

# **Green Schoolyard Initiative Board Presentation**

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# 2026 California Green Ribbon Schools



California Department of  
EDUCATION



# Introduction

- Hadley Mello (Grade 10) & Genevieve Dechary (Grade 12)
- California Youth Climate Policy Leadership Program

# What is a Green Schoolyard?

Green Schoolyards America defines a green schoolyard as transforming asphalt covered spaces into vibrant park-like environments. The California Schoolyard Forest System is a California initiative to increase tree canopy to protect students from extreme heat and the effect of climate change.






# Why is this an issue for LBUSD students?

Trees canopies on school campuses can aid in student's quality of life through providing shade on school grounds. This is especially important in California, where our school grounds include asphalt, which can absorb and radiate out heat, further raising temperatures.

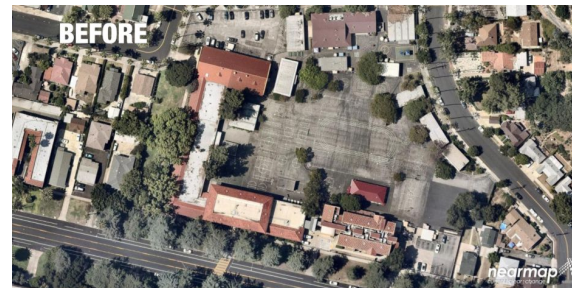
## **Benefits Include:**

- **Health**
  - **Learning**
  - **Ecological and Climate Resilience**
  - **Community**
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# Case Study

Eagle Rock Elementary:

- Before/After photo
- Asphalt changed to athletic field
- Outdoor learning area
- Increasing overall tree canopy



# Statistics Behind the Issue:

<b>School Student Zone Shade Percentage</b>	
<b>El Morro Elementary School</b>	7.9%
<b>Laguna Beach High School</b>	6.1%
<b>Thurston Middle School</b>	4.5%
<b>Top of the World Elementary School</b>	10%

Of the total school property stretching out across all four LBUSD campuses, only 8.3 of the total 57.5 acres are shaded from trees

That makes out to be only 19% of existing tree canopy on LBUSD school grounds district wide that can be accessed by students during the school day

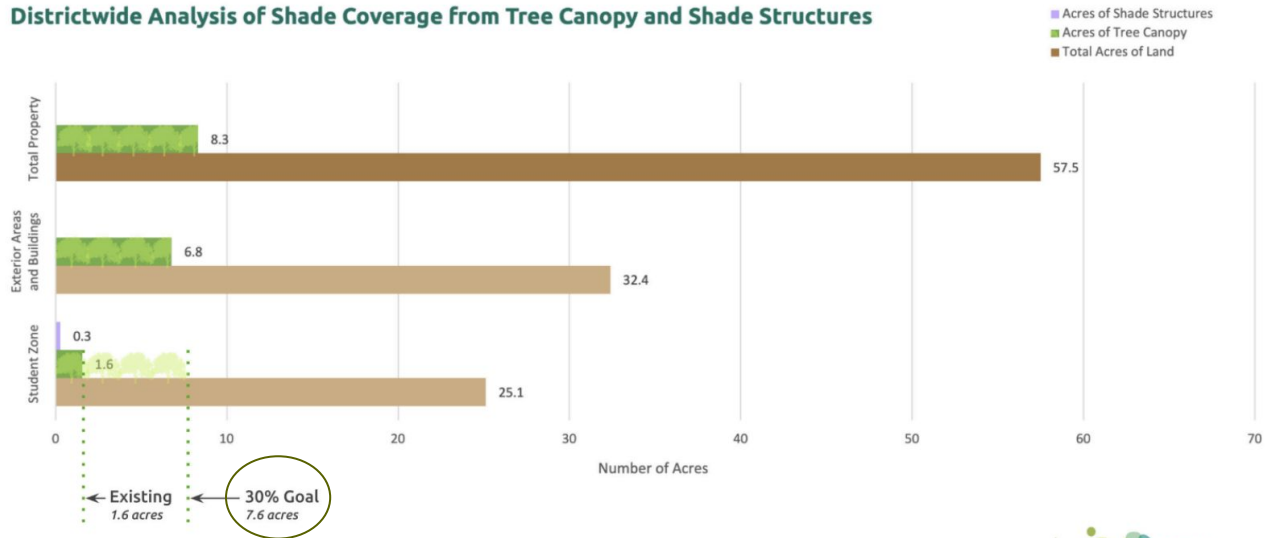
# What is Our Goal?

## 30%!

### Findings Shade

### Laguna Beach Unified School District

Districtwide Analysis of Shade Coverage from Tree Canopy and Shade Structures



# Implementation:

- Cool-Down Zones
- Climate-Ready Canopies
- The Ultimate Outdoor Hub
- Flexible for Every Campus

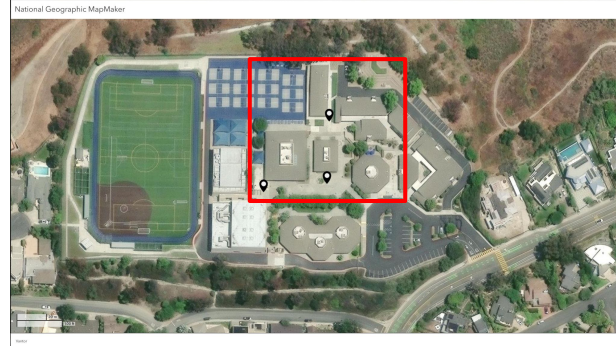
*Thurston Middle School, 12/2014-12/2025*



*El Morro Elementary*



*Thurston Middle School*



# Potential Funding Solutions

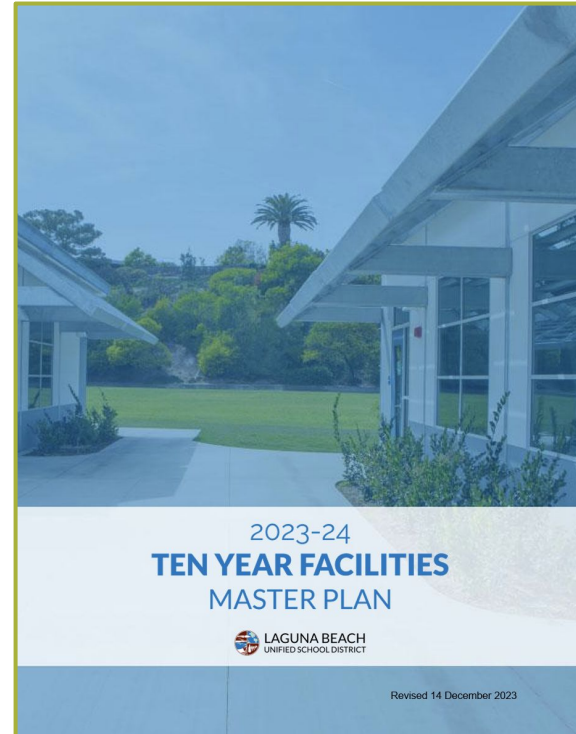
## General Fund:

### Facilities

- Supported by Facilities Master Plan

## Potential Grant Opportunities:

Green Schoolyards America & CAL Fire



# Our Resolution

## GREEN SCHOOLYARD RESOLUTION Laguna Beach Unified School District, 2026

The prioritization of environmental and climate action in schools is essential for the success of our students, both as members of their communities and citizens of the world. As the impacts of the environmental and climate crisis accelerate, it has forced humanity to redefine how we live on this planet. Because children and youth are more susceptible to adverse health effects from environmental hazards and will be burdened with greater impacts as climate change worsens throughout their lives, schools are increasingly called to prioritize environmental and climate action. Through this resolution, our school community seeks to advance progress toward becoming a hub for sustainable and climate-resilience and environmental stewardship in their community, providing equitable access to safe and healthy spaces for children, youth, and adults to learn and play and connect with nature.

*Whereas, the Laguna Beach School Board recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America's schools, students, and their communities.*

*Whereas, environmental initiatives can yield benefits for communities and create a safe and healthy learning environment.*

*Whereas, fostering increased appreciation and connection with the environment will positively impact the student body.*

*Whereas informed students and educators in our district are already showing leadership in climate and justice work, through Green Teams, classroom programs and curriculum, and community partnerships.*

*Whereas, Laguna Beach's youth have demonstrated leadership and expressed an expectation that their representatives will advocate for their communities' well-being.*

*Whereas, Laguna Beach Unified School District has displayed a longstanding commitment to sustainability, having been recognized as a Green Ribbon, "Green Achiever School" by the California Department of Education*

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**Let it Therefore Be Resolved That**, to reduce the total area of school grounds that is paved or otherwise impermeable, increasing the area that is planted to sustainable, preferably native groundcover, and, by 2030, providing that no less than 30 percent of playgrounds and other areas where students most frequently congregate is shaded by trees or other sustainable cover to both reduce local heat impacts and improve water retention on site

**Resolved**, that the school board supports the integration of green building principles in facility design and renovation projects, with a focus on energy efficiency, water conservation, and creating healthy indoor environments

**Resolved**, that the school board supports the development and maintenance of outdoor learning spaces and green areas on school campuses, fostering environmental appreciation and providing opportunities for nature-based education.

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**Pursuant to the Foregoing Commitment, be it Resolved That**, Laguna Beach Unified takes action toward increasing tree canopies on all campuses, which benefits student health and wellness, learning, ecological and climate resilience, and builds a sustainable community.

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/19LWpcDdu38qM8DiZc-Uo0QuygA9ysYXPPzA6JSuxuLQ/edit?tab=t.0>



# Thank You for Your

A special thanks to Ms. Harwood and our  
CYCP cohort and mentors!

# Consideration





# Sources & References:

[Facilities Master Plan](#)

[Green Schoolyards America](#)

[LAGUNA BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF Resolution No. 22-04 In Support of Earth Day, Climate Action, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability](#)

[Model Living Schoolyard: Eagle Rock Elementary School](#)

[School Tree Study: Evaluating tree benefits and care in California schoolyards](#)

[Schoolyard Forrest Rationale - Green Schoolyards America](#)

[25-09 LagunaBeachUSD Data-Graphics](#)

