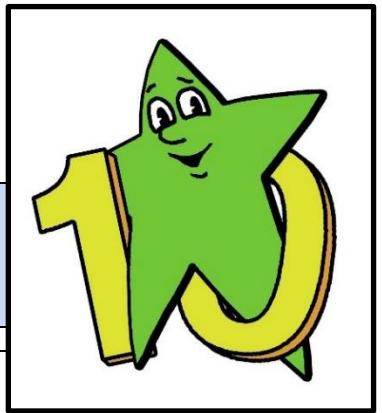


Reducing Junk Mail

eco-cycle

Snapshot

By stopping unwanted mail, schools and families can save resources, reduce waste, and support a healthier environment.



<https://bit.ly/eco-cycle-zero-waste-schools-guide>

Objective: Stop as much unwanted mail as possible.

Age Group: 5th-12th grade, adults (school staff and families)

Setting: School office, staff lounge, homes

Project Duration: Ongoing

Materials:

- unwanted pieces of mail
- internet access
- empty box for collecting mail

Why This Project Matters:

Junk mail is not only excessive and overwhelming at times, but it also comes at a huge cost to the environment. Hundreds of billions of pieces of physical mail are distributed annually in the U.S. Hundreds of millions of trees are cut and processed to create this mail, much of which will end up in the trash and not recycled. This waste affects our climate as well - the production and disposal of junk mail consumes an enormous amount of energy (and produces air and water pollution!).

Project Summary:

With a small time commitment, it is possible to reduce the amount of unwanted mail that a school and/or family receives. Working with a mail-reduction company or contacting senders directly will drastically reduce the amount of unwanted mail in the delivery system, while conserving natural resources and energy.



Implementation:

1. Begin by collecting unwanted mail in a central location. Place a box labeled *JUNK MAIL* in a common area of the school building, such as a staff lounge, where staff members may deposit any unwanted mail.
2. Choose a method for eliminating the junk mail that staff are receiving. Work with a mail-reduction company (such as Catalog Choice) or call the companies sending the junk mail directly and ask for removal from their mailing lists. Both methods may be employed by an environmental club or parent volunteers.



3. If choosing to work with a mail-reduction company, research the options and choose one based on your school's needs and means. Register for service with the company and supply junk mail sender names and addresses from the pieces collected.
4. If choosing to call junk mail senders directly, call each sender and ask to be removed from their mailing list. It may be a few weeks before all mail from a sender stops.
5. As new pieces arrive from new senders not yet submitted to the mail-reduction company, access the account and add their names. Keep a list of senders called directly, so that you do not need to repeat those calls. Different names for the same person may have to be submitted separately.

Assessment:

Unwanted mail will be noticeably reduced after this project.

Related Activities:

Paper Reduction Campaign – Chapter 6

Extensions:

- Consider involving families by hosting a contest between classes or grade levels. Ask families to sign up for an account with the chosen mail-reduction company or to call junk mail senders directly. Ask them to opt out of at least one or more unwanted mailings. The class or grade with the highest percentage of family participation wins the contest.
- Create a mail-stopping service as a fundraiser. For a small donation, families could send their collected junk mail to a student group and let them register the addresses with a mail-reduction company on behalf of the families.

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