



Sustainable Schoolyards

# Case Study: Northfield Elementary

NEBRASKA STATEWIDE ARBORETUM

The original playground at Northfield Elementary School in Gering was a unimaginative area with serious drainage issues. Funding from multiple grants allowed them to fix the drainage issues and create a fun, safe, educational and environmentally friendly landscape for the students. Today, the schoolyard is almost unrecognizable. It is enjoyed by students during the school year and shared with the community as a park during the summer.

## Before



**Top Left:** Erosion from gutters running directly through play area

**Top Right:** Courtyard area between buildings, branching off from play area

**Bottom Right:** View across hot, sunny play area looking toward school building

**Bottom Left:** Two old trees shade a couple benches and small corner of play area

## The Process



**Left:** Site preparation was a large job. A lot of drainage work was required and the schoolyard was almost entirely gravel.

**Right:** Many hands made light work of planting the large rain garden.

## Two Years Later



**Top Left:** A circle of logs and stumps is the most sought after place to play

**Top Right:** Young trees around the playground will provide shade during hot afternoons

**Bottom Left:** The school has become a more welcoming place for students and the community

**Bottom Right:** The rain garden is doing its job to collect water and control erosion

Sustainable landscapes for healthy homes and communities