

Establishing a school recycling program

Gain administrative support.

This can be accomplished by demonstrating how a waste reduction and recycling program can save the school money, increase student and staff morale, and save natural resources (see flyer in Appendix 3). Administrative support is critical to the success of the recycling program, which will succeed best when the administration implements school-wide waste reduction and recycling policies. The administration must lead by example and stay committed and involved with students and staff for their waste reduction efforts.



**Recycling Team at Paint Lick Elementary School
Garrard County**

Choose a recycling coordinator for the school.

The recycling coordinator is a critical role in the success of a recycling program. The coordinator should be someone who has a strong interest in recycling and is willing to take on a leadership role in the program.

Here is a checklist for the recycling coordinator:

- Develop a school recycling committee, consisting of students, custodians, administration and staff.
- Invite other staff members to participate in the school recycling committee.
- Develop a recycling plan for your school with the help of your recycling committee.
- Coordinate recycling pickup with the solid waste coordinator for your community.
- Select recycling bins for your school and print labels stating what can be recycled. Place the labels on or near the recycling bins (see Appendix 4).
- Meet with staff members, custodians and cafeteria managers to ensure every one knows what is expected in the recycling program.

- Inform PTA and other organizations about the recycling program.
- Present information about the recycling program to site-based council members.
- Include information in new hire training packets.
- Conduct a baseline waste audit for the school.
- The results of the waste audit should be shared with the entire school, including parents.
- Make sure trash cans and recycling bins are located next to each other in classrooms and common areas.
- Collaborate with other school recycling coordinators in your district to gather new ideas, solve problems, and identify program strengths and weaknesses.
- Arrange for recycling at afterschool events.
- Maintain flexibility and problem solving skills during the course of the recycling program.
- Plan locker cleanout days in the spring before school is out for the summer to collect recyclable items and to encourage students to reuse notebooks.

Special Instructions

Before implementing a recycling program, inform students, teachers and staff of specific items that are to be recycled (see Appendices 4 and 5). Also inform everyone of special instructions for materials, such as rinsing steel cans, emptying bottles and aluminum cans, removing lids from plastic bottles, etc.

Implementation

- Conduct a baseline waste audit
- Purchase or designate recycling bins for classrooms, hallways, office areas, workrooms, cafeteria, library, sporting event locations, etc. Recycling bin options may include: sturdy plastic totes, cardboard boxes, rolling carts, office paper boxes, etc.
- Create signs to attach to each recycling bin and use consistent signage throughout the school.
- Create posters to place near each recycling bin to remind everyone what can be recycled.
- Consult the custodial staff to find out if the recycling materials should be bagged or not. If the school is transporting materials to the recycling center or drop-off station in the community, materials should be placed in bags to be taken to the drop-off location on a routine basis.
- Enlist the aid of custodial staff to assist students in moving the recyclable materials from classrooms to the designated location on agreed-upon days of the week. If the school is using a recycling dumpster for the materials, then materials should be placed directly in the recycling dumpster. Materials can be placed in a cart or bags to be taken to the recycling dumpster.
- All classroom recycling bins must be placed back in their classrooms after the recycling has been emptied.

Program evaluation

A school will need to do an annual waste audit to show growth in its recycling program and to identify areas for improvement. (Refer to page 11 for instructions on how to complete a waste audit). The results of each annual waste audit should be compared to the baseline waste audit results. This will help determine strengths and weaknesses in the school's program. These results should be posted and discussed with students, staff and parents.



**Student Led Waste Audit at Lincoln County Middle School
Standford, Ky**