Space to Grow — Chicago's Co-Funded Green Schoolyards Capturing Stormwater, Where USGS Monitoring Found 100% Capture at One School and 27.5% at Another (USA)

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · United States of America

Quality score: 40/100

Evidence strength: Moderate

Summary

Since 2014, Chicago has rebuilt 41+ asphalt schoolyards as green, permeable play spaces designed to hold 200,000+ gallons per storm each. USGS monitoring at two schools found 100% capture at one and 27.5% at the other.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced	0/3
Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced	1/3
Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control	2/3
Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced	0/3
Governance, certification & transferability	3/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-11-18

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD), Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Dept. of Water Management, Healthy Schools Campaign & Openlands — accessed 2026-11-18

MWRD — Space to Grow — accessed 2026-11-18

USGS SIR 2024-5036 — Monitoring of stormwater BMPs at selected Chicago schools — accessed 2026-11-18

MWRD — Five CPS schoolyards completed (2025) — accessed 2026-11-18

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