

# VIVID VIRGINIA

## AFTER 2: Schoolyard Survey- What's your system?

**Background:** A schoolyard survey is a type of assessment to connect students to their local system and more deeply consider human interaction with the environment around them. Surveys such as this one also allow students the opportunity to communicate with members of their school community they may not typically interact with (grounds and facilities staff) and has potential for an action project.

**Safety:** Check the school grounds for areas to avoid keeping student safety at the forefront. Ask for parent volunteers or other teachers for help with guiding the students outdoors. Prep: Set up a time for buildings and/or ground maintenance to talk with students, or gather pertinent information before the activity.

**Standards Addressed:** Science (2018): 3.1, 3.8, 4.1, 4.8

### Instructional Strategy:

1. Inquire with students: How is your schoolyard part of an ecosystem? What are the different systems that your school is a part of? Generate a list of students' ideas (Choose your strategy- class discussion, submitting pieces of paper in a container, placing post its on the board, etc.) and then discuss as a class.
2. Next, ask: Now that we know the schoolyard is part of a system in these ways, is it a healthy part of the system? Is there anything we can do to increase diversity or improve the schoolyard's appearance or both?
3. Explore: Tell students that one way we can determine what is going on in their schoolyard is to go out and make observations and gather our own data to then make conclusions. We can test our schoolyard and create a score or report card based on what we observe.
4. Conduct the schoolyard report card, which can be accessed here. [https://www.cbf.org/document-library/education-resources/schoolyard\\_reportcard28aa.pdf](https://www.cbf.org/document-library/education-resources/schoolyard_reportcard28aa.pdf) Place students in small groups, giving each group a report card, clipboard and pencil. Once outside, model how to fill out the report card with your class. Then have them explore in their smaller groups.
5. Back in the classroom, each group will add up the score. Facilitate a class discussion of the scores. Were the scores all the same, can we take an average of the scores? What is the array of scores? (Put the numbers on the board to examine.)
6. Conclusion: What are our next steps? Ask students to generate ideas for schoolyard improvement. Depending on engagement and time allotted, you can conduct a class discussion of habitat improvement. Some guidelines for schoolyard improvement can be found here- Fix your bare spots <http://www.cbf.org/document-library/cbf-guides-fact-sheets/BareSpotsGuide95dc.pdf>