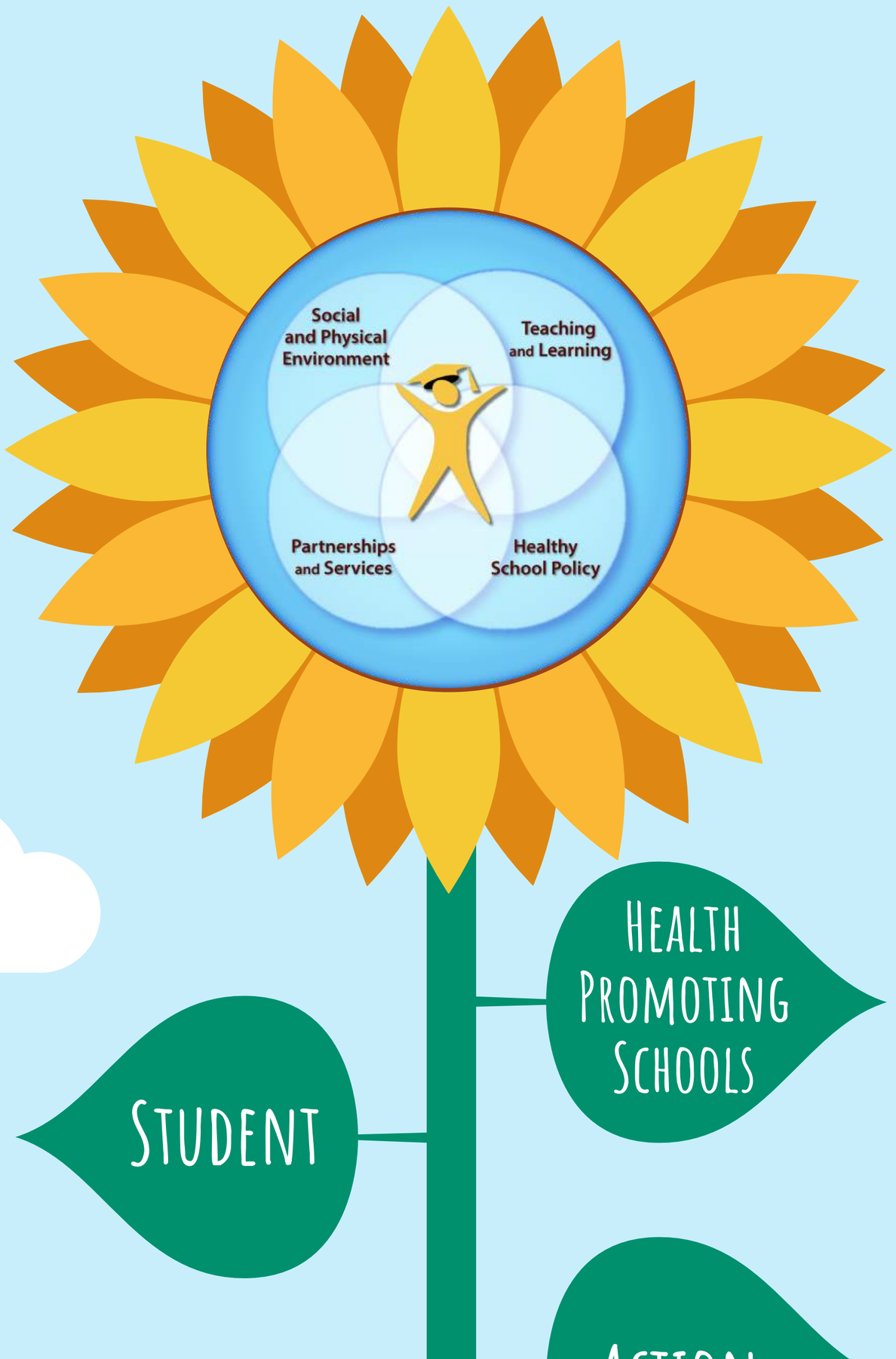
UPLIFT
FOR HEALTHIER GENERATIONS

Promoting Healthy Learning Environments With the UpLift Partnership

The UpLift Partnership provides $5000 in seed funding to participating schools to enhance the HPS approach. Projects are required to incorporate meaningful student involvement. Funding is provided by the PHAC and matched private sector funding. It is encouraged to combine this grant with other grant opportunities.



- Health Promoting Schools
- Student
- Action
- Grant
- Outdoor Classroom and Physically Active Learning

Updated in 2021

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

WHAT IS IT?

Outdoor classrooms can provide a safe and engaging environment for students to learn in the great outdoors, as well as being an ideal environment for physically active lessons (PALS) -- the incorporation of physical activity in academic lessons. Outdoor classrooms provide young leaders the opportunity to co-design and create safe and exciting spaces that support and foster teaching and learning.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Planning an outdoor classroom means engaging different members of the school community:
- Principals
- Teachers
- Students
- Regional Centre for Education/Conseil scolaire acadien provincial
- Local landscape architect
- Local contractors and building stores
- Municipalities - (ex. landowner, connecting to nearby trails, to discuss shared land space for schools with little outdoor space, etc.)
- Other community partners

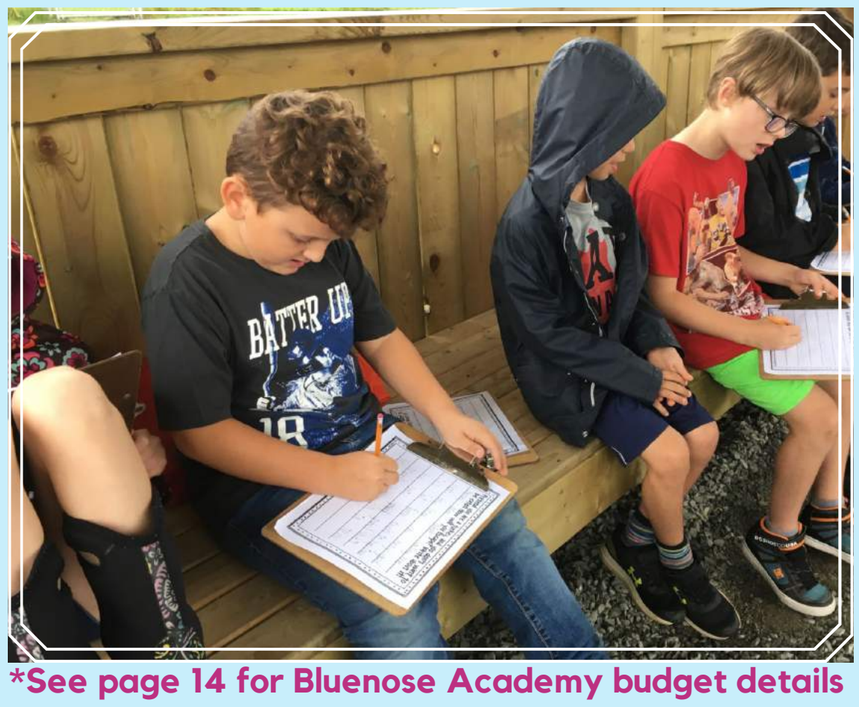
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

This project provides the opportunity to catalyze behaviour change by encouraging teachers to explore new ways of teaching, and doing it more often, leading to a sustainable change. Evidence also shows that participating in outdoor learning spaces can reduce stress, increase patience and self-discipline, and can help improve physical fitness and reduce symptoms of ADHD. Additionally, PALS have been effective in increasing students' physical activity, positively affecting students' time on task, academic achievement, and overall mood and sense of enjoyment of school.

WHAT DOES AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE?

UPLIFT FOR HEALTHIER GENERATIONS

Bluenose Academy Outdoor Classroom (Lunenburg)



*See page 14 for Bluenose Academy budget details

École acadienne de Pomquet (Antigonish)

Prospect Road Elementary School (Halifax)

École Bois-Joli (Dartmouth)

DIFFERENT TYPES OF OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

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A setup of wooden benches and a wooden teaching platform suitable for natural, open spaces.

A setup of small stumps suitable for small spaces.

A setup of desks and tables placed outdoor in a large open space.

A setup of four rows of wooden benches suitable for small spaces.

A two-in-one setup including wooden benches and a small garden.

A small setup of wooden logs and a flattened log placed in the centre.

A round setup using nine wooden benches with backrests.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER

PROVIDED BY THE CCRCE

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Hemlock Log 15"-20" diameter 6' length: ~ $25.00

Slab Bench: 6' length ~$55.00 / 10' ~$65.00

Hemlock-Polar Bench (small): ~ $45.00

Hemlock-Polar Bench (large): ~ $55.00

Poplar Tree Cookie Stump: ~ $5.00 (10") / ~ $6.00 (12")
~ $8.00 (15") / ~ $12.00 (20")

Hemlock Log 10"-15" diameter 6' length: ~ $25.00

***Delivery and setup charges not included**

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LEARNING: NOVA SCOTIA ACTIVE SMARTER KIDS (ASK) PROJECT

UPLIFT
FOR HEALTHIER GENERATIONS

WHAT IS PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LEARNING?

Physically Active Learning (PAL) consists of fun and active lessons that combine physical activity with the review of academic content as part of instructional time. PAL lessons are delivered by classroom teachers and happen primarily outdoors in the schoolyard.

No, you don't need to be an expert in Physical Education to teach PAL lessons! Nor do you need specialized equipment!

PAL is cost-effective, simple and provides students and teachers with an opportunity to review curriculum outcomes in a team-based, engaging and active way. Both the physical and academic challenges of a PAL lesson can be adapted to meet the needs of all students in a class.

PAL OUTCOMES

PAL has been demonstrated to:

- Aid with on-task behaviour
- Increase student engagement with subject matter
- Strengthen sense of enjoyment during learning/instructional time
- Reduce stress and anxiety when trying to answer a question/being assessed
- Contribute to an increase in minutes of physical activity during the day/school day.

WHAT IS THE NOVA SCOTIA ASK PROJECT?

The NS ASK Project is an initiative to support the implementation of PAL in elementary and Junior High Schools across Nova Scotia. NS ASK started in 2018 with two school in the South Shore Regional Center for Education, and has now expanded across the province.

SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PAL/ASK

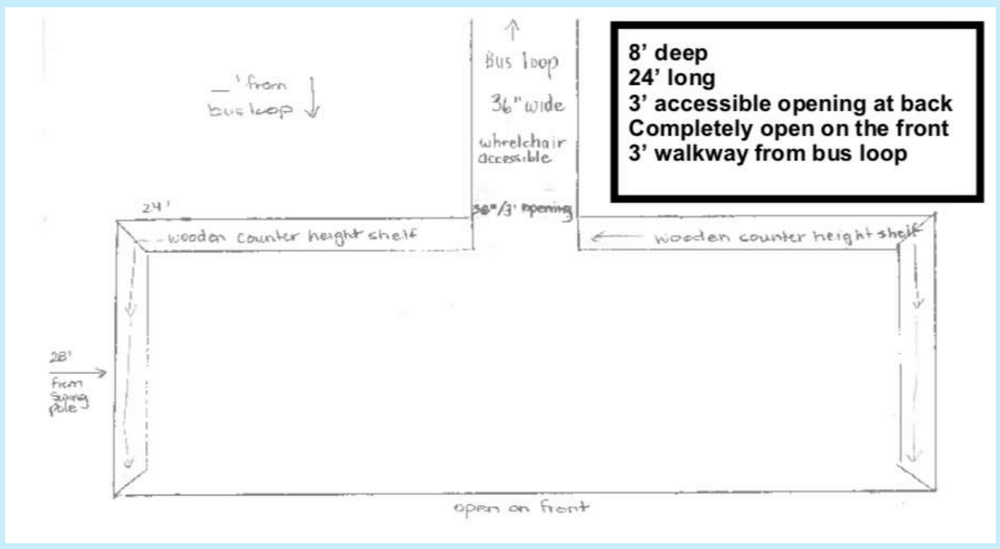
PAL/ASK Lessons can happen in any outdoor setting in a school yard. Specialized equipment is not required to get started with PAL/ASK, however supportive infrastructure can support school experiences. Below are examples of infrastructure that supports PAL/ASK.

PAL/NS ASK EXAMPLES

NOVA SCOTIAN EXAMPLES

Enfield District School

Enfield District School is in the process of building a dedicated ASK lesson structure. The structure will be situated at the top of a small hill which will promote lots of heart-pumping physical activity for the students during their ASK lessons. The shelter is also wheelchair accessible.
Project Cost: $16,000.



Cobequid Consolidated School - Net Scramble

The net scramble was installed to support PAL/ASK lesson.

A NORWEGIAN EXAMPLE

These photos are of the PAL areas at an elementary school in Norway. The school took advantage of an existing hill to build their PAL area, as well as covered areas around the schoolyard. Note that the hillside below the covered shelter is covered in astro turf to make it an all season option for classes.

PROJECT RESOURCES AND CONTACT

ASK Contact:
Britt Vegsund
NS ASK Project Lead
Britt.Vegsund@modl.ca
(902) 541-1336

Introduction to ASK

ASK @ Home

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CASE STUDY 1: GLOOSCAP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (CANNING,N.S)

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Anne Marie is a teacher and a parent at Glooscap Elementary and has children who were inspired to start an outdoor learning project at this school. She had worked with Evergreen before starting work at Glooscap Elementary School. Evergreen is an organization that actively engages Canadians in creating and sustaining healthy urban environments in schools, public spaces, housing, transit systems, and communities themselves. One major strength coming out of the project was the level of community involvement that took place (both the school community and the greater Canning community). This project has been very beneficial for the students as well as the community around the school. It has been a great way to engage students in active learning (reading, math, etc.) while giving them the opportunity to experience nature and the outdoor environment and leave their indoor classrooms for a bit. A committee of parents (8 participants) met 2x/month starting in the fall of 2018.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

- Key champion/leader - In this case, Anne Marie Lewis
- Local expertise - retiree from NSCC horticulture program, farmer who tilled the land, etc.
- Principal
- Parent volunteers
- Teachers
- Students (tree planting)
- Regional Centre for Education
- Engineer

GRANTS

- Inspiring Schools Grant $30,000
- TD Canada Trust $ 7 000
- Teachers and grade 5 students did a fundraising grant application $500
- Local rotary clubs (Kentville and Wolfville) $18,000
- Canning community $500
- Community associations $500

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CASE STUDY 1: GLOOSCAP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (CANNING,N.S)

COST

Total cost is approximately $55,000 including in-kind and volunteering support

- Shade structure - $20,000 (family price)
- Paths (digging paths, laying gravel, landscaping) - $12,000
- Musical instruments - $8,000
- Native Trees, shrubs and plants and soil amendments- $7,500
- Garden Design and project management- In-kind
- Lots of volunteer labour – 4 day long work parties with 6-15 volunteers
- Tree logs + delivery to school – In-kind
- Other work in progress

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CASE STUDY 1: GLOOSCAP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (CANNING,N.S)

KEY SUCCESSES

- Reaction from students

Students were able to take part in the outdoor environment as it was being developed. Anne Marie mentioned that she would go out with students and learn about the plants, their botanical names, Mi'kmaw names, and the uses of the different plants. The students were very excited to have a hands-on experience and were able to learn in the outdoor as the outdoor area was being built. The space is also used outside of the school time for community use and an example was the recreation department run children's summer camps where they use the space, plant plants, etc.

- Student Engagement

In the spring of 2019, in anticipation of the building of the outdoor classroom, the "graduating" Grade 5 class helped to build a pollinator hotel to provide habitat in the garden. In the fall of 2019, every class in the school planted and adopted a tree. They planted bulbs around it and hung bird feeders on it. The goal is for each Grade 5 class to take part in a legacy project to add to the garden. This would add additional phases to the project and continue its development and sustainability.

- Community Support

The entire community rallied around the project providing funding (I.e, Rotary Clubs), in kind supplies (i.e. tree stumps), and time and expertise (workdays where volunteers consisting of parents, teachers and students planted trees, laid gravel, etc.). During the volunteer workdays, a key volunteer had a construction background and was able to address safety and provide instructions on how to perform the tasks and lead the group. The main shade structure was built by a professional contractor. It is estimated that an additional 30-40% of the cost was provided in gifts in kind support. Examples were the discounted (family) price provided by the contractor for the shade structure, design costs, tilling of land, laying of gravel, etc. Volunteers water and weed the garden in the summer.

- Accessibility

The design considered accessibility features such as all paths are manageable for wheelchairs.

TIME FRAME

Spring 2018 - Received Inspiring Schools Grant
Fall 2018 - Parent committee started meeting
December 2018 - Design completed
Winter 2019 - Presented design to RCE
Spring 2019 - Tendering process
July 2019 - Construction started
September 2019 - Open for students to use

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CASE STUDY 1: GLOOSCAP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (CANNING,N.S)

KEY LEARNINGS

- Working Relationship with the Regional Centre for Education (RCE)

A community volunteer (a retired Horticultural instructor from the NSCC) worked with the committee to design the space. This design was presented to the RCE. There was a thorough process that the RCE was required to go through which involved engineers reviewing the design and a tendering process. It is important that adequate time be devoted to allowing the RCE process to take place (i.e. 2 months). Upon the completion of the tendering process, the committee discovered that it was going to cost more than anticipated. Anne Marie and the designer had anticipated that much of the work would be done by volunteers within the community. Also, an a la carte approach was cheaper in the long run which meant separate contracts for different sections of the construction such as heavy equipment rental, laying of gravel, bringing in boulders, etc. A key learning was to check with the RCE prior to developing a project idea to make sure everything aligns with them first, then to proceed
with the project keeping them informed along the way.

- Student Engagement

This project was very parent/adult led and did not have meaningful student engagement early on in the development and design process. Anne Marie mentioned wishing they could have held design workshops where students could design what they wanted to see the outdoor space looking like so that ideas could be incorporated into the final design of the project. Including students in future grant writing is also something Anne Marie thinks is very beneficial as it gives students the opportunity to enhance persuasive writing skills.

MEDIA LINKS

1. Evergreen
2. Canning School Takes Learning Into The Great Outdoors
3. Outdoor classroom at Canning's Glooscap Elementary a reality after months of work

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CASE STUDY 2: CRICHTON PARK SCHOOL (DARTMOUTH, N.S)

PROJECT BACKGROUND

One parent at Crichton Park School in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, put forward an idea to implement a designated outdoor classroom at the school, hoping to see all students at Crichton Park participating in active and safe learning in an outdoor setting. In addition to that, this parent recognizes the long-term advantages of a health-promoting space for learning outside through movement-based activities. While the project idea is in its initial stages, every step that has been taken so far has been documented to give an idea of how a project like this can be brought to life.

WHAT ARE THE INITIAL STEPS?

1. Present the project idea to the School Advisory Council
2. Identify key members to make up the project team
3. Identify and include other key partners and community members
4. Facilitate focus groups including key stakeholders (students, teachers, principal, etc.) to create a common goal and define roles and priorities
5. Co-design the outdoor classroom with key stakeholders and partners
6. Obtain funding through school/community fundraisers, corporate sponsorships and different grants (ex. TD Friends of the Environment Foundation)
7. Connect with local contractors and building stores (materials and labour)

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- Principal
- Teachers/staff
- Administration
- Families
- Darren Fisher (MP) / Sam Austin (Councillor for Dartmouth Centre)
- Jacob Ritchie (Director of Operations Services at Halifax Regional Centre for Education)
- Active Smarter Kids (ASK project) - discuss considerations for developing a conducive environment for physical activity-based learning
- Department of Community, Culture and Heritage
- Halifax Regional Centre for Education/Nova Scotia Health
- Home and School Committee - in Crichton Park School
- Cobequid Consulting
- HRCE Indigenous Artists

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CASE STUDY 2: CRICHTON PARK SCHOOL (DARTMOUTH, N.S)

KEY STEPS

- Connecting with and visiting other schools that have already implemented an outdoor classroom project and. This step can be used to get a more precise idea of what the steps are in creating such a project in a school setting.
- Getting the right people involved is key to a successful outdoor classroom project. Having these connections and being able to receive support from others can really benefit a project like this and in bringing it to life.
- Identifying funding opportunities
- Recognizing provincial priorities and aligning with what is most relevant. Let's Get Moving.
- Seeing if your school could be a pilot project for organizations doing something in relation to outdoor classrooms.
- Creating posters/documents that can be used to communicate the project widely and to kick off fundraising efforts

ESTIMATED BUDGET

Item 1: Physical infrastructure (materials and labour): $35,000
Item 2: Teaching materials and resources: $2,500
Item 3: Professional development (Free if provided through NS ASK)
Item 4: Project champion 1 day/week (8 hours) at $20/hr, Sept-June: $5,120
Estimated total: **$42,620**

ANTICIPATED FUNDING SOURCES

- Health School Communities Grant: $2,000
- SAC and H&S Committees: $10,000
- Wellness grants: $8,100
- Donations: $1,500
- Sam Austin: $1,000
- TD Friends of the Environment Fund: $8,000
- NS Teachers Union: $2,000
- Kent Building Supplies: Donations and Sponsorships
- Project Champion: $5,120
- Community fundraising and engagement efforts for in-kind and/or financial contributions

MORE INFORMATION ON OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

Bluenose Academy's Outdoor Classroom budget:

Work provided by Risser's Construction Ltd:
- CONCRETE SONO TUBES - $3,582.90
- FRAMING MATERIALS (PRESSURE TREATED) - $1,526.90
- ROOF FRAMING (PRESSURE TREATED) - $787.06
- ULTRAVIC STEEL ROOFING - $834.71
- GALVANIZED HARDWARE - $241.84

LABOUR (3 STAFF @ 4 DAYS) - $4,104.00 (3 staff @ 2 days provided in kind-$2052)

GRAND TOTAL + HST = **$12, 739.02**

Learn more about facilitating outdoor classrooms

1. Green Schoolyards as Outdoor Learning Environments: Barriers and Solutions as Experienced by Primary School Teachers
2. Getting Going With Outdoor Learning
3. Top Ten Tips For Teaching Outside – Early Childhood
4. Top Ten Tips For Teaching Outside – Elementary
5. Top Ten Tips For Teaching Outside – Middle and High School

Learn more about outdoor classrooms

1. Transforming Outdoor Learning in Schools
2. Tips for Creating An Outdoor Classroom
3. The Great Outdoor Learning Environment

South Shore Regional Centre for Education resources:

1. Outdoor Learning Checklist
2. Dressing for Outdoor Learning
3. Tips for Creating Outdoor Spaces

TO LEARN MORE

Visit our website: https://www.upliftns.ca
Email: UpLift@dal.ca
@UpLiftns UpLiftNS UpLift Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA ASK active smarter kids

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