



MORSE STREET SCHOOL
21 Morse Street, Freeport, Maine 04032
Tel. (207) 865-6361, Fax (207) 865-2903
Julie Nickerson, Principal
nickersonj@rsu5.org

March 2018

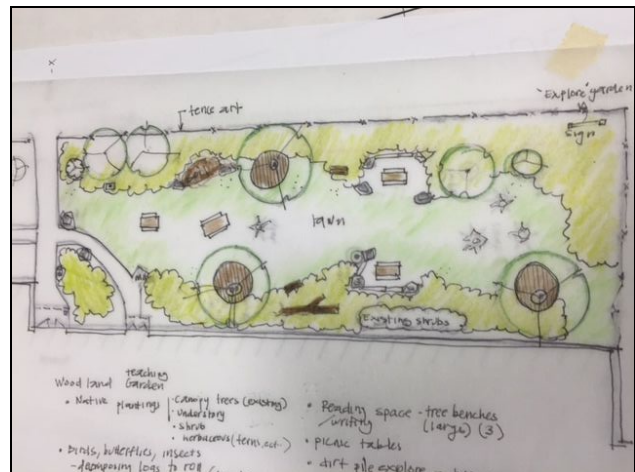
Dear Morse Street Families and Community Members,

As many of you know, we have been investing time and energy into improving the play space at Morse Street School. The Morse Street faculty recognized the need for upgrading the existing playground and was compelled by the research that supports a natural playspace for our students. With this in mind, we embarked on a design process that involved our students from the onset. We wanted this to be a playground designed by students that have students in mind. Each child at Morse Street designed a playground that they would love to play on. These designs, coupled with the input from a community charrette, resulted in a design developed by Sashie Misner (Landscape Architect, Mitchell & Associates). The vision stretches beyond a traditional play setting. It incorporates opportunities for students to play and learn in a variety of ways and with a variety of natural materials at their fingertips. We hope for a playground with few rules and plenty of opportunity for children to be creative, be physically challenged and collaboratively solve problems. The finished product will not only be an asset to our school but our community as a whole.

This project so far has truly been a collaborative venture. Students, staff, parents and community members have all been involved in the planning and designing of the improved space. Parent and community volunteers have spent time getting this project started so that our students can enjoy playing in a more varied and natural way. In addition to the generous donation of many people's time and in particular Jenna Frost, the design and planning process and phase one has been financially supported by the Morse Street School PTC, RSU5, FPaD (Freeport, Pownal and Durham Education Foundation), a grant from Greener Schools Coalition, and individual donations. The total cost for the completed project of both the playground and the learning garden from beginning to end is approximately \$70,000.



Playground



Woodland Learning Garden

To continue improvements through the next phases, we will be seeking funding through grant opportunities as well as monetary and material donations.

Planning Phase: Consult with Greener Schools Coalition, host Community Charrette, design completed by Sashie Misner (Landscape architect, Mitchell & Associates) **(Complete)**

Phase 1: Groundwork, sandpit, repair and remove existing equipment for safety, install irrigation and water fountains, add wooden boat and fairy house hut **(Complete)**

Phase 2: Finish sandpit area, increase hills, tunnels, bridges, boulders and plantings

Phase 3: Outdoor stage area and replace raised beds

Phase 4: Woodland learning garden

We have received estimates from Three Stone Landscaping who designed multiple playgrounds in the area including Rowe School in Yarmouth and Deering Oaks in Portland. To complete phases 2 - 4 of the Morse Street Playground project, we need \$45,000. We have applied for a grant through Lowes and will hear in May whether our attempt has been successful. Even if successful, it will not cover the whole cost for completion. As we have such a strong Morse Street School community, there is amazing potential to complete this fundraising quickly and ensure we can finish this project over the summer. We are frequently asked by family members how they can support our school. Please consider not only making your own tax deductible donation to this valuable community asset but also encouraging friends, family and any local business connection you may have to contribute.

What would your money buy?

\$25 would go towards native Maine shrubs

\$50 would go towards log and stone seating, balance elements, or boulders

\$100 would go towards a shade tree or wood to build garden beds/stage

\$250 would go towards a play bridge or tree benches

\$500 would go towards a hill and play tunnel

Please make checks out to **Morse Street School** and mail to:

Morse Street School

Playground Fund

21 Morse Street

Freeport, ME 04032

Thank you for considering this project. The youngest children of the Freeport community will greatly benefit from your generosity.

Sincerely,

Julie Nickerson