



## Applying Lessons Learned from COVID into the Future

Session Organizers: Nancy Striniste, Green Schoolyards America

10:40 am - 11:30 am

Session Padlet: <https://ncboestc.padlet.org/estcworkshops2/2la3tpfoopxvziww>

COVID has changed the educational landscape—perhaps forever. People around the world have been reminded of the value of spending time outdoors for our health and well-being. Since early in the pandemic the National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative (NCOLI) has been supporting schools and districts across the country in reopening safely and equitably by using outdoor spaces. Also during the pandemic, many young children in our region attended forest schools or nature preschools, which provided safe, joyful, and educationally rich outdoor experiences for the youngest residents of our watershed.

### Discussion Questions

- How can we help school districts steward the land they own to enhance ecological function while improving the academic performance, physical and mental health, and happiness of students?
- How could my state or district use the resources created by the National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative to create guidelines for our schools and implement an equitable and sustainable outdoor learning program state or district-wide.
- How can we increase equitable access to high quality outdoor learning opportunities that support families and provide developmentally appropriate early childhood education?
- How do we build capacity for professional development that equips teachers to offer more equitable opportunities for outdoor learning?
- How can we meaningfully advance this work using existing COVID-19 Economic Relief funding, and the potential for additional funding for pandemic recovery, infrastructure, and/or climate change efforts?

### Three Things You Must Know:

- The National Outdoor Learning Library is a comprehensive and free resource for use by schools, districts, and states as they plan for outdoor learning during the pandemic and beyond. Find it at <https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside> *The extensive National Outdoor Learning Library was written by hundreds of subject matter experts from around the country who volunteered thousands of hours over the last seven months of 2020, to create guidance for education stakeholders.*
- Transforming the land owned by school districts into sustainable park-like spaces represents a significant opportunity to both mitigate the effects of climate change and to improve the lives of children and communities by providing equitable access to nearby nature and all the physical and mental health and academic benefits that access to nature offers.
- Nature-based education and outdoor learning offer significant opportunities for holistic development for all ages and in all kinds of settings. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00305/full>

### Background & Key Resources

- **The National Outdoor Learning Library:** The National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative's free library of resources and solutions to support schools and districts in using the outdoors for learning during the pandemic and beyond. Find it at <https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside> *The National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative was co-founded by Green Schoolyards America; the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley; San Mateo County Office of Education; and Ten Strands. The extensive National Outdoor Learning Library was written by hundreds of subject matter experts from around the country who volunteered thousands of hours over the last seven months of 2020, to create comprehensive guidance for education stakeholders.*

## Session Speakers

- Sarah Pedemonte, Science Education and Curriculum Specialist, [Lawrence Hall of Science](#), [spedemonte@berkeley.edu](mailto:spedemonte@berkeley.edu)
- Nancy Striniste, Director of East Coast Programs, [Green Schoolyards America](#), [nancy@greenschoolyards.org](mailto:nancy@greenschoolyards.org)
- Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Executive Director, [Eastern Regional Association of Forest and Nature Schools](#), [director@erfans.org](mailto:director@erfans.org)