants’ school grounds, held over the course of the year. These site visits offer host-principals a chance to share their successes and challenges with their colleagues and to ask for advice about emerging projects.

Personalized Guidance: Green Schoolyards America’s staff will offer each district team one site visit during or after the first year of the program, to help participants advance their independent projects by deepening their school districts’ engagement with green schoolyard ideas,
methods, and strategies. This district-level support will be tailored to serve each team’s needs and ongoing projects. It may include meetings, professional development for the school district’s administration, or a public presentation to provide training in green schoolyard best practices.

Resource Library: Our program will include the gift of a small, personal green schoolyard resource library for each participant. This collection will include materials intended to provide background and perspectives on this field that will help participants engage their schools and districts.

Hands-on Schoolyard Research: Schools and districts that participate in the Principals’ Institute are also eligible to take part in Green Schoolyards America’s citizen science microclimate research project, How Cool is Your Schoolyard? In this study, children evaluate their own school grounds to understand how the different materials used onsite affect surface temperature and microclimate. If they find places that are uncomfortably hot, students propose solutions (e.g. planting trees) to improve the playground’s climate. This place-based research empowers students to become changemakers. The study will be accompanied by standards-based climate change and urban heat island curricula developed in partnership with Los Angeles Unified School District.

Regional Network: The Principals’ Institute will include schools and districts from across the greater Los Angeles area, with a wide range of experiences and contexts. Participants will be encouraged to explore this diversity, get to know their colleagues, and learn from one another. Following the Institute, all participants are welcome to join our regional Green Schoolyard Leadership Network to continue a dialogue with peers in the years to come.

LEADERSHIP
The Principals’ Institute is led by Green Schoolyards America’s CEO Sharon Danks, MLA-MCP, in collaboration with Principals’ Institute Program Director Dr. Raymond Isola, EdD (a retired elementary school principal).

DATES AND LOCATIONS
Professional Development Seminars will be held on January 31, March 13, October 8, and December 3, 2020. Each seminar will meet from 9:00 am – 2:30 pm at rotating locations around the greater Los Angeles area.

Schoolyard Learning Walks (site visits) will take place on four days over the course of the year, from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Participants will select the dates after the program begins. A Learning Walk will generally follow each seminar.

We understand that school leaders’ time is precious. We request that all participants plan to attend all four seminars and as many of the Learning Walks as possible.

Lots of ideas! Love it. Broadens the way I think of outdoor learning space.

The most helpful aspects were Sharon and Ray’s intelligent, enthusiastic sharing of experiences and examples of green schoolyards and interactive play spaces. The information about the changing experiences of children outdoors and the limiting aspect of reduced risk, so children are no longer challenged, has been thought-provoking and eye-opening.

I just love that this conversation is happening! It makes us feel less like an island...

The chance to hear from experts in the field is really important and inspiring. I came back from our first meeting ready to really go for it, despite some obstacles we were facing.

Thank you so much for this important work. Though it may take time, I expect to bring real change to our campus.
TEAM STRUCTURE

The Institute is designed to serve school district teams that include at least two school principals and at least one leader from the school district’s administration. District leaders might include a staff member from the central office or facilities, health, or education departments. This team-based model is designed to help build robust, collaborative support within each district.

Principals from independent or charter schools are welcome to enroll, and may build their team by including their facilities director, wellness director, or education director and/or principal colleagues from other schools in their network. Please note that our follow up site visit after the program is only provided at the team level (one visit per team). Individual schools may enroll, but they will not receive a follow up site visit after the program.

If you are interested in enrolling but need assistance building a team, please contact us.

ENROLLMENT

The cost of the year-long Institute is $2,250 per person. This includes:

- 4 professional development seminars (with morning coffee and lunch)
- 4 full-day green schoolyard Learning Walks
- A small personal resource library for each participant
- Individualized support for each participant during the program, as they develop their project concept
- Follow-up support with one site visit per team, during or after the Institute
- Ongoing membership in the regional Green Schoolyard Leadership Network

Deadline: Enrollment is on a first come first served basis. The last day to register is December 13, 2019.

Refund Policy: Enrollment fees are nonrefundable, but a team may substitute a new participant if a team member has to leave the program for any reason. In the unlikely event that this program is canceled by Green Schoolyards America, enrollment fees will be refunded.

Title 1 Schools: We are currently working to raise funds to offset the enrollment cost for Title 1 schools, and hope to be able to offer several discounted enrollment slots. If your district team includes a Title 1 school that would have difficulty enrolling without financial assistance, please contact us for more information before registering.

REGISTRATION

To register, please visit: http://bit.ly/GSA-Principals

QUESTIONS?

Please contact: info@greenschoolyards.org

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS AMERICA inspires and enables communities to enrich their school grounds and use them to improve children’s well-being, learning, and play, while contributing to the ecological health and resilience of their cities. Our programs are designed to change the norm for school ground design, use, and management so that all children and youth will have access to the natural world, every day, right outside the classroom door. Green Schoolyards America is fiscally sponsored by Earth Island Institute, a 501(c)(3) corporation.