

# APPENDIX 2

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## **SAMPLE SURVEYS**

### **INITIAL SURVEYS/QUESTIONNAIRES – Vision stage**

These surveys are two fold – they should provide information on what people's attitudes are towards the school property, as well as provide an idea of some of the current uses of the site. Both types of questions will provide a baseline for comparison after the project has been installed. They should be designed with the different stakeholders in mind. Survey can be answered on paper or the questions used to facilitate brainstorming sessions. Results can be tabulated (a great math activity!).

What follows are some short examples to give you an idea of where to start

#### **For students**

##### *Attitude*

- Please describe your schoolyard with five to ten descriptive words.
- How does the schoolyard make you feel? Why?
- What can be done outside to make you feel better?
- Where do you spend most of your time when you are outside? Why?
- Where don't you play? Why?
- Do you have a favourite place in the school ground? What makes it special?
- What is your favourite outdoor place to go when you're not at school?
- What is your least favourite thing about the schoolyard? Why?
- Do you think there are enough trees in your schoolyard? Explain.
- What wildlife have you seen in your schoolyard?
- Are there places to get out of the wind, rain and sun?
- Are there places that you think could be made more colourful?

##### *Activities*

- What would you like to be able to do in the school grounds that you can't do now?
- Do you remember having a lesson in the school grounds?
- Is there enough for everyone to do what they like to do? Why? Why not?
- What would you like to be able to do outside?)
- Are there any places where bullying takes place? Where?
- Are there any places in the yard that are not used very much? Why?
- Is there any shade on the school property? Where?
- Do you use the schoolyard with your teacher for lessons?
- Are there any safe places for smaller children who might be knocked down by bigger kids?
- How could the schoolyard be changed to make it better? Explain.

### **For parents**

#### *Attitude*

- What do you think of the school grounds?
- Describe the school ground with 5 descriptive words.
- Are there any parts you like? Why?
- Are there any parts you dislike? Why?
- Do you find the school site welcoming? Unwelcoming?
- Do you think first-time visitors could locate the office/reception area/classes easily?
- What do you think about the way the school grounds are maintained?
- Which parts of our school grounds do you think your children particularly like? Why?
- Which parts of our school grounds do you think your children particularly dislike? Why?
- What is your child's favourite activity when they are in the school ground?
- Is there anything about our school grounds that causes you particular concern?
- Can you wait for your children in comfort and safety?
- Is there enough shade for kids to play in?
- Are there quiet places for kids to sit?

### **For teachers**

#### *Attitude*

- What do you think of the school grounds?
- Describe the school ground with 5 descriptive words.
- Are there any parts you like? Why?
- Are there any parts you dislike? Why?
- Do you find the school site welcoming? Unwelcoming?
- Do you think first-time visitors could locate the office/reception area/classes easily?
- Which aspects of the grounds do you think are an asset?

#### *Activities*

- What parts of the school grounds do you use to teach? What subject area? What time of the year?
- Are there any supervisory issues presented by the school ground as it exists now?
- What would you like students to learn in a naturalized area?
- What would you like them to do?
- What topics do you teach that could be enriched by a natural space?
- What existing elements of the schoolyard might present opportunities for creating an educational setting?
- What other purposes might the naturalized area serve??
- What are your recommendations to improve the grounds so that they may be used more fully by the teaching staff?
- Would you be willing to devote class time to the maintenance of the grounds if outdoor classroom development and use were integrated into the curriculum?
- Are there any problems or constraints connected to your current use of the site for teaching?

## SCHOOLYARD SURVEY

1. Describe the schoolground with 5 descriptive words.

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2. What is your child's favourite part of the schoolground?

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3. What is their least favourite part of the schoolground?

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4. Is there enough shade for kids to play in?

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5. Are there quite places for kids to sit?

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6. What is your child's favourite activity when they are in the schoolground?

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7. Do you find the schools site welcoming or unwelcoming?

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8. Circle your top three choices for things that could be incorporated into the schoolground

Shade plantings

Butterfly garden

Outdoor classroom with seating

Greenhouse

Weather station

Native grasses

Climbing trees

Compost bin

**Canadian Biodiversity Institute**  
**School Grounds Transformation**

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS**

These sample questions are just that. They are intended as a guide only and schools can adjust them according to their needs.

**STUDENT BRAINSTORMING**

Start by asking the students to tell you what they do outside at different times of the year. Write all responses to questions and note all general comments and ideas for changes on a flip chart for future reference. Where appropriate, expand upon the responses to the questions about existing conditions and uses by asking students questions such as those shown in parentheses. You can also ask students to draw their vision of their ideal schoolyard.

- **Where do you like to play? Why?**
- **Is there anything that you like to do that is “not allowed”? Why?**
- **Is there enough for everyone to do what they like to do? Why? Why not?** (What would you like to be able to do outside?)
- **What do you think of the noise in the yard? Would you like to have quiet places away from active play? Would you like to be able to sit quietly and read or talk to friends?** (What would a quiet place be like?)
- **Are there any places where bullying takes place? Where?** (What can be done to solve this problem?)
- **Are there any out-of-bounds areas? Why?** (When students are attracted to shade, quiet or natural surroundings found in off-limits spaces, ask how such places could be replicated in other areas of the schoolyard.)
- **Are there any natural areas?** (Would you like to have more nature in the yard?)
- **Are there any places in the yard that are not used very much? Why?** (What can be done to make them more interesting?)
- **Is there any shade? Where?** (How can more shade be created?)
- **Is it comfortable? Why? Why not?** (What can be done to make it more comfortable?)

- **Is it colourful outside?** (Are your classrooms colourful? Why? How can the yard be made more colourful?)
- **What sounds/noises do you hear when you are playing? Do you like them?** (What sounds would you like to hear?)
- **Is there any seating? Where? Is it in the right place?** (Where can seating be added? Think about how you would use seating arrangements. If you designed seating to suit the things you want to do outside, what shape would it be? What would it be made of? Can you think of interesting things to make seating of such as logs, stumps, rocks, etc.?)
- **Is there any shelter from the wind or sun?** (How can shade and windbreaks be created?)
- **Are there any trees in the yard? Where? How big are they?** (Would you like to have more trees and other vegetation in the yard?)
- **Do you use the schoolyard for classwork?** (How do you think the yard could be used for classes out of doors?)
- **Is there any litter in the yard? Why?** (What do you think can be done about it?)
- **Are any animals attracted to the litter? Can you identify them? Do you like them?** (How can you attract species that you do like?)
- **Is there any wildlife? What have you seen? Where?** (Would you like to attract more birds, insects and small mammals to your schoolyard?)
- **What do you think of the fences? How do they make you feel?** (Can you think of ways to improve the look of the fences?)
- **Are there any painted pavement games? Do you use them?** (Can you think of any other games – for example, snakes and ladders, tic tac toe, number and letter snakes, mazes, maps, magic circles, etc.?)
- **Are there any safe places for smaller children who might be knocked down by bigger kids?** (How can safer spaces be created for little kids?)
- **How does the schoolyard make you feel? Why?** (What can be done outside to make you feel better?)

After the brainstorming session, organize the responses into four main groups: Present Play Activities, General Comments, Green Spaces Wishlist and Sports Areas and Equipment Wishlist. This will help you compare the responses of different age groups, identify problem areas and determine the aspects of the schoolyard that are most important to the children.