The Living Schoolyards Act of 2022, introduced by U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), a former outdoor educator, will provide grants to schools and districts to transform their schoolyards into dynamic outdoor learning environments. The bill will enable schools to re-envision their outdoor school grounds with the goal of providing more hands-on learning opportunities, strengthening local ecological systems, and giving every single child a place where they can learn and play outside.

The legislation establishes Outdoor Learning Spaces Grants and Living Schoolyards projects. Outdoor Learning Spaces Grants will allow schools or districts to create outdoor classrooms and learning spaces, to provide professional development for teachers and engage with outdoor learning partners to implement schoolyards programs.

The Living Schoolyards Projects will be designed through a two-step process for school districts to apply for these grants through the U.S. Department of Education:

1. Planning phase: School districts will develop a master plan to turn all or some of their school yards into Living Schoolyard Projects. This process must involve community input and factor in ecological goals, educational and health outcomes for students, and relevant community partners.

2. Implementation phase: School districts will build the Living Schoolyards and offer professional development to educators to help them incorporate the outdoor spaces into their teaching.
The Benefits of Living Schoolyards

Transforming schoolgrounds into living and green schoolyards provides these benefits:

- Increased engagement and improved learning outcomes and academic performance
- Improvements in physical and mental health for students and teachers, including reduced stress, anxiety, and depression, and increased happiness and physical activity
- Climate and ecological benefits including shade to protect students from extreme heat and reduce energy costs; watershed protection, and increased wildlife habitat
- Edible gardens in schoolyards are powerful teaching tools and reduce food insecurity
- Jobs in designing, building, teaching in, and caring for living schoolyards as well as job training for students
- Outside school hours, schoolyards are green spaces that improve life in communities

Endorsers

Find links to the bill, more advocacy information, and a full list of endorsers here: [www.greenschoolyards.org/living-schoolyards-act](http://www.greenschoolyards.org/living-schoolyards-act)

Questions? Please contact nancy@greenschoolyards.org.