

## Supporting The Next Generation of Good Water Stewards

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For nearly five decades, the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) has offered Orange County students in-class water education lessons focused on the importance and value of water. While the 2020-2021 school year was filled with challenges like transitioning hands-on programming to virtual distance learning, it was also a year of great successes. As a result of the global pandemic, the MWDOC public affairs team was compelled to completely redesign its K-12 water education programs, including format, content, and offerings. After completing an extensive RFP process, two well-known, highly respected contractors were selected to present innovative water education programs to students across the County. Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, the MWDOC Choice K-12 School Programs (Programs) are now offered by [Shows That Teach](#) and [Orange County Department of Education's Inside the Outdoors](#). Depending on the school's COVID-19 protocols, all programs are available both in person and virtually.

While the Programs continue to support California State Standards, they also include [Environmental Principles and Concepts \(EP&Cs\)](#), which have been integrated into the Science (Next Generation Science Standards – NGSS), History-Social Science, Health, Arts, and soon Mathematics Frameworks. Incorporating EP&Cs into the Programs expands MWDOC and the sponsoring local water provider's involvement in youth education beyond science classes, allowing essential water-focused lessons to be taught in multiple core subjects. Each program incorporates hands-on interaction, pre- and post-program activities, and opportunities for family and community engagement. Through participation in the Programs, Orange County K-12 students gain the interdisciplinary knowledge to become thoughtful water stewards by connecting with their local environment and solving real-world problems in their own communities.

### Elementary School Programs

Shows That Teach utilizes original music, humor, and audience participation to effectively engage K-2 students in water-centric topics such as the water cycle, water supply resources, and using water wisely. This exciting assembly-style program introduces Orange County's youngest water users to fundamental water education early in their academic career. Students also participate in hands-on activities that encourage them to reflect on their relationship with water through artistic expression, word challenges, games, and more. As an added feature, MWDOC's education mascot, Ricky the Rambunctious Raindrop, will make an appearance as a puppet cast member to remind students to protect and preserve our most valuable natural resource.



Through grade-specific classroom sessions, Orange County Department of Education's Inside the Outdoors offers students in grades 3-5 valuable instruction on the importance of a reliable source of drinking water to every community. Through thoughtful discussions and interactive activities, students explore personal choices to protect our local water resources, identify the key role water plays in California's history, and examine existing water management solutions to develop ways to protect our water supply. Participating students and their families also receive resources including trivia games, outdoor activities, and science and art projects that encourage students to continue the conversation outside of the classroom.

### **Middle School and High School Programs**

The MWDOC Middle School Program and High School Program are also presented by Orange County Department of Education's Inside the Outdoors and consist of interactive classroom sessions for students in grades 6-12. Through participation, students collect and analyze data to identify sources of human impact on the quality, quantity, and availability of water in their communities. These engaging programs include hands-on activities that guide students to investigate challenges faced by local water providers to provide a reliable supply of water to residents and businesses. Students also have the opportunity to participate in field study and volunteer days of service to receive credit toward their required service hours.

Involving students in the decision to protect our water resources helps answer the question "Why should this matter to me?" at a critical age. The MWDOC K-12 Choice School Programs ensure that students are aware of key environmental issues that may impact our future, and be engaged and knowledgeable enough to find solutions. Through participation, students are equipped with the necessary skills to become the next generation of good water stewards prepared for active citizenship as well as academic and career success.

If you are interested in learning more about the MWDOC K-12 Choice School Programs, please visit [www.mwdoc.com/schoolprograms](http://www.mwdoc.com/schoolprograms) or send us an email at [mwdoceducation@mwdoc.com](mailto:mwdoceducation@mwdoc.com)!