

## Contact

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## California Legislature approves historic investment in school greening

The California Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom this week agreed to a historic investment of \$150 million over two years to green schools across the state—a 200 percent increase from the \$50 million the Administration proposed in May. The move comes as six million school children attend asphalt-covered schoolyards at the beginning of what is projected to be the longest and hottest heat wave to sweep across California this year.

“I applaud our state leaders, and especially Sen. Bob Hetzberg for his steadfast leadership to protect our kids and school communities from extreme heat,” said TreePeople CEO Cindy Montañez. “As we speak, children across the state are attending schools on campuses covered in concrete where temperatures can reach 145 degrees on the asphalt. This is a dangerous situation that we can no longer ignore. The health and safety of our children and teachers are at stake, and I thank our state leaders for making their wellbeing a priority. Luckily, the solution is relatively simple: plant more trees and create green spaces in order to provide more shade and cool our schools.”

Gov. Newsom is expected to approve the additional funding later this week, which contains \$117 million for school greening in underserved areas, plus another \$20 million for urban forestry to complement the \$30 million for urban forestry passed in June.

School campuses are at the frontline of extreme heat, not only because asphalt-covered schoolyards expose the most vulnerable among us to extreme heat but also because they contribute to a community’s overall “urban heat island effect.”

The state’s unprecedented increased investment, funneled through California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, will provide additional resources to protect kids, teachers and the school community from extreme heat.

TreePeople’s own studies have shown that shade from trees can lower surface temperatures by up to 45 degrees and cool the air around them, lowering air temperatures by up to 9 degrees. Trees in schoolyards also produce water-savings and flood-reduction benefits, an added benefit in a state faced with a megadrought and a possible megaflood. Studies have also shown that

trees support academic excellence, complement environmental education standards and improve student health and wellbeing.

The work of greening schools by TreePeople has already begun. This includes greening projects that are now underway or have been completed at 96th Elementary School, 112th Elementary School, Weigand Ave Elementary School, and Compton Ave Elementary School. TreePeople has also secured partnerships to plant trees at six schools in the San Fernando Valley, plant 300 trees across campuses at Rialto Unified School District, and support the development of greening projects at five schools within Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District.

### **About TreePeople**

*TreePeople unites the power of trees, people, and nature-based solutions to grow a more climate-ready LA. The organization inspires, engages and supports Angelenos to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, facilitates collaboration among government agencies, and promotes leadership in grassroots volunteers, students and communities. In this way, TreePeople seeks to build a powerful and diverse coalition to grow a greener, healthier and more water-secure Los Angeles for present and future generations. For more information, visit [treepeople.org](http://treepeople.org).*