

QUICK FACTS:

Mission: “Building & Sustaining Schools and Community Through Play”

A Learning Landscape is...

- an educational setting
- a healthy environment
- a community space
- a fun place

What We Do

The Learning Landscape Initiative improves public school grounds, enhances community involvement, and provides technical assistance. Our technical assistance and community outreach program focuses on strengthening community relationships, enhancing civic engagement, and cultivating school and community leadership. Neighborhood participation is continually encouraged. Participation begins with an initial master plan and continues after physical construction of the school grounds. Average Cost: \$450,000 per playground.

Location

Learning Landscapes are located predominantly in disadvantaged focus neighborhoods as identified by the City and County of Denver’s Housing and Development Office.

Recognition

- 2008 - Denver passed a school bond bringing Learning Landscapes to every Denver Public Elementary School.
- 2008 - Learning Landscapes establishes a website including 48 sets of professional construction documents, and 70 design development documents, 80 master plan reports, 8 white papers, and thousands of visual images of the construction process.
- 2008 - Learning Landscapes is featured in *Landscape Architecture* magazine.
- 2005 - Learning Landscapes are Denver City indicators for education objectives
- 2005 – Learning Landscapes are part of the Denver Public Schools’ Plan to improve educational opportunities and safe and healthy environments
- 2004 - El Pomar Foundation Award of Excellence Finalist
- 2003 - Denver passed a \$10 million school bond to support Learning Landscapes
- 2002 - Formal Resolution, Denver Public School Board, Learning Landscape Projects
- 2001 - Formal Resolution of Appreciation, Denver City Council and Mayor Webb, Garden Place Academy learning landscape
- 2000- Included in the City of Denver’s Focus Neighborhood Initiative

How Success is Defined and Measured

We strive to create living environments that evolve and grow with academic and community needs. The effectiveness of the project is evaluated on a continual basis using pre- and post-surveys, formal and informal focus groups, and tracking of volunteer involvement. An annual report is written and shared with community partners, residents, and Denver Public Schools in an effort to continue to improve our community outreach efforts.

Evaluation of Denver Learning Landscape Program

We work with Denver Public Schools, LL Committees, students, community leaders, and city officials to identify and measure indicators of Learning Landscape successes and failures. Our goal is to create self-sufficient sustainable site-based evaluation programs in an effort to build upon baseline evaluation data obtained by the Center for Research Strategies for future reference and on-going evaluation. Working with community members, we hope to establish site specific evaluations in an effort to better empower stakeholders through assessment. We also continually make adjustments and improvements at Learning Landscape sites as requested through post-occupancy assessments.

Goals for 2008 and beyond

- Secure funding for Denver Learning Landscape Program
- Continue to broaden fundraising
- Continue Design Development Studio's for future LL's
- Seek research funding for environmental education & whole health issues