Cool Schools connect students and teachers to nature by planting trees and creating fun and engaging outdoor experiential learning areas. These spaces cultivate children’s knowledge and awareness of the natural environment. Research shows outdoor time can result in academic and health benefits for children. Cool Schools promotes hands-on outdoor environmental activities with a STEM-based/TEKS-aligned curriculum, so no child is left inside!

The Texas Trees Foundation serves as a catalyst in creating a new green legacy for North Texas through transformational, research-based plans that educate and mobilize the public to activate the social, economic, environmental, and health benefits that trees and urban forestry provide.

**BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**

- **Resources:** STEM-based/TEKS-aligned curriculum, educational resources, and hands-on learning activities provided to engage students in Cool Schools outdoor learning areas.
- **Behavior:** Research shows that kids who spend more time outside pay more attention inside. Trees and nature lower aggression and symptoms of ADHD, and children are better able to concentrate, complete tasks, and follow directions.
  
  *Findings from a 2019 research review indicate student experiences with nature lead to:*

- **Academics:** increased retention of subject matter, higher standardized scores, better grades, better math, reading and writing skills, and higher graduation rates.
- **Development:** better leadership skills, better communication skills, more resilience, better critical thinking and problem solving, and better spatial skills.

**BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY**

Cool Schools increase tree canopy cover from 7% or less to 20% or more, aiding in environmental conservation and financial savings through shading of the school. Research supports the following benefits:

- **Cooling:** Up to 15°F of cooling on hot summer days. A young, healthy tree is equivalent to ten room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.
- **Energy Savings:** Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30% and can save 20–50% in energy used for heating.
- **Return:** The return on investing in trees provides a 3:1 return on investment. For every $1 on tree planting and maintenance, there are ~$5.82 in health, ecosystem, and environmental benefits for the school and surrounding community.
COOL SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

Establish a **Green Team** of teachers and staff

Create **landscape plan** tailored to each school

Provide educational resources to teachers and students

Run **planting day** with students, faculty, volunteers and partners

Monitor and water new trees until established

Measure short and long-term educational and environmental impacts

“Student engagement is improving and student discipline issues are decreasing as a result of the children interacting with nature, which satisfies their curiosity and allows them to solve problems in a real-world setting.”

Lisa Lovato, Principal, Dan D. Rogers Elementary School

Cool Schools in Dallas ISD
Felix G. Botello Elementary School, Onesimo Hernandez Elementary School, Dan D. Rogers Elementary School, C.A. Tatum, Jr. Elementary School, S.S. Conner Elementary School, Boude Storey Middle School, Tom C. Gooch Elementary School, Clinton P. Russell Elementary School, C.F. Carr Elementary School, Oran M. Roberts Elementary School, and more to come!

Interested in Joining the Green Team?
Contact Texas Trees Foundation at (214) 953-1184 or info@texastrees.org.