

Playground Planning Guidance

- **The first step in the playground process is to set up a meeting with school leadership and the facilities team.**
- The Medford School District inherits the responsibility and liability associated with all playground equipment; therefore, the MSD will make the final decision as to what we install onto the playgrounds.
- The facilities department has several Certified Playground Inspectors on staff that have participated in numerous installs. They will provide input throughout the process.
- We look at current safety trends and considerations. We apply lessons learned based on experience and input from the playground industry toward new construction. Therefore, you may see things on existing playgrounds that we no longer allow/prefer on new playgrounds. We do not remove them from existing playgrounds unless they become overly problematic.
- Contractor availability and weather are a significant consideration for installation.
- Sub-surface composition is a significant consideration for installation.
- Winter, rain, and saturated ground are not conducive to installing playgrounds.
- Summer is the best time for playground installation (Weather/Time Available)
- Most installs are a 3-week project; one-week installs are not a good option (i.e. Spring Break). One week provides no time for site work, finish inspection/soft fall install or room for contingency.
- There are many variables to be considered in the process. This is not something that happens overnight.

Responsibilities

- Facilities will do the site preparation (Removal of Soft Fall/Fabric).
- Facilities will provide a certified playground inspector who will be on site throughout installation.
- Facilities will provide additional soft fall when necessary.
- Facilities will remove existing equipment when necessary.
- Facilities will provide the final QA/QC check before opening the playground.
- PTO's will work with facilities to select the items. They will also fundraise and get volunteers.

Funding

- Any purchase over \$10,000 needs to be bid out. The only exception to this requirement is when companies are listed on a state approved contract.
- Facilities will facilitate the Request for Proposal (RFP) process when necessary.
- Fundraising must consist of the **purchase price + the installation price + a contingency.**
- We recommend a 10-20% contingency. Unforeseen circumstances occur frequently.
- Installation costs can be significant when contractors are in demand.
- Once the PTO has raised the money, they need to provide a memo to the business office outlining what the money is to be used for and transfer the money to a designated school district account.
- Please, do not pay any bills directly without prior communication.
- Facilities will use funds from the designated account to purchase the equipment.

Keys to Success

- Principal leadership and involvement are critical to the success of playground projects.
- Clear communication and understanding of expectations and responsibilities are essential.
- Consistent and timely communication between the school, facilities and the PTO will be crucial throughout the process.
- Flexibility and an open mind are appreciated.
- A positive attitude is welcomed!

Things to Consider When Selecting Equipment

- Age appropriate equipment
- Safety
- Activity inducing
- Existing playground
- Obstructed views/Hiding places
- Susceptibility to graffiti and etching
- Head/Finger Entrapments

Example Timeline

- Initial Meeting
- Define The Desired Scope of Work/Funds Available (What is wanted?)
- Decide whether to send out an RFP or sole source based on a pre-approved vendor
- Equipment Selection
- Final Approval Meeting between school, PTO, and facilities.
- Fundraise (purchase price + installation + contingency) – **This can be done throughout.**
- Select installation method (Volunteer, Contractor, MSD)
- Round up volunteer support
- Install (A Community Event)
- Ribbon Cutting/Open For Play

*This is an example timeline. It will vary depending on the methods selected.