

806 Outdoor Learning Spaces

Adopted: May 28, 2013

Policy

The Board of Education values the opportunity to promote learning activities beyond the conventional classroom and school building. School grounds and areas adjacent to the school provide opportunities for the integration of curricula through enhanced features including interactive playgrounds, outdoor classrooms, covered outdoor play areas and learning gardens. The Board recognizes the benefit of these enhanced features for all forms of students' intellectual development. Outdoor learning spaces offer opportunities for community connections.

The Board's vision of welcoming, safe, and sustainable facilities that enrich the learning and teaching environment is supported by the addition of enhanced fixed features to the school grounds. Fixed building features and site enhancements provide increased learning opportunities for students through self- and teacher-directed experiences that extend the classroom into nature. These opportunities, as well as learning through play during recess, lunch and outside of regular school hours, support the Board's core mandate for intellectual development and its commitment to learning out-of-doors, developing students' connections with nature, and fostering environmental and community stewardship.

The Board believes in a collaborative process that is transparent, inclusive, and timely. This process should guide the initiation, development, and sustainability of site enhancements for outdoor learning. The Board may choose to enter into partnerships with community groups in the development of building features and site enhancements to support outdoor learning.

The Board, in planning for new and/or replacement schools, recognizes the value of outdoor learning spaces and will consider building features and enhancements to the school site that support outdoor learning.

The Board values community partnerships and recognizes their potential to increase the success and sustainability of outdoor learning spaces that will support student learning. Fixed building features and site enhancements can represent an additional cost that may exceed the capital and/or operating budget(s) of the Board. In these instances, additional sources of funding, such as parent fundraising and/or corporate and government grants, may be required to address the initial and ongoing costs of these enhancements.

The Board deems schools responsible for the initiation and development of proposed site enhancements and any related costs. The school Principal, the zone Assistant Superintendent, and Facilities and Planning Department will undertake the evaluation of the proposal and implementation stages of a site enhancement. The North Vancouver School District assumes liability once equipment, materials and/or structures are installed on school grounds and must therefore approve their selection.

The Board, guided by the *Administrative Procedures - Outdoor Learning Spaces*, will consider each request individually and advise which projects will be approved.