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CITY OF BOSTON  
Office of the Mayor  
Martin J. Walsh

## **MAYOR WALSH, STUDENTS CELEBRATE NEW GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AT WASHINGTON IRVING MIDDLE SCHOOL**

*New design elements protect environment, serve as outdoor classroom  
and play area*



BOSTON - Tuesday, October 3, 2017 - Mayor Martin J. Walsh today joined students and staff of the Washington Irving Middle School in Roslindale, along with leaders from the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, to unveil the school's new environmentally-friendly playscape, which integrates green infrastructure principles into the school's outdoor areas.

"Boston has become a national and international leader when it comes to sustainability. Protecting our environment is a core value of everything we do -- from parks to transportation to how we design our schools," said Mayor Walsh. "The outdoor learning aspects of the Irving project is a first of its kind for the Commonwealth, and I congratulate both the Washington Irving School and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission on this cutting-edge project that is expanding learning opportunities for our students, and making our City more resilient."

Today's announcement builds on the Administration's commitment to green infrastructure. In addition to the Washington Irving Middle School, four other Boston Public Schools will be participating in the green infrastructure initiative, a \$1.5 million multi-year investment. The four other schools include: David A. Ellis Elementary School in Roxbury, Rafael Hernandez K-8 School in Roxbury, Jackson Mann/Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Allston and the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers in the Fenway. The Hernandez School will be the next project, to be completed in October 2017.

"At the Irving school, we focus on providing students with a safe and engaging learning environment. We intentionally design learning experiences that allow students to make their thinking visible through explanation and demonstration of their reasoning," said Washington Irving Principal Carmen Davis. "This new green infrastructure redesign will allow us to accomplish our mission on a daily basis in our physical education and science classrooms. We are excited about the endless learning opportunities our students will have as a result of this project."

The Irving School project is a collaboration between the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC), and incorporates elements of BWSC's green stormwater management best practices into BuildBPS, Boston's 10-year facilities and educational master plan. BWSC will work with each individual school selected to participate in the initiative to identify opportunities to add or improve green infrastructure.

New features at the Washington Irving Middle School include:

- A significant amount of green space that has transformed the look and feel of the school. The Washington Irving was previously surrounded by paved areas and bare ground.
- The green infrastructure (GI) designs for this project include outdoor classroom and laboratory spaces so that students, teachers and community members can interact with the space and gain a better understanding of how stormwater is managed. Teachers in Boston will receive stormwater/GI curriculum that will allow them to better relay complex concepts using visual and physical aids.
- Adjacent to the turf field is an outdoor classroom space containing an extensive bioretention area surrounded by boulders where students can sit, play and interact with nature.
- In addition, a designated bus lane was added to the rear parking lot of the Irving School. The parking lot has also been divided by two swales that collect stormwater: one is concrete, and the other is vegetated. The two different swales offer students a hands-on demonstration of "grey" versus "green" infrastructure, illustrating the most innovative ways to protect our environment.

"This project is truly a win-win for our students and our environment," said BPS Superintendent Tommy Chang. "It has transformed an asphalt-covered lot, where buses once dropped off and picked up students, into a dynamic space with a turf field and track now used solely for students to safely play and exercise outdoors. The new athletic facility also gives the Washington Irving's

sports teams a place to call their own."

The green infrastructure of the Irving playground space helps reduce stormwater runoff that sends pollutants into our waterways, and the bioretention area, also called a rain garden, also serves as an outdoor space where students can learn about nature and ways to preserve it.

"BWSC's goal through green infrastructure design is to protect and promote water quality in Boston's receiving waters, including Boston Harbor and the Charles, Neponset and Mystic Rivers. Green infrastructure projects like the one at the Washington Irving School are essential for Boston's future," said BWSC Executive Director Henry F. Vitale. "It's wonderful that our students are able to learn about protecting the environment in a setting where education can be both fun and interactive. BWSC is honored to be a part of Mayor Walsh's and BPS's initiative."

"The green infrastructure redesign at the Washington Irving Middle School provides an excellent example of what the future of science education and sustainable building design look like," said Elisabeth Cianciola, aquatic scientist at the Charles River Watershed Association. "The Charles River Watershed Association is thrilled to have been a partner on this project and looks forward to seeing more projects like this in Boston and other communities around the river."

### **About Boston Public Schools**

The Boston Public Schools (BPS), the birthplace of public education in the United States, serves nearly 57,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 125 schools. BPS is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world-class system of innovative, welcoming schools. We partner with the community, families, and students to develop in every learner the knowledge, skill, and character to excel in college, career, and life.

### **About the Boston Water and Sewer Commission**

Boston is home to New England's oldest and largest water, sewer and stormwater systems, which are owned, maintained and operated by the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC). Established in 1977, BWSC provides potable water and sewer services to more than one million people per day. BWSC is also the leading organizer of We Are All Connected, a campaign to raise public awareness about the importance of protecting and preserving Boston's waterways. For more information please visit: [www.bwsc.org](http://www.bwsc.org).