

O.C. students go green with support from \$1.99 million state water board grant

This semester, with a \$1.99 million grant from the State Water Resources Control Board (state water board), student leaders at three Garden Grove Unified School District (GGUSD) high schools — Santiago High School, Bolsa Grande High School, and Los Amigos High School — organized Earth Day assemblies to promote conservation and sustainability.

The entire program at GGUSD is known as the state water board's Drought Response Outreach Program for Schools (DROPS), which promotes water conservation and stormwater capture by altering school campuses with new bioswales, rain gardens, and native plants.

The GGUSD facilities department has worked closely with landscape architecture firm NUVIS to design DROPS projects on all three campuses that will reduce stormwater pollution and provide multiple benefits including water conservation, increased awareness of water resource sustainability, and reduced dry weather runoff.

To encourage the community's understanding of the program's environmental benefits, DROPS also includes an education and outreach component with student-led assemblies and student films.

Students at each high school worked in teams to write and act in short films that educate and raise awareness about the new campus improvements to conserve water.

The student-run assemblies served as premieres for the short films and also featured educational skits, trivia games, and student speeches.

GGUSD's partners for the DROPS program include Climate Resolve, a Southern California-based nonprofit that focuses on local solutions to global climate change; Orange County Coast Keeper, a local nonprofit that implements innovative, effective programs in education and water conservation; and Patriot Video Productions, which filmed the videos and instructed the students in the art and craft of film production.

Jonathan Parfrey, Executive Director of Climate Resolve, praised the school district for leading sustainability among California schools.

"Garden Grove Unified School District has been visionary. They're modernizing these campuses with sustainability in mind and, most of all, the students love this environmentally-responsive approach," said Parfrey.