**Support for the Olivehurst Education Program**

**Context:**

* **Dec 2017:** the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Proposition 1 IRWM Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) contract was signed with the Yuba Water Agency as the fiscal agent
  + Contract covered all or parts of 6 counties
  + Each county was allocated funds to support locally designed projects
* Yuba IRMW collaboration identified OPUD Education Program as the desired recipient
* **June 2018-June 2019:** initial program design in direct collaboration with Olivehurst 4th grade teachers
  + 4th grade was chosen because this is when the Water Cycle is taught
* **Summer of 2019:** the Olivehurst team presented the work plan to principals and teachers
* **June 2019:** YWA took over funding as DACI funding included program design and preliminary implementation but not a full school year
  + Team finalized design and delivered materials
* **Fall of 2019:** the two pilot schools began use of materials specifically designed to be compliant with multiple standards for the school year 2019-2020
* **Semester 1 of 2019:** we were able to implement pre-salmon run assembly (Sammy the salmon), salmon run field visit, post-salmon run integration, in class experiment boxes delivered, teacher support, pre and post experiment box science journaling lesson by a Graphic Facilitator at all four schools, as well as ongoing design and development for semester 2
* Development and review of program to help students showcase their work
* **March 2020**: Covid-19 interrupts the program
* Previous workplan immediately shifts to supporting teachers with distance learning including virtual experiment box, virtual read-alongs, and extensive teacher support both for the developed materials and for the challenges associated with distance learning
  + We have been working through ongoing responses to semester 2 educational scenarios (distance, hybrid or in class)
* **June-August 2020**: continued support and refinement on experiment box, read-alongs, distance learning strategies, and teacher support
* **Semester 1 of 2020-2021:** delivery of materials, teacher support, strategies and responses to evolving educational models (distance, hybrid, or in class)

**Rational:**

* The state has already funded “in person” experiment boxes that will be available when schools go back go in person, so the agency should take advantage of this and build off of their work
* The agency has funded virtual experiment boxes that can be used now and into the future
* This curriculum can be systematically exported to schools across the YWA impact area
  + Up to 23 schools
  + The agency becomes a durable supporter at minimal cost
* The developed model is unique, and the ongoing teacher support that made this pilot so successful is extraordinarily inexpensive given the impact of it being available
  + The program has implementation actions that support long range goal that are not theoretical but practical in application
* 80% of students in Yuba County are failing science
* The last time the school district updated science books was 2001
* Continuing this program will show that the YWA is serious about equity work
  + These issues disproportionately effect black and brown students
* The community has had some struggles and needs this program, especially during this difficult time
* The Community Economic Development project identifies education as a key component to long term development and expansion of Yuba County
  + this program offers a curriculum solution that will help build the Yuba County they want
  + If YWA wants Yuba County to attract new long term residents, the school system needs to be strong and pulling funding does not support this
  + YWA needs to invest in all aspects of Yuba County
* This is not just an education program, but is a community advancement piece that works directly with other YWA programs to help advance Yuba County as a whole and complete community

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**Moving forward:**

The Yuba Water Agency has invested $124,000 in the Olivehurst Education program. These funds have helped build up an essentially nonexistent science program, exposed young students to the world of conservation, and helped teachers through a turbulent time in education.

The Agency now has the opportunity to engage the community in a meaningful way. Principals and teachers across the district are looking to the Agency to further the success of this program through the next couple of years. Failure to complete the program will reinforce a chronic problem facing schools, especially those in disadvantaged areas. Failure to continue this program will show the teachers that they do not have the support they need and show the students that their education is not important. We cannot perpetuate these ideas.

The YWA now has to decide how to move forward. By cutting this program in its entirety the invest made is lost. The Agency’s reputation will be tarnished, and the community will be hurt.

If this program is allowed to continue on, the benefits will grow exponentially.