

Action Item - 1

Title: Acceptance of USDA Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act – Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program (\$1,413,146)

Board of Education Meeting Date: 1/30/2025

Action Under Consideration

The Administration recommends that the Board of Education authorize The School District of Philadelphia, through the Superintendent or his designee, to accept a Donation as follows:

- Name of Donor: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service
- Brief description of item/good:
Grant
- Gift/Donation amount not to exceed: \$1,413,146

Description:

The District's GreenFutures sustainability plan mission is to provide each student in Philadelphia with a green, healthy high-performance school and emphasizes the need for students to access outdoor learning environments that integrate greening. These spaces provide vibrant environments for learning and imaginative play, improve air quality, reduce heat and improve the ecology of their outdoor environment. As part of the District's continued effort, staff participated in the City-wide 10-year strategic plan for the growth and care of Philadelphia's urban forest. As one of the largest landowners in Philadelphia, with schools throughout the City, the District is a strategic partner in the City's effort to equitably increase tree canopy on public, private and institutional lands. The School District is excited by the opportunity to expand the scope of its green schoolyards program and landscape management team to coordinate concentrated plantings at over 40 schools (serving 14677 students in elementary, middle, and high school) in high priority areas with the lowest tree canopy in the city struggling with effects of urban heat islands, and the maintenance and upkeep of the District's mature tree canopy at these sites. An overarching \$12 million grant from the US Forest Service was received by a coalition of partners, including the District. Of that grant, the District received \$1,413,146 to support staffing, mature tree maintenance and pavement removal. The District also was awarded a US HUD Community Project Funding for \$300,000 and PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources's grant of \$500,000 grant to supplement the US Forest Service grant for trees and planting, supplies and young tree establishment. We will be working with each school to engage staff and students in the tree planting effort. This effort hopes to plant up to 700 trees within the next 5 years.

How is this work connected to the District's plan to achieve Goals and Guardrails?

This project supports Guardrail 1 making every school a safe, healthy and welcoming space for all students, staff and community. Through this project we will create a cleaner and greener space for students to play, relax and learn.

How will the success of this contract be measured?

After all the trees are planted, District staff will inspect and maintain them to support tree survival.

When applicable, is this an evidence-based strategy? If so, what evidence exists to support this approach?

The over 40 schools included in this grant rank high on the District's Equity Screener which helps the District prioritize our efforts on schoolyard improvements.

When applicable, was a larger community of District community members and/or stakeholders involved in this selection process? If so, what groups and how?

The Office of Environmental Management and Services partnered with Capital Programs to develop the scope of work for this grant application with support from grants development and grants fiscal.

Related resolution(s)/action item(s)

N/A

Office Originating Request:

Operations - Environmental Services