

CASE STUDY: OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Program Name: Project WATER (Water Awareness Through Education and Research)

Agency Name: East Bay Municipal Utility District

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Number of Customers:

Program provided free to 465 schools in 23 school districts, 24 day care and after-school programs, which used more than 65,000 published materials in year 2000. A total of 38,260 published materials were sold at cost to 10 water agencies in 2000. Since Project WATER was created in 1974, more than 1.5 million student workbooks have been used free in schools served by EBMUD. Sales to other water agencies and schools have totaled more than 2 million workbooks and teacher's guides over the same period.

Program Description:

Project WATER classroom materials teach students about water and demonstrate how to achieve wise use of this essential resource through practical changes in attitude and behavior. The materials are evaluated and revised periodically to assure up-to-date information and educational value. The program's goals are based in provisions of the California Education Code, which requires instruction in environmental education and encouragement of students to act responsibly toward their environment. In addition to curriculum materials, some of which are available in Spanish, for grades K-10, the program includes live interactive theatre tours by the National Theatre for Children, hands-on teacher workshops, information materials about EBMUD's water and wastewater systems for grades K-12, video programs, and field trip and service-learning opportunities on EBMUD's watershed lands.

Program Beginning:

Project WATER began in 1974 with development of the *Captain Hydro Official Water Conservation Workbook* and Teacher's Guide.

Target Audience:

K-12 classroom teachers, environmental educators and after-school programs. The Project WATER program reaches upwards of 90,000 youngsters per year.

Program Cost and Funding:

EBMUD budgets \$174,000 (exclusive of salaries) for Project WATER. Prices for outside agency purchase of classroom materials are:

Teacher Guides	\$2.00 each (more than 150: \$1.75 each)
Student Workbooks	.50 each (more than 5,000: .43 each)
Posters	.70 each (more than 1,000: .50)

Staff Time: None. Project WATER curriculum materials contain all the information a teacher requires to use them, including California frameworks references in the teacher guides. No training of teachers is required to use any Project WATER materials.

Program Objective/Driving Force:

Project WATER was developed to help instill a “water conscience” in future generations. The goals are:

- To develop an appreciation of water’s life-sustaining role in humanity’s survival and an awareness of the limits of water supplies
- To acquire knowledge of water, its physical properties and its uses in our environment
- To identify the problems related to water and its use
- To select solutions, after examining the alternatives, which take into consideration both immediate and long-term effects
- To demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills in functional water problem-solving

Program Type:

Project water curriculum materials are off-the-shelf. Some materials are specific to EBMUD’s water and wastewater systems and are not usually purchased by other agencies.

What Works Best:

The Project WATER curriculum materials and the live-interactive theatre assemblies by the National Theatre for Children (Minneapolis, MN)

What Would Change:

Over 30 years, many lessons were learned and incorporated. At this point, there is nothing we would change.

Evaluation of Effectiveness:

First, the materials are only provided to schools on request of the teachers, who must order them from EBMUD. Between 60,000 and 85,000 curriculum materials are ordered annually, and more than 150,000 annually in drought years. In focus groups conducted every few years, teachers tell us overwhelmingly that the materials are educationally sound, fun for the students and convenient to use. They commend us for the depth of subject treatment and the sequential development of lessons.