

Recycle Planning and Implementation

Student Research and Planning

In order to put together a successful recycling program at your school, you'll need to do a little digging to find out what, when, and how to get started. Contact your school's trash collector, or a local recycling collection service to find out what types of recycling collection programs are available in your area. If there is no collection service, find out where the nearest drop-off center is.

Find the answers to these questions:

- What items can be recycled in your area?
- What is the charge for collection and is there a contractor that offers a package deal that includes both waste and recyclables pickup?
- What price will the contractor pay for the items?
- How will the recyclables need to be separated?
- Does the contractor provide collection containers?
- What is the pickup schedule?

Planning

Now that you've done your research, it's time to put your plan together. Decide what items would be best to recycle. Paper is a good place to start because it is easy to recycle and collecting it can make a huge difference to your school's trash output. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), approximately 35% of the municipal solid waste stream is made up of paper and paperboard products. Other items that can and should be recycled include aluminum, glass, plastics, newspaper, steel, and magazines. Food waste can be composted.

Your plan should also include the number of recycling bins your school will need and where they should be located. Ideally, collection bins should be placed close to where the recyclables are generated and/or next to each trash can. That way, it's just as easy to recycle an item as it is to throw it away.

Finally, you need to figure out whether or not you will need to raise money to purchase collection bins, create signs, and initiate the recycling program... Now put all of your research and planning together into a proposal that you can present to your school administrators.

Presenting to those who will approve the plan



It's time to present your plan to your school's principal and/or school board. If they are hesitant, or reluctant, point out all of the ways this program will benefit your school. These benefits being cost savings, improved school spirit, philanthropy, and the like.

Implement the Program

If you want your recycling program to be successful, you need to make sure that everyone in the school participates. Make sure that collection bins are placed in a convenient location and that they are appropriately labeled. Hold training sessions to teach not only how to recycle but why it is important, including the impact they are making on their shared community and shared future.

Advertise the Program

Advertise with signs that are placed throughout the school and near all recycling bins and trash cans. Write an article for your school newspaper and send one to your local newspaper as well. Create a social media presence and attempt to make recycling a social norm at your school. Continue the buzz by regularly describing the impact. For example, you can tell how many trees were saved in a year or how much the soil in the school garden was enriched by compost.

Additional Projects

In addition to a recycle program, these ideas also have an impact on the environment by reducing, recycling, or reusing. All three Rs together make the biggest difference for the environment. Reducing consumption or not buying are better for the environment than recycling.

Recycling Drives

A one-time or occasional drive eliminates the need for long-term storage and requires shorter-term volunteer commitment. Decide what items to collect and where you will collect them. To hold a drive, you must publicize it thoroughly and well in advance, asking families and students to save their recyclables for several weeks and to bring them to the school during a specific time. Recycling drives can be used to collect clothing, printer cartridges, computers, cell phones, electronics, and more!

Hold a Swap Meet

Instead of tossing your old books, sports equipment, and art supplies, host a swap meet where students can drop off stuff they don't want or need and pick up stuff they do. Leftover materials can be donated to a needy organization such as a library, a homeless shelter, or a hospital.

Organize a Yard Sale

Students, teachers, and other school staff can donate items they no longer want to a school yard sale. Staff the yard sale with volunteers and use the proceeds to fund the school's recycling program or any other green project.

