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Biscayne Beach Elementary Community Schoolyard

Parks are essential for healthy, equitable communities. And almost 20 million people without park access, including kids and their families, live within a 10-minute walk of a public school. Community schoolyards are the solution hiding in plain sight, making creative use of public land to give kids more contact with nature during school time and to offer access to more users outside of school time.

Reimagining Public Space

The Biscayne Beach Elementary Community Schoolyard is a collaboration between City of Miami Beach, Miami-Dade County Schools, and Trust for Public Land (TPL) to engage students to reimagine the land around their school as an outdoor learning space and public park. Through community engagement, student-led participatory design, and construction, TPL and its partners will bring kids' visions for outdoor spaces to life. The completed community schoolyard will be available for students and teachers to use during the school day, and for community members to use when school's not in session.

Why Greenspace Access Matters

Community schoolyards have the potential to help shrink the park equity gap. TPL's data analysis reveals that in the 100 most populous U.S. cities, neighborhoods where residents predominantly identify as people of color have access to an average of 44 percent less park acreage than earned national STEM certification predominantly white neighborhoods. A similar pattern emerges in low-income versus high-income communities. Easy walking access to public greenspace and parks can also address urgent community needs by offering the following benefits and more.

- **Educational Benefits:** STEM-based learning through the student-led participatory design process provides real-world experience that empowers students by bringing their vision to reality. Once complete, community schoolyards support schools in offering students more outdoor learning and nature contact on an ongoing basis.
- **Mental Health Benefits:** Spending time outdoors reduces anxiety and depression.
- **Physical Health Benefits:** Access to outdoor recreational space increases physical activity, helping to combat diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic diseases associated with a sedentary lifestyle.
- **Community Benefits:** These spaces build stronger communities by offering space to gather and developing a shared sense of ownership among neighbors. Residents with access to parks know more of their neighbors, have more friends, and are happier with where they live.

A Unique Opportunity Exists

The students of Biscayne Beach Elementary will be playing a key role in the design of a community park that responds to a variety of conditions and serves multiple benefits. One of the most important factors to respond to is the site's flooding due to its proximity to the Tatum Waterway. Additionally, the park's adjacency to the Waterway's paved path lends itself to being a nexus of regular and accessible community use.

This effort is possible since the Miami-Dade County Public School District have a joint use agreement with City of Miami Beach. Because of this, the City has commissioned TPL to lead community engagement and develop conceptual designs for the site. Designs will be handed over to City and school district to hire and manage consultant and contractor to finalize design and construct project.

Because Biscayne Beach Elementary is in the 4th largest school district in country, this Community Schoolyard project could be the beginning of a very special program.



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