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Estimating Total Cost to Expand Schoolyards to Playgrounds Program

January 23, 2025 – Per the request of Council Member Gale Brewer, the New York City Independent Budget Office has estimated the cost of opening outdoor schoolyards on weekdays and weekends. This estimate looks at buildings that are not currently participating in the Schoolyards to Playgrounds Program, which total 676 buildings Citywide.

IBO's [report](#) found that on average students need to walk between 0.14 and 0.49 miles to reach the nearest park, with Staten Island students walking the farthest distance (see IBO's report for a breakdown by borough and by City Council district).

What is the program: City initiative that allows public access to playgrounds on weekends, overseen by the Department of Education, Parks, and Trust for Public Land.

Context: Last week Mayor Adams [proposed an expansion](#) of 11 schoolyards to the program.

How much would it cost: Up to \$91,000 per weekday, and \$243,000 per one weekend day for all 676 buildings – **this is not a per building cost, it is the total cost per day for all 676 buildings.**

Why is this different from [IBO's previous estimate](#): The increase in cost is in part due to changes to the [prevailing wage schedule](#) that began on July 1, 2024.

