**Campus Toolkit - Tips for Student & Community Engagement**

Transforming nonfunctional lawns into water-wise landscapes is more than a compliance project - it’s a chance to engage students, parents, and the broader community. By weaving education, pride, and participation into the process, schools can turn landscape changes into a shared achievement.

* **On-Campus Engagement** 
  + Design Input: Gather ideas and feedback from students and staff early in the process to ensure the new landscape reflects campus needs and pride.
  + **Before/During/After Signs:** Post simple, student-friendly signs around campus showing the stages of transformation:
    - “Stay tuned… our landscape is about to transform!”
    - “Work in progress: Building a water-wise campus.”
    - “Pardon our progress: Sustainability in action.”
    - “Welcome to our new learning landscape!”
    - “This landscape saves water, supports wildlife, and inspires students.”
  + **Groundbreaking Celebration:** Host a “first shovel” or ribbon-cutting event with student leaders, teachers, and parent volunteers.
  + **Planting Day:** Invite students and parents to help plant new native species—turning the project into hands-on learning.
  + **Volunteer Maintenance Days:** Schedule seasonal workdays for clubs, sports teams, or community groups to help weed, mulch, or water new plantings.
  + **Opening Day Ceremony:** Once complete, host a campus walk-through or tour led by students to showcase the new space.
* **Online Engagement**
  + **Sample Newsletter Copy:** 
    - Transforming Our Campus, Together  
      Our school is taking an exciting step toward sustainability by replacing nonfunctional lawns with vibrant, water-wise landscapes. These new spaces not only help us meet state requirements but also create outdoor classrooms, attract pollinators, and boost campus pride.  
      Students, parents, and staff are invited to join us for upcoming planting and volunteer days. Together, we can create a landscape that reflects our values and inspires learning.
  + **Sample Social Media Copy:**
    - **(before/during):** Big changes are coming to our campus! We’re saying goodbye to thirsty lawns and hello to a water-wise landscape. Stay tuned as students, parents, and staff join together to transform our landscape into something beautiful and sustainable.
    - **(during planting):** Today’s planting day! Students, parents, and staff are working side by side to create a new water-wise campus landscape that saves water and inspires learning.
    - **(after completion):** From lawns to learning landscapes! Thanks to our students, families, and volunteers, our campus now features beautiful, water-wise gardens that support pollinators, save water, and build school pride.
* **Other Engagement Ideas** 
  + **Student-Led Documentation:** Have the school’s photography or journalism club document the project with photos, articles, art projects, and yearbook pages.
  + **Curriculum Connections:** Incorporate lessons in science (native plants, pollinators, water cycles), math (measuring water savings), and art (murals, painted signs, designing coloring pages for younger students).
  + **Partnerships:** Work with local nurseries, landscape professionals, or water providers for donations, expertise, and event support.
  + **Living Schoolyards Month** (May): Celebrate the transformation during California’s Living Schoolyard Month - first established by state resolution 2014 - as an opportunity to connect students with a larger movement celebrating more vibrant and sustainable school grounds.

**For more lesson ideas and inspiration for your new water-wise landscape, these are just a few places to look:**

* **California Academy of Sciences Living Schoolyard Guide**: <https://www.calacademy.org/educators/lesson-plans/living-schoolyard-guide> (also available in other languages: [www.greenschoolyards.org/guides](https://www.greenschoolyards.org/guides))
* **California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom**: <https://learnaboutag.org/resources/gardens/>
* **California Native Plant Society**: <https://www.cnps.org/gardening/school-gardens>
* **Los Angeles Unified School District’s School Garden Guidebook**: <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1500/school_garden_guidebook_lausd.pdf>
* **Natural History Museum of LA County:** <https://nhmlac.org/learning-resource/creating-school-garden-california-native-plants>

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