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A new, statewide initiative to increase tree canopy on public school grounds across California to shade and protect PK-12 students from extreme heat and rising temperatures due to climate change



THE NEED FOR TREE CANOPY EQUITY

Across California, more than 10,000 public schools serve 5.9 million PK-12 students on ~130,000 acres of public land, every day. Most of that land is paved with hot asphalt surfaces and lacks tree canopy in places children spend their time, so millions of PK-12 students are exposed to unhealthy high temperatures on a regular basis. As temperatures rise due to climate change, these stark campuses pose increasing health risks for children when they are outdoors, and also increase indoor temperatures and cooling costs.

Since children are more vulnerable to heat than adults this is a problem for all schools in California. However, the lack of tree canopy and green space creates a significant, disproportionate burden on school communities with the lowest income and in communities of color, which already face environmental, economic, and racial injustices. Adding shade trees to schools that serve the most vulnerable populations will not only reduce extreme heat and environmental justice issues, but will also address other stark inequities in access to green space, hands-on educational resources, and health and wellbeing.

VISION

The California Schoolyard Forest SystemSM seeks to create schoolyard forests across PK-12 public school grounds statewide to directly shade and protect students from extreme heat and rising temperatures due to climate change.

GOALS

- **Plant enough trees** by 2030 that, when mature, will cover at least 30% of each school property in the areas used by children and youth during the school day.
- **Center equity** by prioritizing schools and districts in under-served communities with the highest poverty level, fewest trees, and hottest climates.
- **Use school grounds as a PK-12 learning laboratory** across the curriculum and grade levels.
- **Build environmental and climate literacy** by engaging students in standards-based hands-on research, design, planting, and stewardship of their schoolyard forests.

FOUNDING PARTNERS

Green Schoolyards America is collaborating with the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Ten Strands, school districts, and county offices of education to create the new statewide California

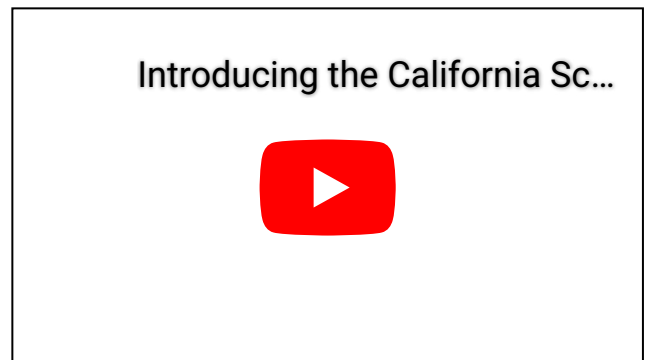
Schoolyard Forest SystemSM. This initiative will address schoolyard tree canopy equity and bring schoolyard forests to scale by working to align state and local policy, funding, planning, and technical assistance to support and enable broad adoption by school districts.

**CLICK HERE TO READ OUR
AUGUST 2022 PRESS
RELEASE**

LAUNCH WEBINAR

On October 4, 2022, Green Schoolyards America, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the California Department of Education (CDE), and Ten Strands hosted an hour-long webinar to launch the California Schoolyard Forest SystemSM. We invite you to watch the recording to learn more about the initiative.

More information about the webinar’s content and speakers can be found in our [blog](#) about the event.



PLEASE JOIN US!

We invite public agencies, school districts, and county offices of education to join us as we launch the California Schoolyard Forest

SystemSM in the coming year. We also welcome collaboration from nonprofits and other organizations and will invite broad participation as our program develops. Please contact us using our information form (to the right) if you would like to participate or receive information as the initiative moves forward.

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California Schoolyard Forest SystemSM

FOUNDING PARTNERS



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