**Campus Toolkit - Compliance Checklist**

**A Compliance Checklist for Educational Institutions**

*Here are some steps to help you identify areas with nonfunctional lawn and develop alternative, water-wise landscapes.*

**1) Identify areas with Nonfunctional Lawn**

* Gather the existing landscape and irrigation system plans for your managed properties.
* Use an online mapping system to identify and designate nonfunctional lawns. Contact your local water provider to inquire about potential site assessments.
* Walk each property and make an inventory of the areas that are non-functional, such as:
  + Entryway lawns
  + Lawns alongside curbs, fences, or walls
  + Grassy medians in parking lots, between buildings, or near sidewalks
* Consider hiring a landscape professional to conduct the walkthrough.

**2) Develop plans for a Water-Wise Landscape**

* Check with your local water provider to see if they offer a rebate for converting the lawn areas into climate-appropriate landscapes.
* If they do offer a rebate, determine the steps and documentation needed to qualify for the rebate. \**Rebate funding can be limited and is available on a first-come, first-served basis*. *Learn more about rebates in your area by visiting* [www.NonFunctionalTurfCA.org](https://nonfunctionalturfca.org/)
* Work with a certified contractor and/or landscape designer. WaterSense has a directory of Certified Professionals: [www.lookforwatersense.epa.gov/find-a-pro.html](https://lookforwatersense.epa.gov/find-a-pro.html).
* If working with a non-certified landscaper or utilizing in-house staff for this project, consider sending them to a class at your local water provider or through the QWEL (Qualified Water Efficiency Landscaper) program. *Many water providers offer free landscape and irrigation design courses, and some will even provide you with a free design plan. QWEL classes can be found online at* [www.qwel.net](https://www.qwel.net/)
* Focus on areas with high water use, those with irregular dimensions (inefficient to irrigate), or areas in high visibility but nonfunctional locations, such as entrances and exits.
* Focus on the need for maintaining mature tree health within the new landscape design.
* Create areas that will add new shade and refresh curb appeal.
* Prioritize drought-tolerant, native species and pollinator-friendly species.
* Develop strategies to protect and water existing trees during work. *See Best Practices for Existing Trees During Lawn Conversion* for details.
* Organize plants into appropriate hydrozones (placing plants with similar water requirements on the same zone).
* Educate students, teachers, staff, and the wider school community on the law and transition plans.
* Leverage using maintenance staff for some of the work.
* *Remember, the new plantings will take time to become established and fill in the spaces.*

**3) Upgrade and adjust the sprinkler system**

* Check if your water provider offers rebates for upgrading your irrigation system.
* Convert sprinklers to drip irrigation and bubblers or other efficient irrigation methods where applicable to ensure that trees and shrubs receive sufficient water.
* Determine if new stations should be added to the irrigation system. For example, it is best practice to avoid using both drip irrigation and regular sprinklers on the same station.
* Research opportunities for smart water applications technology, potentially as educational opportunities for faculty or students interested in science and new technology: <https://www.irrigation.org/SWAT>
* Install a WaterSense-labeled, weather-based sprinkler timer (“smart controller”) to enhance the efficiency of your irrigation system.
* Ensure the water pressure of your system is optimal to provide adequate coverage.

**5) Document the changes made to the nonfunctional lawn areas**

* Information on how to certify your property’s adherence to the law will be posted on NonFunctionalTurfCA.org once the State Water Resources Control Board has issued the proper reporting procedures.
* Documentation could include the reduction in water used, the square footage of nonfunctional lawn transformed, and irrigation system upgrades.

**6) Educate staff on how to maintain the landscape**

* Identify training needs for maintaining the new landscape.
* Discuss with the landscape designer the possibility of holding training sessions for maintenance staff and groundskeepers.
* Develop an appropriate watering schedule for newly planted areas.
* Establish a routine for inspecting the irrigation system.

7) **Engage Students and Parents in the Transition**

* Campus Pride & Aesthetics: Highlight how new low-water landscapes make the campus more welcoming, attractive, and reflective of school values.
* Learning & Engagement: Use converted areas as outdoor classrooms, science gardens, or student-led sustainability projects.
* Community & Partnerships: Invite parents, local organizations, and volunteers to support planting days, provide resources, or help maintain landscapes.
* Celebration & Visibility: Share progress through school newsletters, social media, and campus events to showcase the school’s commitment to sustainability.

*[A close-up of a logo

AI-generated content may be incorrect.](http://nonfunctionalturfca.org)*[Feel Free to Add Water Agency Logo]

Website: [Insert URL]

Phone: [Insert Number]

Rebate Info: [QR Code or Link]