



News Release

Orange County Department of Education • County of Orange



OCDE contact
Nichole Pichardo
npichardo@ocde.us
714-966-4065

OCWR contact
Francine Bangert
francine.bangert@ocwr.ocgov.com
714-834-4174

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2021

New recycling education program launches in OC classrooms *County of Orange, OCDE partner on curricular initiative supporting sustainability*

COSTA MESA, Calif. — As part of a multifaceted outreach program to educate students, residents and organizations about recycling best practices, OC Waste & Recycling (OCWR), in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education's (OCDE) Inside the Outdoors environmental education program, is launching a new curricular initiative aimed at challenging local learners to adopt sustainable behaviors.

Under the "[Eco Challenge](#)" umbrella, the program will provide local educators with educational materials that support classroom lessons, student engagement and family activities connected to Orange County's waste diversion efforts. Nearly 20 local schools have participated in a pilot program to sample and give feedback on the new curriculum, with dozens more expected to implement the program in the upcoming 2021-22 school year.

"The county is proud to provide educators with the valuable tools to engage students about waste diversion while supporting state mandated teaching requirements," said Supervisor Andrew Do, Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors. "Together, we're inspiring students to play an active role in preserving our local resources for a safe and healthy community for future generations."

Aimed at building environmental literacy, the program seeks to support local communities in achieving the organic waste diversion goals set forth under [Senate Bill 1383](#). Approved by the governor in 2016, the law changed the way California manages organic waste and required a 75 percent reduction in the statewide disposal of organic waste by Jan. 1, 2025 based on 2014 levels.

"While waste diversion goals can be reached through activities such as edible food rescue, composting and recycling of organic waste, the partnership between OCWR and OCDE intends to educate the county's youngest consumers, creating a lasting impact for the future and increasing engagement in these practices," said Lori Kiesser, education and partnership coordinator for Inside the Outdoors.

The program also enables OCDE to better support local districts with the implementation of science and history academic frameworks, including California’s Environmental Principles and Concepts, or EP&Cs. The EP&Cs, which highlight the relationship between human and natural systems, are required to be taught in the classroom and must be focused on local environmental priorities.

“The partnership with OCDE’s Inside the Outdoors program is key to the county’s next generation of waste diversion education and programs in response to state standards and more recent economic impacts within the recycling industry,” said Tom Koutroulis, director, OC Waste & Recycling. “OCWR and OCDE are uniquely positioned to provide teachers, students and families with resources that support academic frameworks to ensure accessibility for all communities in Orange County.”

For additional information on Eco Challenge and how local educators can implement the curriculum in their classrooms, please contact Inside the Outdoors at insidetheoutdoors@ocde.us.

About OC Waste & Recycling

OCWR serves the County’s solid waste disposal needs by providing waste management services through a municipal landfill system and resource recovery facilities, protecting the local environment, investing in renewable energy enterprises and promoting recycling in order to ensure a safe and healthy community for current and future generations. The department manages one of the nation’s premier solid waste disposal systems, serving residents and businesses in the County’s 34 cities and unincorporated areas. OCWR’s three active landfills reflect environmental engineering at its best. Learn more by visiting the oclandfills.com or follow @ocwaste on social media.

About Inside the Outdoors

OCDE’s Inside the Outdoors has been a leader in hands-on science and social science programs since 1974. The mission of the program is to empower students, teachers, parents and the community to explore natural areas and expand their knowledge, understanding and stewardship of the environment. To learn more about Inside the Outdoors, visit the [ITO website](#).

#