



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Upgrades enhance Field Elementary School in Rogers Park neighborhood

Space to Grow improves outdoor access, stormwater management



Students, faculty and Space to Grow partners, including MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, celebrate the unveiling of a new schoolyard at Field Elementary School in Rogers Park.

Space to Grow partners have unveiled a new schoolyard in the Rogers Park neighborhood, making it the fourth campus improvement at area Chicago Public Schools in 2018 and the highest-capacity stormwater retention project to date.

Partners with the Space to Grow program, including the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), officially opened a new schoolyard at Field Elementary School, 7019 N. Ashland Blvd., on Sept. 20, alongside officials with the Healthy Schools Campaign, Openlands, Chicago Department of Water Management and Chicago Public Schools (CPS). This is the 13th Space to Grow school completed through the partnership.

Through the schoolyard transformation, the grounds at Field School will be able to capture up to 422,169 gallons per storm event. In addition to addressing neighborhood flooding, Space to Grow transforms Chicago schoolyards into beautiful, vibrant and functional community spaces for physical activity, outdoor learning, environmental literacy, engagement with art and community participation.



(L-R, back row): Field School Principal Adrian Dobbins, MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos, 49th Ward Ald. Joe Moore, and (front right) Assistant Principal & ELPT Coordinator Cynthia Williams celebrate the new schoolyard with Field students.

“Space to Grow continues to make a dramatic impact on the education of thousands of Chicago Public Schools students,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “With the addition of Field School, Space to Grow schools now have more than 2.4 million gallons of capacity for stormwater. We can now protect our schools and communities from flooding, while also giving these students and their families a vibrant place to play and learn.”

Field School will capture more water per storm event than other schools because it was discovered to be sitting on top of clean sand subgrade soil, which allows more water to quickly infiltrate underneath the storage area.

The new schoolyard at Field School will include a permeable turf playfield for soccer and football with gravel storage underneath; two areas with underground stormwater storage chambers, new playground equipment; permeable rubber play surfacing; bioretention areas featuring rain gardens, bioswales and native gardens; an outdoor classroom with seat (*continued*)

Upgrades enhance Field Elementary School, *cont.*



Before and after images of Field Elementary School illustrate the Space to Grow transformation that made the schoolyard a place to play.

walls and wheelchair seating areas; a two-lane running track; a nature trail; game tables for chess and checkers; and downspout disconnections from the school roof. Instead of draining to the local combined sewer system, that water will now drain to new green infrastructure and soak into the ground, as opposed to overwhelming the sewer system during heavy rainfall.

“We are excited to deliver these major upgrades that transform Field Elementary School into a center of both indoor and outdoor education,” said MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila. “We hope these investments made by the MWRD and our Space to Grow partners will also allow for an education

into green infrastructure and the importance of protecting our water environment.”

Space to Grow schoolyards help CPS students meet daily recess and physical education requirements for elementary schools, while also providing a daily connection to nature, which research has shown helps reduce stress and improve academic performance. The Space to Grow partners are on schedule to transform six schoolyards this year, capturing approximately 1,280,025 gallons per storm event. Once completed, there will be 15 total schoolyards completed that have the ability to capture a combined 2,762,144 million gallons of storage, equivalent to 4.2 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.