

# BJM PLAY AREA NEWS

creating a better outdoor play and learning environment for all of us



## Help us make a better play area for everyone!

*Get involved, have fun, make a difference*

The BJM play area needs improvement, and you can help.

BJM's existing schoolyard has a lot of issues: equipment that is not safe, poor drainage, lack of a separate area for young children, surfacing problems, no place to sit, no green space... the list goes on.

Of course, there are good things, too. Kids love using different parts of the area to run, jump, swing and play with their friends.

We want to make our play area the best place it can be. But what exactly would that look like? What activities would happen there? How would it support being active, learning, exploring and having fun?

We need you—parents, students, teachers, staff, and our school neighbors—to help think about how to make the BJM schoolyard a fantastic outdoor play and learning environment that meets the needs of all our kids.

We will be doing a series of fun activities in the coming weeks and months to help us all think about how to transform our outdoor space into an exciting, imaginative, active, educational, engaging and fun place for everyone.

Read on, and please—*get involved!*

## ICSD Bond Issue and BJM

On March 6th, Ithaca voters will decide whether to authorize ICSD to issue bonds to fund extensive renovations, improvements and additions to district schools, including Beverly J. Martin Elementary.

**Proposition 1**, if passed, will directly affect BJM by funding the following renovations:

<b>Roofs</b> new roof (last replaced in 1987)	<b>\$ 800,000</b>
<b>HVAC [heating, ventilation, and air conditioning]</b> convert steam boiler to hot water system, replace original 1932 steam piping distribution system, install air conditioning system	<b>\$ 4,300,000</b>
<b>Site Work + Miscellaneous</b> replace electrical panel boxes and circuit breakers, increase electrical capacity, repoint exterior brick work, repair and repave asphalt around building	<b>\$ 397,000</b>
<b>Total Beverly J. Martin Renovation Estimate:</b>	<b>\$ 5,497,000</b>

Also included in Proposition 1 is **\$900,000 to renovate playgrounds** throughout the district. Due to the way in which the renovation grants are designed, should this bond pass BJM is slated to be the first playground renovated and updated. That means ICSD could begin demolition of the playground in late June 2007.

**Proposition 2**, if passed, will finance additions and renovations to Ithaca High School and Lehman Alternative School, and a new Belle Sherman gym. For your reference, conceptual design drafts of the proposed additions and renovations for IHS, LACS and Belle Sherman are posted on the BJM PTA board, next to the main office.

For more information on the bonds contact Judith Pastel, ICSD Superintendent of Schools, Administration Building, 400 Lake Street, Ithaca (607) 274-6845, or see their website at <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/board/FacilitiesBond2006/>.

# What's in a play area?

The answer: *more than you think!*

Most of us think of swings, slides and climbing structures when we think of a playground. But if we think about the kinds of things we enjoyed as kids, and the places that were special to us, we will think of lots of other things, too: trees, gardens, a vacant lot where we built forts, a special place where we talked with friends, and many other “non-playground” places.

We can't recreate all these experiences in the BJM play area, but we can use them to think broadly and creatively about the possibilities. Following is a list of some things we should consider as we think about our redesign of the BJM play environment:

- **Appropriate Challenges** for different ages and abilities
- **Accessibility** for children with disabilities
- **Seating** for children and adults, in small or large groups
- **Natural Settings** such as grassy areas, trees, gardens or plants for play
- **Storage** for easy access to play equipment and play props
- **Entrances** that facilitate getting in and out of the play area while ensuring a secure environment
- **Outdoor Classrooms** to support curriculum activities
- **Safety** so that it is free from hazards and excessive risk
- **Appropriate Maintenance** so that quality is maintained over time
- **Year-round Use** so that we can play all year long

## GET INVOLVED!

We've formed a "Play Area Steering Committee" to help guide the play area improvement effort. The committee includes reps from parents, teachers, students, administration, ICSD, the City, GIAC, Immaculate Conception and the neighborhood.

The committee is responsible for making sure that the improvement process goes smoothly and everyone in our community has a chance to get involved.

In the coming weeks, students at BJM will have the opportunity to reflect on what they like and don't like about the play area, and give input on how they would like to see it changed. Parents, teachers, staff and others will have a chance to give input as well.

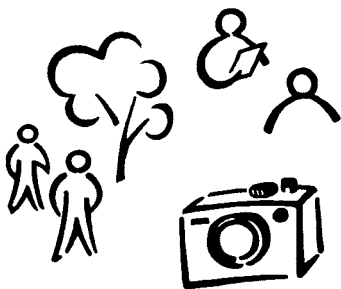
If you would like to help out, in whatever way, please get in touch. Also, if you have special skills that could be helpful, let us know.

**Contact Neema Kudva by email ([nk78@cornell.edu](mailto:nk78@cornell.edu)) or phone (257-8319).**

Look for announcements about the date of the Community Design Day, and plan to join us. More information will be posted on the PTA website, [www.bjmpta.org](http://www.bjmpta.org), and in the next **BJM Play Area News**.



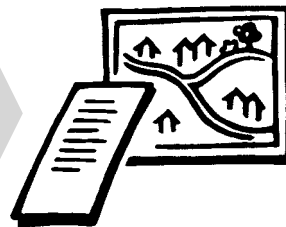
## PROCESS OVERVIEW (key steps along the way)



**MARCH / APRIL**  
evaluate existing area  
+ generate new ideas



**APRIL (date TBA)**  
Community Design Day /  
hands-on workshop



**MAY / JUNE**  
develop design plan



**SUMMER 2007**  
build our new play area!