

Outdoor Classroom Projects



Outdoor classrooms have traditionally been a novelty on America's campuses, reserved for beautiful days where students can enjoy learning in a more leisurely setting.

The advent of the pandemic has shifted the educational view of outdoor classrooms from a luxury to a potential strategy to get students back on campus and learning in a safe environment.

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE (CLASSROOM) BOX

Nowadays, school administrators and facility managers are looking around their campus to assess how to integrate this feature into their environment, and luckily the interpretations for an outdoor classroom are plentiful.

Architects can help you decide if an opportunity exists.

To get started, a facility assessment can be conducted to audit your current spaces for use, wear, and square footage. By having a complete picture of your campus' assets, you can make well-informed decisions that have long-lasting impact on the quality of the educational environment you provide. An official record of the buildings and grounds is an initial planning tool for all your facility upgrades and future improvements best followed by a Master Plan.

Once you've assessed that you have the space and the demand for an outdoor classroom, decisions can be made regarding the location, layout, materials, and timeline for completion.

4 ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER FOR AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM PLAN:

LOCATION

Placement of your outdoor classroom will need to be considered carefully. Security, drainage, proximity to the main facilities and other logistics are all part of establishing your vision of an ideal outdoor classroom space.

An Architect can help gather the appropriate qualified expertise to compile and analyze the information together so you can identify the very best location on campus.

Even temporary outdoor classrooms (tenting) need to have the ground area reviewed to make sure the right number of seats can fit on a reasonably level surface.

Plus, accommodating 21st Century classroom technology integration should be considered, as internet connectivity and use of electronics may require additional electrical power and receptacles rated for outdoor use and Wi-Fi hot spots.

FIRM STATS AT-A-GLANCE

- 14 PERSONNEL
- 6 LICENSED ARCHITECTS
- 3 LEED ACCREDITED PROS
- + CONSULTANT SERVICES

SUSTAINED RECORD OF EXCELLENCE

- AIA:
Award of Special Citation, Institutional/Commercial; Fostering Emerging Professionals Recognition; Architectural Design Award for Merit (Eastern chapter)

-Architects & Engineers:
Presidential Award of Excellence, Innovative Energy Efficient Design

- Associated Builders & Contractors:
Award of Excellence

- Central PA:
Forevergreen Award, Suburban Renewal School of the Year

- Masonry Contractors of Central PA:
Excellence in Masonry Design; Judges Award for Craftsmanship

LAYOUT

It is the goal of every campus to safely accommodate as many students as possible, and your new outdoor classroom can too. With mandates and guidelines shifting frequently, an Architect can help guide you through the best practices that keep your venue in line with the most up-to-date learning environment philosophies and safety recommendations. However, an occupancy limit and seating arrangement are not the only considerations. You'll need to think about what style of classroom fits into your landscape, and the kind of educational models that will be in use on those grounds.

MATERIALS

Outdoor classroom surfaces must stand up to both your student population and the elements. In addition to selecting new materials, Administration and Facility Management departments can review current assets on hand for adaptive reuse. For example, Kutztown University has an enclave of outdoor classrooms and elected to use a stone slab they had in their inventory as the table surface for one of the gathering spaces. Our firm designed a concrete base to support the stone and create a stately meeting place for small groups.

TIMELINE

Knowing your budget and your timeline for completion is critical to getting your successful outdoor classroom set up in place. We can help you establish an estimate of the cost and time requirements it will take to complete your vision, source the qualified contractors and engineers, and conduct the bidding and construction administration needed for compliance with local and state authorities.

See our resources links below, and find out more about how outdoor classrooms create:

1. Better Social Skills
2. Enhanced Team Work
3. Better Engagement with Learning
4. Happiness

If you're considering augmenting your campus with outdoor classrooms contact us to discuss your ideas and put together a plan of action. We can't wait to help you share the benefits of outdoor classrooms with your student population, as shown in recent studies.

Contact us today and get started!

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM RESOURCES

[Outdoor Classrooms in the Age of COVID-19: Pros and Cons](#)

[The Surprising Benefits of Teaching a Class Outside](#)

[Guide to Advocating for Outdoor Classrooms in Coronavirus-Era School Reopening](#)

[Saint Joseph's University Creates Outdoor Learning Space to Help Keep Students Safe During Pandemic](#)

[OutdoorClassroomDay.com](#)



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Classroom Projects @
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Based in Berks County, Pennsylvania, our firm has been committed to a better built environment for over a century. To review a sample portfolio of our completed projects and rich history, please visit our website listed below. Contact us to discuss your outdoor classroom or other upcoming project today.



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