

## **Fact Sheet**

### **Landscape Irrigation Water Efficiency Requirements for Schools**

California is in a fourth straight year of drought, representing an unprecedented water shortage. Governor Brown called upon all Californians to reduce urban water use by 25 percent. It is clear that we must change the way we as a state approach outdoor landscaping.

#### *All Building Types Need to Conserve:*

- Water-efficient landscaping requirements were recently enacted for hospitals, and commercial and residential construction.
- The Division of the State Architect (DSA) proposed emergency regulations for schools that will apply to all new construction and building additions of more than 1,000 square feet.
- The regulations were approved at the July 21, 2015 Building Standards Commission meeting, for an anticipated October 1, 2015 effective date.

#### *The Changes Benefit School Districts:*

- Funding programs may be available through local water districts.
- School districts will achieve cost savings over time by reducing the amount of water used.
- The regulations will help school districts meet requirements of their local water districts and the Governor's Executive Order.
- School districts can set the example for water conservation among their students and communities.
- Making these changes conserves a valuable resource in our state's time of need, benefitting all Californians.

#### *Requirements Balance Maintenance of School Landscapes with Water Conservation:*

- The regulations allow a higher level of water use for school landscape areas than that permitted for commercial and residential landscape areas.
- Landscape areas dedicated to specific educational or recreational purposes, such as vegetable gardens and playing fields, and areas using recycled water, are allowed additional water to maintain their functionality.

#### *DSA Proposal Provides Flexibility:*

- DSA engaged stakeholders throughout the process and incorporated feedback provided, including the elimination of landscape rehabilitation requirements for school modernization projects.

- Although all new campuses and all new or rehabilitated landscaping must comply with the requirements, schools have district-wide options to perform required landscape irrigation work on a different campus, if desired.
- School districts can receive credit toward landscape requirements associated with future construction projects if they choose to complete a stand-alone landscape project now.
- No additional landscape rehabilitation is required for projects constructing a new building on a previously landscaped area, since the project already reduces water consumption.

*The Regulations Offer a Streamlined Process:*

- DSA's review fee for these requirements will be fixed at \$500, and we will work with districts to ensure project schedules are not adversely affected.
- Schools can demonstrate compliance with the self-certification of a design professional at the beginning and end of a project.
- Landscaping requirements will not preclude DSA certification of construction projects.
- If all landscape areas on a construction campus already comply with the irrigation requirements, the school district is not obligated to bring other district landscape areas into compliance.
- DSA will publish information and resources to provide technical assistance for school districts.

*Schools Can Conserve Water in Additional Ways:*

- Refer to DSA's recent [water conservation infographic](#).
- Be familiar with outside resources such as [www.SaveOurWater.com](http://www.SaveOurWater.com) and the California Department of Education's [Drought Response Best Practices and Resources](#).
- In the near future, DSA will develop an online forum for school districts to collaborate and share innovative ideas and best practices for conservation.