



An Educational Approach to Saving Water

Public School Water Assessment Program

San Mateo County Energy Watch (SMCEW) and the Green Star Schools (GSS) Program



Project Overview



SAN MATEO COUNTY
energy watch

The GSS Certification Program recognizes teachers in San Mateo County who have integrated waste management education into their core curriculum. GSS also provides online resources and technical assistance toward certification, and will soon launch certification pathways for water, transportation, energy and food.

In 2008, the Pacific Gas & Electric Company partnered with the City/County Association of Governments to form an Energy Watch team in San Mateo County. The Energy Watch team serves local governments, small businesses, non-profits, low-income residents, schools, and farms by providing energy efficiency services like free audits, incentives, and public classes and training.

2013

SMCEW completed a successful energy benchmarking program for school districts, utilizing PG&E's Portfolio Manager to track and analyze the data. They wanted to establish a similar water benchmarking program, seeing landscape irrigation as a potential major water saver.

2014

A ClimateCorps fellow realized that Portfolio Manager was not optimal for analyzing water data, so they developed their own water use efficiency scoring method and benchmarked water use for 12 school districts.

2015

CivicSpark fellow Kyle Ramey proposed a less technical Water Auditing approach instead. He arranged a cost-sharing program with NGO's to cover the cost of his training and to assess one school for ~\$2,000.



2016

Megan trained to audit school facilities and landscapes. Megan found that most facility managers were not responsive and the auditing process was cost-prohibitive to conduct alone. She partnered with GSS to delegate auditing to school Green Teams.

Legacy with GSS

- To certify their classroom, teachers must engage students to complete a background worksheet on where water comes from and how it's used
- To certify their school, teachers and students must form a Green Team
- The Green Team must audit the whole school and generate an annual Action Plan to educate all students in water conservation



Results and Deliverables

5 schools audited and 5 water savings-cost analysis reports generated, including recommendations for improvements

Potential average annual school savings of \$2300 and 185,000 gal

Map of overlapping boundaries between 23 school districts, 150+ schools, and 16 water agencies; had not existed

Portfolio of water incentive programs offered by each water agency, available for use by schools



Megan Waters, a Bay Area Fellow, graduated from Princeton with a degree in Politics and Environmental Studies. Her experience spans both the non-profit and private sectors, ranging from youth and college coaching to resource conservation and transportation planning and finance. Megan is interested in creating public-private partnerships to reduce GHG emissions and increase access to employment and academic opportunities.



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