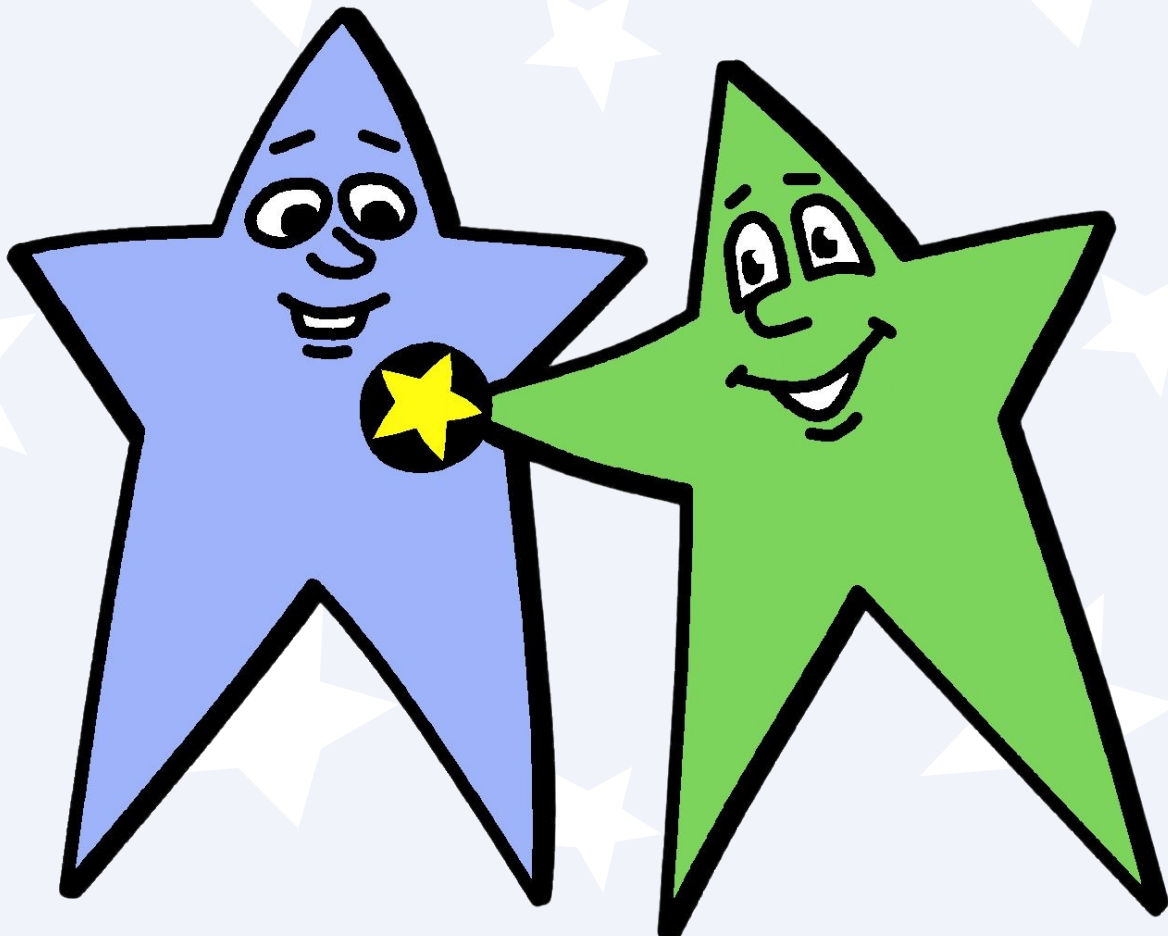


# MOTIVATORS & REWARDS



# Reinforcing Collection Programs Over Time

eco-cycle

## Snapshot

Compost collections, recycling collections, and other school waste-reduction programs will be successful when regular training and education are provided.

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

**Objective:** Students and staff will be able to accurately sort waste items into the school's recycling, composting, and trash bins. Students and staff will fully participate in sorting their waste for maximum diversion.

**Age Group:** K-12<sup>th</sup>

**Setting:** School building

**Project Duration:** Ongoing

### Materials:

- Dependent on activity

## Why This Project Matters:

On average, each North American produces 4-5 pounds of waste per day. Much of this waste has the potential to be recycled or composted if the opportunities exist locally. The environmental benefits of recycling and composting include: less waste being sent to landfills, natural habitat preservation, reduced air and water pollution, healthier soil, reduced fossil fuel consumption, and an increase in available jobs (compared to manufacturing new products from virgin materials and landfilling).

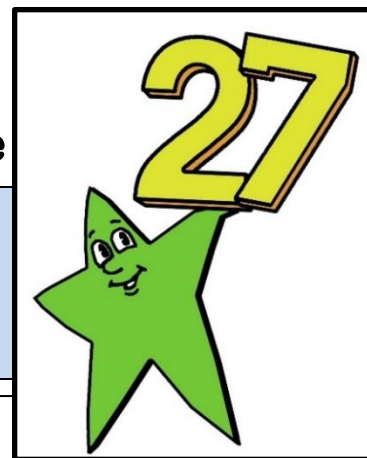
## Project Summary:

Over time, recycling, composting, and waste-reduction habits can lose priority in the busy lives of students and staff. A successful school Zero Waste program must include continuous education, training, and fun, engaging special projects.

## Implementation:

The following is a list of activities that can help reinforce and reinvigorate an existing Zero Waste program.

- Create and schedule 15-45-minute in-class “refresher” presentations. If possible, provide them to all classrooms in elementary schools and all science (or other subject) classes in secondary schools. During the presentation, demonstrate the use of the school's waste-collection containers by sorting samples of waste items to reinforce *how* to recycle and compost properly. Make sure to also explain *why* the program helps the environment.
- Enlist an art teacher, parent with artistic skills, or a graphic designer to create coloring sheets for primary-grade students. Design the images to illustrate how to sort waste for recycling and/or composting.
- For upper elementary and middle-level students, create word searches or crossword puzzles that integrate recycling and composting concepts. An internet search will provide websites with free puzzle-making tools.



- During lunchtime in the cafeteria, help students sort their lunch waste by having specially-trained students or adults volunteer to be waste goalies at the waste station(s) (to monitor sorting and answer questions).
- Make copies of a school map and instruct students to mark the locations of recycling and/or composting bins. Students can then submit this “scavenger hunt” to be entered into a prize drawing.
- Organize waste-sort relay races. Teams of students can compete as grade-levels or classrooms. The relay-sort race can feature lunch trays with typical lunchroom materials (utensils, imitation food, napkins, milk cartons) or a cloth bag full of items that need to be sorted as recyclable, compostable, or trash. Teams that make the fewest mistakes and complete the relay in the shortest amount of time may win a prize or other reward.
- Whenever possible, have a presence at after-school events like Back-to-School Night. Set up and staff a table with information for students and families about the Zero Waste efforts at the school. Create fun interactive displays, such as: games that require participants to match recyclable items to the natural resources from which they are made (paper to trees, plastic to oil, etc.); an example of a home-packed waste-free lunch versus a wasteful lunch; a container of finished compost for participants to see, smell, and touch; a vermicomposting worm bin to examine; other simple waste-sorting activities such as a “fishing pond” full of waste items and mechanical grabbers to sort items into the proper containers.
- Meet with the school’s student council or environmental club to create a waste-reduction campaign. Students may choose to focus on many issues such as: increasing participation in their school’s recycling and/or composting collections, reducing the use of disposable plastic in the cafeteria, helping to save the world’s rainforests through improving paper and aluminum recycling, or other environmental ideas. Assist with the fact-finding research on their chosen topic to create skits, signage, announcements, videos and/or contests that will draw attention to the issue and provide action ideas.

### Extensions:

- Have a student group monitor classroom waste containers and leave each class a friendly report card indicating what was recycled or composted properly, and what was found in the trash that should not have been there. Ask the classroom teacher to share the results with the class. Repeat monthly and publicly acknowledge each class that achieves fewer than five mistakes per audit.





- Many other activities in this guide can also be used to reinforce an existing composting, recycling, or other waste-reduction program. Consider the following:
  - Waste-Free Lunch, Part 1:  
Classroom Challenge – Chapter 2
  - Waste-Free Lunch, Part 2:  
School Contest – Chapter 2
  - Waste-Free Lunch, Part 3:  
Durables in the Cafeteria – Chapter 2
  - Paper Reduction Campaign – Chapter 6
  - Locker Leftovers/Classroom Cleanout – Chapter 9
  - Zero Waste School Parties and Events – Chapter 11
  - Repurposing in the Classroom – Chapter 12
  - Purchasing Policy, Part 1:  
Classroom Policy – Chapter 17
  - Reporting Progress – Chapter 28
  - Student Sponsor Group Celebration – Chapter 29
  - Conducting a Waste Audit – Chapter 30
  - Compost Delivery – Chapter 32
  - Five and Ten-Year Celebrations – Chapter 33



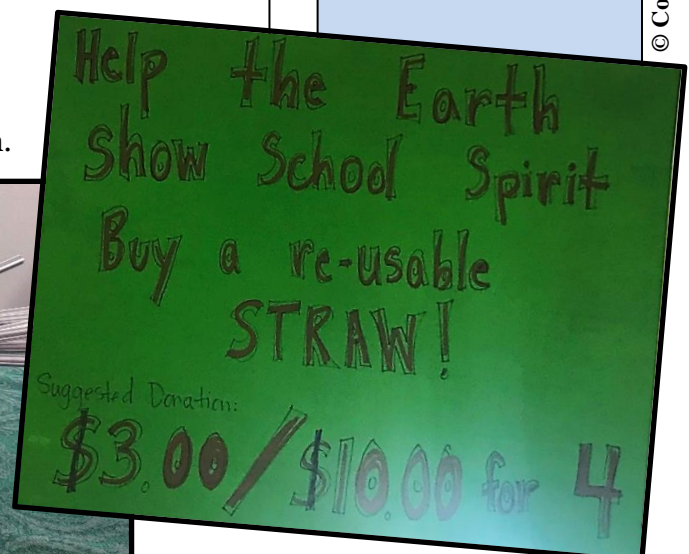
### Assessment:

After completing the chosen reinforcement activities, quiz students in the cafeteria or classroom with pertinent questions to assess their knowledge gain. For example:

- Name one item that can be recycled at school.
- Name one item that can be composted at school.
- Where does food waste belong when you're done with it?
- Name one way our school is helping the environment.
- How does recycling help the earth?
- How does composting help the earth?
- What natural resource are you saving when you recycle an aluminum can?

### Related Activities:

See final bullet of the Implementation section.



# Reporting Progress

eco-cycle

## Snapshot

This assessment is a quick and effective way to determine how successful a newly implemented recycling or composting collection program is and where improvement is needed.



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

**Objective:** The analyzed results will show a significant decrease in trash production and a significant increase in the collection of recyclables and/or compostables.

**Age Group:** K-12<sup>th</sup> grade and adults

**Setting:** School dumpsters and classroom (or other meeting area in the school building)

### Project Duration:

- Data collection: 2-4 weeks
- Feedback to community: 45-90 minutes

### Materials:

- Paper and pen for recording trash, recycling, and/or compost levels
- Spreadsheet software and printer, or chart paper and markers

## Why This Project Matters:

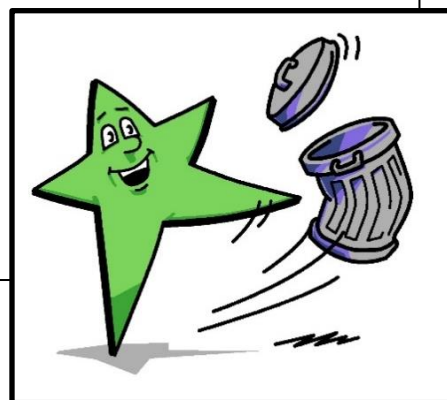
Recycling and composting collection programs can significantly reduce the amount of trash a school or community sends to the landfill. Schools in the US have reached 20-60% diversion rates by making recycling and/or composting easy and accessible.

### Project Summary:

Tracking the success of a new recycling or composting collection system requires that waste levels be recorded before and after the program has been launched. The efficacy of the program's operational and educational components is determined by calculating the degree of change in trash, recycling, and/or compost volumes. Sharing the data with the school community encourages continued participation and improvement on their diversion efforts.

### Implementation:

1. Record waste levels in the school's dumpster(s) for two to four weeks prior to the new compost and/or recycling collection program's launch. (See sample data recording form below.) For accurate volumes, record the levels just prior to each pickup date and time. Students in a class or sponsor group may assist with the monitoring of the dumpster(s), but the same designated adult should accompany them each time for consistency of results. Calculate the weekly average to determine a baseline.
2. Once the collection program is well established, repeat step 1 to obtain accurate data on how volumes have changed with the program's implementation.
3. If the composting happens onsite and the compostables do not end up in a dumpster, arrange to collect volume data using the internal compost collection bin(s) before they are emptied.



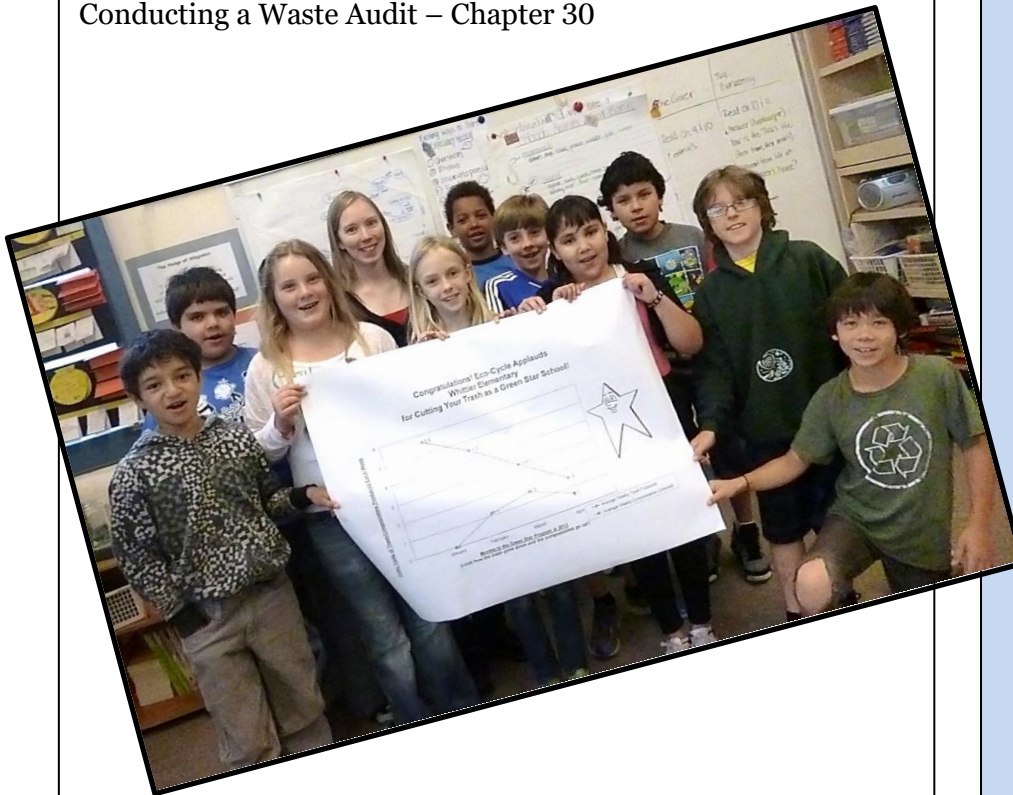
4. Create a chart showing the changes in trash, recycling, and/or composting volume levels over time. Ideally, the trash levels will drop, and the recycling/composting levels will rise. Print or draw the chart in poster-size and display prominently for students, staff, and families to see. Include the chart in the school newsletter and social media. (See sample chart below.)
5. Continue to monitor the school's trash volume until it appears to be permanently reduced. Contact the school's trash hauler to request a smaller-sized trash dumpster and/or reduce the number of pickups per week. The money saved on trash service can fund the hauling of the recycling and/or compost.

### Assessment:

The activity itself is an assessment of the new collection system(s).

### Related Activities:

Schoolwide Recycling Collection – Chapter 18  
 Backyard Composting at School – Chapter 24  
 Schoolwide Compost Collection – Chapter 25  
 Conducting a Waste Audit – Chapter 30



### Extensions:

- Review the following with the student group, finding ways to share the information with the school community.
  - Discuss which parts of the program were successful and which parts could be improved upon next semester or school year.
  - Discuss how to reduce contamination by further educating the school community about proper sorting of recyclables and compostables.
  - Share information on the benefits of the collection program to the environment.
  - Utilize posters, announcements, waste station signage, skits, songs, and/or video commercials to spread the word.

### Sample Data Form:

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Data collected by: \_\_\_\_\_

Audit conducted during the weeks of: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Trash is picked up at my school on the following days of the week:** (circle all that apply)  
Monday   Tuesday   Wednesday   Thursday   Friday   Saturday   Sunday
- **Recycling is picked up on the following days of the week:** (circle all that apply)  
Monday   Tuesday   Wednesday   Thursday   Friday   Saturday   Sunday
- **Compost is picked up on the following days of the week:** (circle all that apply)  
Monday   Tuesday   Wednesday   Thursday   Friday   Saturday   Sunday

Please record the material collected and the size of each dumpster. *Just prior to each time the dumpsters are emptied*, record the date and how full each dumpster is in the table below. Estimate the fullness level and record one of the following: *EMPTY*,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , or *FULL*.

***For accuracy, information must be recorded just prior to each collection by the hauler.***

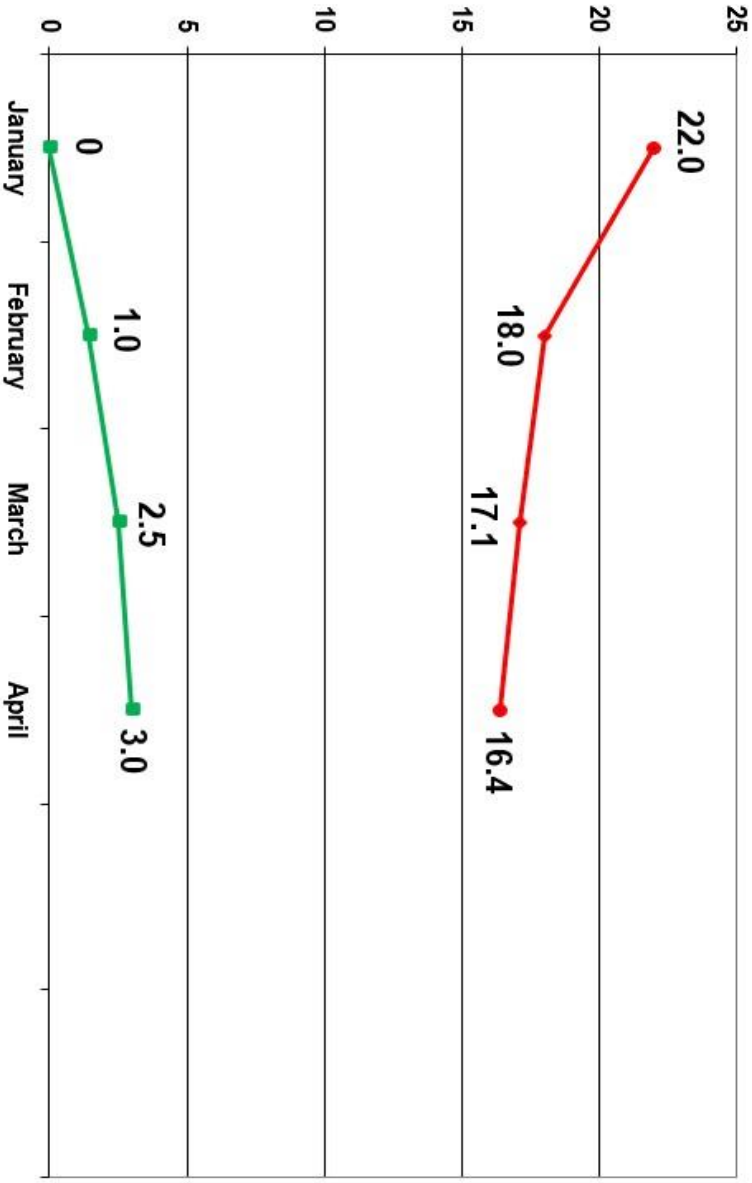
[illegible]



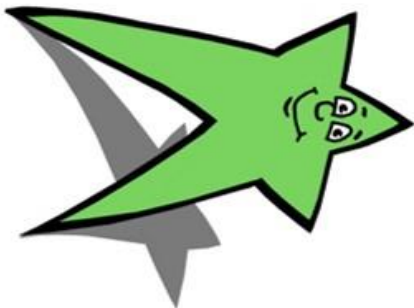
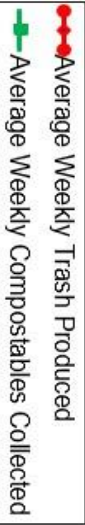
Sample Dumpster Volume Chart

Congratulations on cutting your trash by 25%!

Cubic Yards of **Trash**/**Compostables** Produced Each Week



Months in the Waste Reduction Program



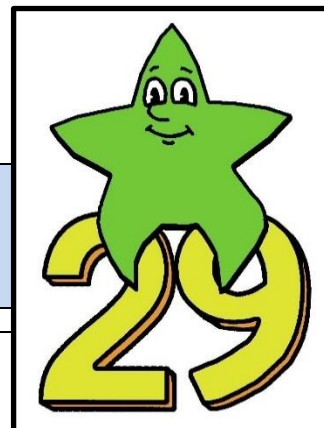


# Student Sponsor Group Celebration

eco-cycle

## Snapshot

Recognize and reward the effort students have put into their school's waste-reduction program.



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

**Objective:** Students will understand that the work they are doing to bring Zero Waste practices into their school is important, appreciated, and worth recognition.

**Age Group:** K- 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Setting:** Classroom or other meeting area in school building

**Project Duration:** 30-45 minutes

### Materials:

- Waste diversion data collected for the school year (see Reporting Progress, Chapter 28)
- Chart paper and markers
- Homemade cookies or other waste-free treats (check school allergy protocols)

## Why This Project Matters:

Zero Waste programs, like recycling and composting collection, can lead to a major reduction in school trash. By recognizing students' efforts in a fun, celebratory way, they are often motivated to help with future Zero Waste projects and to get other students involved.

## Project Summary:

This short celebration serves as a review and wrap-up activity for the student group helping to implement a semester or school year of Zero Waste efforts. It is intended to reward the students and to advertise the program's success.

## Implementation:

Conduct this celebration after facilitating the Reporting Progress activity in Chapter 28. Students can work on drawing or coloring the charts as part of the celebration. (A final waste audit before the celebration is an alternative way for students to assess the status of the program.)

- Bring cookies or another treat to share with the student group that helped to promote and implement the program. If possible, aim for no packaging (homemade) or packaging that is recyclable or compostable.
- Facilitate a discussion with the students about their experience with promoting the program. Ask which parts they think worked well, and which parts were not as easy or successful. Create a list of ideas for improvements during the upcoming semester or school year.



### Assessment:

Students' level of comprehension and ownership of the project will be evident during the discussion about what did and didn't work well from their perspective.

### Related Activities:

Schoolwide Recycling Collection – Chapter 18

Backyard Composting at School – Chapter 24

Schoolwide Compost Collection – Chapter 25

Reporting Progress – Chapter 28

Conducting a Waste Audit – Chapter 30



### Extensions:

- Ask the school administration to sign certificates for each student to recognize their contribution to the program.
- Ask that students be acknowledged in front of the entire school community, such as at an assembly, on social media, or in the school newsletter.
- Share the group's improvement ideas for the upcoming semester or school year with the school community through announcements, social media, and/or the school newsletter.
- Create a suggestion box to allow other students in the school to contribute their ideas.

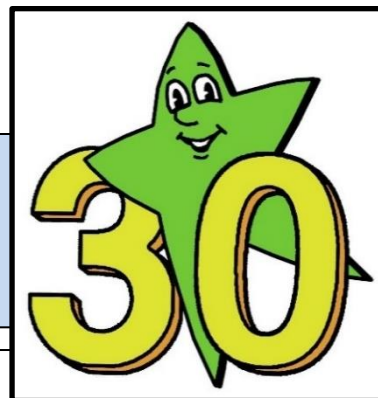


# Conducting a Waste Audit

eco-cycle

## Snapshot

A waste audit to investigate discarded items in the trash, recycling, and/or compost bins around your school will reveal items that are consistently sorted correctly or incorrectly.



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

**Objective:** Students will determine which items in the school waste stream need specific attention when educating the school community about the proper sorting of their waste

**Age Group:** 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Setting:** Cafeteria

### Project Duration:

- 30-50 minutes for each audit conducted
- Follow-up time varies

### Materials:

- 3-6 large tarps
- Disposable gloves (1 pair/participant)
- Newspapers
- Category signs
- Sorting guidelines /examples of items
- Cleaning supplies
- Record sheets
- Clipboards and pencils
- Additional adults for assistance

## Why This Project Matters:

Collection programs for recycling and composting can only be effective if items are sorted correctly. A load of recyclable or compostable items that contains too many contaminants may be rejected by the sorting facility and sent to the landfill. In addition, when large amounts of recyclable or compostable items are being placed in trash receptacles, waste-reduction programs lose much of their impact and value.

## Project Summary:

A waste audit is a tool for determining how well the collection system is going and where more education might be needed. Before a school begins a collection program, a student group may conduct a waste audit to determine a baseline from which to plan next steps. Another waste audit after the recycling or composting collection is implemented, and then again annually, will help determine participation and contamination levels. All receptacles (trash, recycling, and compost) should be audited.

## Implementation:

*Baseline waste audit (to be conducted before launching recycling or compost collections):*

1. Ask custodians to gather 4 large bags of trash, each from a different area of the school: cafeteria, kitchen, hallways, classrooms (collection of several classrooms).
2. Cover the floor or 3-4 large tables with tarps.
3. Place a layer of newspapers on top of each tarp.
4. Arrange a set of category signs (to create a sorting station) for each area where a team of student sorters will work (see sample signs). Each team will sort the waste from a different part of the school.





5. Assign student teams to each station/waste stream category. (Cafeteria and classroom waste is diverse enough that having two teams sorting each type is best.) Supply a pair of disposable gloves to each participant, instructing them not to remove the gloves until you announce that the audit and clean-up are finished.
6. If your school composts restroom waste, this will not be sorted. Remind students, however, that restroom waste should only contain paper towels and facial tissue, no plastic, metal, or glass items. Next, demonstrate the audit procedure by sorting a few handfuls from a bag into piles next to the proper category signs at one station. Hand out guidelines for your school's program and/or show real examples of items. Demonstrate how to use the data sheet to record data (see sample data recording sheet).
7. Assign one student to record the sort results for each team.
8. Have students begin sorting while receiving supervision and assistance from adults. Go over results when done.
9. During clean-up, have students place items into the correct bins (soiled newspaper goes in compost), wipe down tarps and tables, and dispose of gloves in the trash.
10. Ask students to share their findings and anything significant they noticed. Discuss what messages to emphasize when the new collection program begins.

*Follow-up waste audit (to be conducted 3-6 months after the baseline audit, then annually to assess participation and contamination levels):*

11. Follow the same steps as above, this time making sure to sample the trash, recycling and/or compost bins.
12. After students review their data, discuss a plan to educate the school community about their findings.

### **Assessment:**

Document any changes in the sorting accuracy of the school community over time by comparing audit results.

### **Related Activities:**

Schoolwide Recycling Collection – Chapter 18  
 Backyard Composting at School – Chapter 24  
 Schoolwide Compost Collection – Chapter 25  
 Reinforcing Collection Programs Over Time – Chapter 27  
 Reporting Progress – Chapter 28

### **Extensions:**

- To educate the school community and improve sorting accuracy, create a campaign using multiple tools to inform them about which materials belong in each bin. Ask the student group to spread the word using skits, videos, posters, announcements, classroom prize incentives, waste-station monitoring in the lunchroom, etc.





Sample Category Signs

Recyclables:

Cardboard/Paperboard

Recyclables:

Newspaper/Magazines

Recyclables:

Containers

Recyclables:

Classroom Paper

Compostables:

Food Waste

Compostables:

Non-recyclable Paper

Landfill:

Food Packaging

Landfill:

Other

## Sample Waste Audit Data Recording Sheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

- Location of waste source (circle one): **Classroom (#s\_\_\_\_\_)**   **Hallways**   **Cafeteria**   **Kitchen**
- Type of waste being sorted (circle one):        **Trash**                      **Recycling**                      **Compost**

**Please examine and sort the trash, recycling, or compost sample. In the table below, write down the materials that were found correctly or incorrectly sorted in each waste category.**

	Correct	Incorrect
<b>Recycling: Drink Containers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>milk/juice cartons, juice boxes</i></li> <li>• <i>steel containers</i></li> <li>• <i>aluminum cans</i></li> <li>• <i>aluminum foil &amp; trays</i></li> <li>• <i>#1-7 plastic bottles</i></li> <li>• <i>glass bottles/jars</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Recycling: Paper</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>cardboard</i></li> <li>• <i>paperboard</i></li> <li>• <i>newspaper</i></li> <li>• <i>magazines/book orders</i></li> <li>• <i>light &amp; white-colored:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>paper</i></li> <li>○ <i>sticky notes</i></li> <li>○ <i>envelopes</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<b>Compost:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>food waste</i></li> <li>• <i>paper towels, napkins, tissues</i></li> <li>• <i>non-recyclable paper:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>construction paper</i></li> <li>○ <i>dark/neon paper</i></li> <li>○ <i>brown envelopes</i></li> <li>○ <i>paper bags</i></li> <li>○ <i>small scraps</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<b>Trash:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>food packaging/wrappers</i></li> <li>• <i>gum/stickers</i></li> <li>• <i>plastic-coated paper products</i></li> <li>• <i>straws/plastic bags/wipes</i></li> <li>• <i>frozen food containers</i></li> <li>• <i>juice pouches</i></li> <li>• <i>recyclables with food in them</i></li> <li>• <i>disposable utensils, plates, cups</i></li> <li>• <i>other:</i></li> </ul>		

# Zero Waste Field Trips

eco-cycle

## Snapshot

Field trips are a fun, effective way to introduce students to the Zero Waste initiatives happening in their own community.



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

**Objective:** Students will learn how real-world composting, recycling, and other Zero Waste community programs function.

**Age Groups:** K-12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Setting:** Various community facilities

### Project Duration:

- Planning: 2-4 hours
- Field Trip: 4-5 hours

### Materials:

- Permission slips
- Class list
- First aid kit and student medications
- Worksheets (1 per student)
- Pencils (1 per student)
- Clipboards

## Why This Project Matters:

Because so many of the real-world Zero Waste processes happen unseen in our daily lives, a field trip offers participants the chance to witness authentic examples of recycling, composting, and/or other waste-reduction initiatives. Waste issues become real to students, potentially inspiring them to make positive changes in their recycling and composting habits, and in their interactions with packaging, containers, and other solid waste.

## Project Summary:

The field trips below give examples of the range of Zero Waste facilities available nationwide for touring. While the infrastructure of communities will vary, similar sites may exist in your area.

## Implementation:

1. Plan the field trip at least one month in advance to allow ample time for school district buses to be reserved and/or parent volunteers to be recruited for carpools.
2. Field trips are designed for one class at a time (approximately 30 students). A small group size allows more opportunities for students to see better, hear more, and ask questions. However, all these field trips may be adjusted to accommodate larger groups.
3. Research local facilities and companies that are contributing to the Zero Waste movement. These may include waste hauling companies, compost facilities, environmental/waste management divisions of local government, recycling centers, landfills, grocery stores, used-building-supply sites, local businesses practicing Zero Waste, and recycling factories. See below for suggested combinations of stops to create a cohesive field trip.



4. Contact sites of interest with potential tour dates and times. Inquire if the tour will have a guide or be self-guided.
5. Once a date and times are scheduled for each stop, arrange transportation (school bus, city bus, parent carpool, etc.).
6. Follow the school district's policies for field trips. Contact sites if liability waivers must be signed.
7. Recruit adult chaperones for the field trip (one adult per 5-6 students). Check to see if any of the facilities have requirements for adult-to-student ratios.
8. Before the field trip, conduct a lesson to build students' background knowledge on the places they will be visiting. See below for suggested topics to cover. At the end of the lesson, explain the field trip itinerary, appropriate dress for the day (based on weather and safety), lunchtime procedures, behavior expectations, and what to bring.
9. Thoroughly review safety procedures for each location.
10. Prepare a student worksheet for the field trip including several questions specific to each facility. A worksheet helps focus students' attention and can serve as an evaluation of their learning.

*Below are suggested field trip topics and sites to visit:*

(Two to three sites can usually be visited in 4-5 hours. This includes time for transportation, lunch, and bathroom breaks.)

Trip focus: dealing with waste wisely (K-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

- Background information:
  - the environmental benefits of recycling
  - the difference between *reuse* and *recycle*
  - items that can be recycled at home and at school
- Facilities to visit:
  - recycling drop-off center
  - materials recovery facility (MRF) for sorting of recyclables
  - local building materials reuse center (ex: Habitat for Humanity's ReStore) or another local reuse store
  - special recycling center (for specific materials such as metal, batteries, household chemicals, tires, or paint)

### **Extensions:**

- As a follow-up activity, have students write a thank you letter to each location including three or more things they learned at the site.
- Have high school students interview a local business owner on their waste-reduction practices.
- For a student group who supports their school's Zero Waste programs, provide this field trip at the beginning of the year to enhance their background knowledge for the work they will be doing all year long. Another option is to provide the trip at the end of the school year as a reward for their hard work.





Trip focus: waste alternatives and awareness (3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

- Background information:
  - general solid waste facts
  - how a landfill is designed and operates
  - items that can be recycled at home and school
  - how to “pre-cycle” (choose products in packages that can be reused or recycled, that are non-toxic, or that minimize packaging with bulk buying)
- Facilities to visit:
  - grocery store to conduct a scavenger hunt for less wasteful products (see sample worksheet below)
  - local landfill or solid waste transfer station
  - MRF or recycling drop-off center

Trip focus: community agriculture/composting (K-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

- Background information:
  - organic vs. conventional farming
  - how the composting process works
  - examples of compostables and non-compostables
- Facilities to visit:
  - community gardens (where compost is being used)
  - agricultural heritage center/farm museum to learn how earlier generations of farmers employed waste-free living
  - organic farm (that utilizes compost as fertilizer)
  - industrial or large-scale composting facility

Trip focus: Zero Waste practices by businesses (high school)

- Background information:
  - define the term Zero Waste
  - highlight companies around the community and around the state/country/world that implement Zero Waste and other environmentally friendly initiatives
- Facilities to visit:
  - three businesses that are implementing the above (select a variety of types)

### Assessment:

Review students’ worksheets from the field trip to assess their understanding.

### Related Activities:

Reinforcing Collection Programs Over Time – Chapter 27



## **Sample Scavenger Hunt to Teach Pre-Cycling Concepts**

Below is the answer key to a sample *Pre-Cycling Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt Worksheet*. It is identical to the scavenger hunt that students would follow, but it includes answers.

**Here are the procedures to follow for a setting up the activity:**

- Students are divided into small groups of 5 or less, each with an adult chaperone.
- Each student group is given one copy of the scavenger hunt along with a clipboard and pencils. Students take turns recording answers.
- Each chaperone is given one copy of the answer key to the scavenger hunt to check students' work for accuracy. *(Answers are in green.)*
- Students are reminded of expectations for appropriate behavior in a place of business and rules are established around picking items up from the shelves. (It is best to avoid touching items unless given permission by the adult chaperone. Items must be returned to their places on the shelves exactly as they were found.) Buying groceries or eating during the scavenger hunt is not allowed.
- Go over the seven principals of pre-cycling with the entire group. Establish a meeting place and time that the scavenger hunt will conclude. Communicate this to each group and their chaperone.
- Each group begins the scavenger hunt in a different area/aisle of the store to prevent overcrowding, avoiding areas where other student groups are gathered.

## **Pre-Cycling Grocery Store Scavenger Hunt Worksheet**

**Answer the questions below with your group. Discuss each purchasing choice.**

**Stay with your adult chaperone at all times.**

**Remember, pre-cycling means shopping with the earth in mind!**

**Pre-cycling** means buying products that are non-toxic, use fewer of the earth's natural resources, and create less trash or pollution. Here are some tips!

- Buy in bulk, or large quantities, to reduce packaging.
- Avoid products with extra layers of packaging.
- Look for containers you can reuse.
- Look for containers you can recycle.
- Look for packaging made of recycled materials.
- Avoid disposables. Buy things that last.
- Buy the least toxic (poisonous) product.



## **PRODUCE** (aisle/location in store)

- How can you use less packaging when buying fruits and vegetables?  
Reuse plastic bags, use cloth or mesh bags, and avoid using bags when possible.

## **BULK FOODS** (aisle/location in store)

- Find the bulk bins in the store where you can buy products like nuts, flour, beans, and rice. How would you package foods from these bins in a way that reduces waste?  
Cloth or mesh bags, bags from home, reusable containers
- How does using only one layer of packaging benefit the earth?  
Less trash in landfills, fewer natural resources used, less energy used to produce packages
- Could these packages be used again? Yes
- Name one thing you would like to buy from these bins.  
Answers will vary.



## **BAKING PRODUCTS** (aisle/location in store)

- Locate the flour. List the unit price per ounce of one brand that has different sizes  
(Find the price tag on the shelf and look for the smaller number in the bottom left corner of the tag).

Size	Unit Price Per Ounce
5-lb. bag of flour	
10-lb. bag of flour	

- Which size bag has the cheapest flour per ounce? The 10-lb. bag
- Which bag(s) uses less packaging if you need a total of 10 pounds of flour?  
One 10-lb. bag uses less packaging than two 5-lb. bags.

## **SOUP** (aisle/location in store)

- List two kinds of containers for packaging soup:  
Steel cans, paper cartons (aseptic), Styrofoam
- What natural resource do you think each container is made from?  
Steel = rocks/ore, paper = trees, Styrofoam = oil (petroleum)
- Which container can be recycled again and again? Steel cans



### CEREAL (aisle/location in store)

- List 3 brands of cereal packaged in recycled paperboard. (\*Hint: Look on box tops and bottoms.) Any brand marked “made from recycled materials.”
- Can these packages be recycled again when you’re done with them?  
Yes
- How do you know a package is made from recycled paper?  
It will have more than just the recycling symbol. It will say “recycled” in writing.



### PAPER PRODUCTS (aisle/location in store)

- Most of the paper items here were made from trees. Find the recycled paper products. (\*Hint: They will say “made from recycled paper” on the label.) List them below.  
Napkins, tissues, toilet paper, paper towels
- How can you tell if paper products have been recycled? Package will say so.
- What could you use instead of paper towels and paper napkins?  
Sponges, cloths, rags

### LUNCH CONTAINERS (aisle/location in store)

- Find three ways to pack a sandwich for lunch.  
Reusable containers, aluminum foil, plastic bags
- Which of these options could be reused hundreds of times?  
Reusable containers (Aluminum foil can be recycled.)



### DETERGENT (aisle/location in store)

- Name a brand of detergent that is packaged in a bottle made from at least 25% recycled plastic. Check the labels or bottles
- Now, find a dish soap that is eco-friendly.  
(\*Hint: Look for the word “biodegradable” on the label.)  
Answers may vary.
- Why do you think eco-friendly soap is better for the earth?  
It breaks down safely in the environment and doesn’t cause pollution.



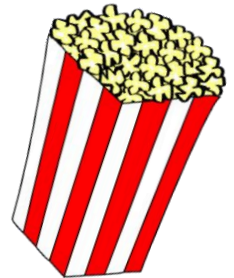


### SHAMPOO (aisle/location in store)

- How big (in fluid ounces) is the biggest bottle of shampoo you can find?  
39 ounces (Answers may vary.)
- What natural resource do you save when you buy one large plastic bottle instead of several small ones (buying in bulk)? Petroleum (oil)
- Should a plastic cap be recycled separately or attached to an empty bottle?  
It should be screwed on to the empty bottle. (Pump or spray tops are trash.)

### POPCORN (aisle/location in store)

- Which kind of popcorn package is the best pre-cycling choice?  
Plastic bottle with raw kernels (It is reusable AND recyclable.)
- Which popcorn packaging would make the most trash?  
Boxes of microwave popcorn (Each serving is individually wrapped.)



### JUICE (aisle/location in store)

- List six different kinds of juice drink containers. Put a star (\*) by the ones you can recycle. Circle the worst pre-cycling choice(s). (\*Hint: Some single-serving containers may not be in this aisle.)

glass bottle\*

aluminum can\*

plastic bottle\*

juice box\*

steel can\*

juice pouch

- What makes a drink container a good pre-cycling choice?  
It is reusable or recyclable.
- Is reusing a container better for the environment than recycling it? Yes

### DAIRY (aisle/location in store)

- Which milk containers can you recycle?  
Plastic jugs, paper cartons
- Name the natural resource each container is made from.  
Plastic = oil, paper = trees



## **CHECKOUT COUNTER**

- Name two things you can do to save natural resources when choosing the kind of shopping bag you use.

*Use reusable bags like cloth bags or don't use a bag at all.*



## **CHALLENGE**

**Discuss and write thoughtful answers to these questions.**

**What would you do to pre-cycle the next time you go to the store?**

---

**Why don't more people pre-cycle when they go to the store?**

---

**How would you show someone else how to pre-cycle?**

---

# Compost Delivery

eco-cycle

## Snapshot

For a school that has implemented a compost collection program, providing finished compost for staff and families to use (at home or school) serves as a useful reward and incentive to continue composting.



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

**Objective:** Students will understand how the food and paper waste they put into compost bins at their school turns into a valuable soil amendment.

**Age Group:** K-12<sup>th</sup> grade and adults

**Setting:** School parking lot or other vehicle-accessible outdoor space

**Project Duration:**  
2 days

### Materials:

- Finished compost (delivered)
- Shovels and hand trowels
- Sturdy plastic bags (used, if possible)
- Poster-making materials
- Informative flyers

## Why This Project Matters:

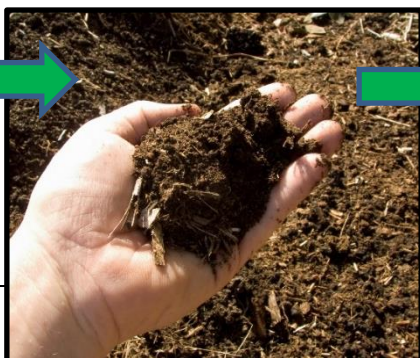
Finished compost is a valuable soil amendment that results in stronger, healthier plants without the use of synthetic chemical fertilizers. Using finished compost and raising awareness about its benefits is just as important for a healthy environment as keeping compostable items out of the landfill.

## Project Summary:

A delivery of finished compost to a school that has implemented a compost collection program has enormous benefits to the school community. The finished compost provides a direct link between the food scraps and non-recyclable paper collected at school and the resulting compost. Families and school staff will be able to take the compost home to use on their own yards and gardens. The school may also use it to amend school gardens and landscaping.

## Implementation:

1. Contact a local compost facility for prices of finished compost by volume and the cost of delivery.
2. Decide if the finished compost will be used for school grounds and gardens only, or if it will also be offered to families and staff. Order the adequate amount needed.
3. Coordinate delivery dates with school administration. (This project works best in the springtime.)
4. If the finished compost will be applied to school gardens, consider coordinating with student and parent groups to organize a community workday to assist with this project.



5. Coordinate with administration to determine the best location for the finished compost to be delivered. The site should be close to the school so that families will see and remember to come and pick up compost. The site should also be out of the way of all traffic (school buses, student drop-off, delivery trucks, and recycling/waste trucks).
6. Finalize the dates and arrange with the local compost company for delivery and pick up. (It is best if the compost comes in a large roll-off container.) With sufficient advertising to the school community, one or two full school days (including 30 minutes before the school day begins and 1-2 hours after the school day ends) of availability is usually adequate. Establish a pick-up of any remaining compost so the school is not charged for what is not used.
7. Encourage a student group to develop announcements and posters advertising the compost delivery event to the school community. Include reminders to bring shovels and containers (plastic bins, bags, etc.). Determine a quantity limit for each person.
8. Develop other communication pieces to invite families and staff to take finished compost for their own use (school newsletter, email, school website, social media, signage near the entrance and student pick-up/drop-off areas, etc.).
9. Organize volunteers to assist with the compost delivery event, especially during the high traffic times just before the school day begins and right after it ends. Adult volunteers will need to be prepared to answer general questions or pass out literature about compost application, ideas for where to acquire backyard compost bins, local resources for composting workshops (if available), and information about the school's compost collection system. A student group may also assist with shoveling and loading compost into vehicles. If there is a Master Gardener program in your area (often housed with County Extension Agents), they may be able to help. Many Master Gardeners maintain their "master" status by volunteering for community needs.

**Assessment:**

As students are loading finished compost into their family vehicle or watching it being applied to the school grounds, ask where it came from (help make the connections between their lunchroom apple cores and the dark brown finished compost).

**Related Activities:**

Schoolwide Compost Collection – Chapter 25

**Extensions:**

- Create a research project to identify the living decomposers that turn organic waste into finished compost.
- Study other factors necessary for decomposition (water, sunlight, oxygen).
- Have students illustrate the progress of food scraps decomposing into finished compost (the nutrient cycle) by creating and displaying posters using photos and/or drawings near the compost delivery site.

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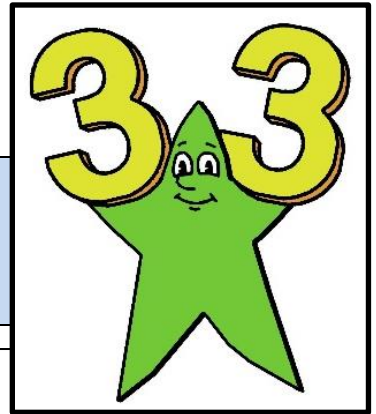




# Five and Ten-Year Celebrations

## Snapshot

After a school has been actively working toward Zero Waste for the milestones of five years or ten years, it's time for a week-long celebration!



**Objective:** Students and staff will be refamiliarized with their school's Zero Waste goals and how these actions help the earth. Everyone will have a renewed sense of the school's Zero Waste mission.

**Age Group:** K-12<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Setting:** School building and recess area

**Project Duration:** One week

### Materials:

- Projector, computer, and audio equipment
- Prizes that reduce waste (reusable or made with recycled content)
- Framed certificate with signatures of officials
- Recess activity supplies (for cloth napkin making or game show spinning wheel)

## Why This Project Matters:

After five years or ten years, a school that regularly employs Zero Waste methods has likely avoided thousands of pounds of trash and drastically reduced its ecological footprint. With landfills filling up and natural resources disappearing, this valiant waste-reduction effort makes a real difference for the environment and should be celebrated!

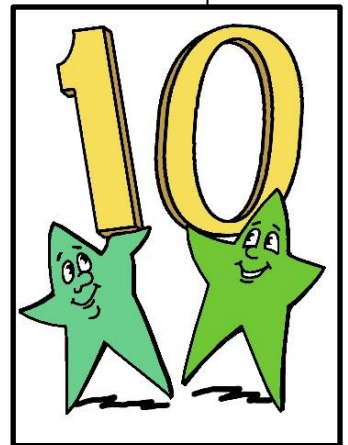
## Project Summary:

Once a school has been striving for Zero Waste for five or ten years, enthusiasm and practice may wane amid so many other obligations of school life. This celebration is designed to give the school recognition for its efforts and to reinvigorate participation in Zero Waste projects. The four-day celebration involves an all-school assembly on Day 1, and the reeducation of students and staff on Days 2-4 through classroom presentations and fun Zero Waste activities during recess and lunch.

## Implementation:

### Pre-event:

1. Approximately six months in advance, schedule an all-school assembly with the principal and provide them with an outline of the other celebration activities.
2. Prepare a presentation for the assembly (see Day 1 below). For the 10-year assembly, consider including an animal rehabilitator (such as a birds of prey specialist), an environmental musician, or other special guest. This will help students make connections between their Zero Waste actions and their wider impact on the community and/or wildlife habitat. Schedule the guest presenter as soon as possible.
3. Invite school district and community officials to participate (superintendent, district officials, county commissioners, city officials, etc.).

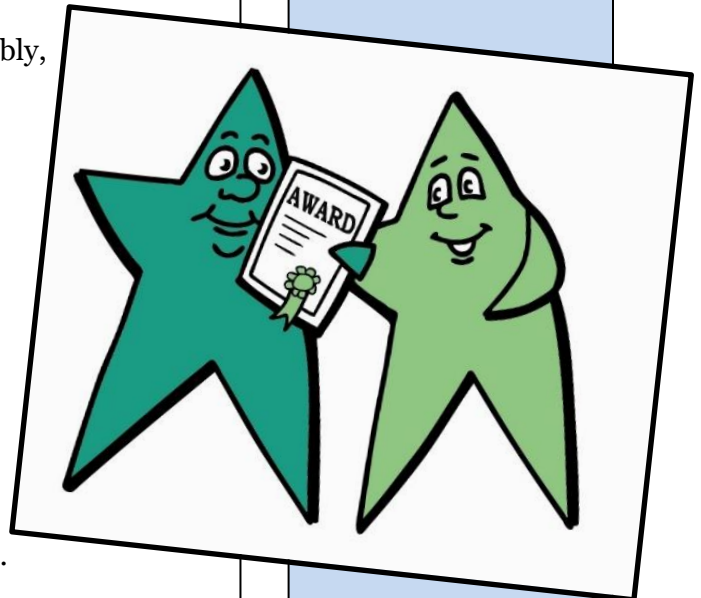


4. Prepare materials for the recess and lunchtime activities (see below for more details).
5. Organize materials for refresher presentations to be given to each class. The goal of these 25-to-30-minute presentations is to make sure every student knows what can be recycled and/or composted in the school, and to increase participation in other waste-reduction efforts being made by the school community (such as reusing one-sided paper, etc.). It is also an important opportunity for staff and students to ask their own “burning” questions.
6. One month before the assembly, confirm dates, times, and venue (gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria) with the principal, district officials, community officials, and any special presenter. Ask guests to arrive 15 minutes early. Make sure to ask about any AV or room set-up needs.
7. Print and frame a 5-year or 10-year award certificate for the school (see samples below).
8. Create a sign-up schedule for individual class refresher presentations to occur the few days following the all-school assembly. Send to the school office manager two weeks prior to the celebratory week, asking them to post and share with all teachers. Ask for the principal’s support in motivating teacher sign-up.
9. Acquire 5-7 reusable or recycled-content prizes to distribute during the all-school assembly.
10. Acquire a large quantity of small prizes (equivalent to the school population) to distribute to all classes on the last day of the celebration week (e.g., pencils made from recycled newspaper) (optional).
11. Create a list of Zero Waste questions to ask students during the assembly and lunch periods.
12. Write a letter to student families explaining the school’s accomplishments and the celebration activities. Ask the office manager to distribute it.
13. Coordinate with the custodian regarding assembly Set up (AV equipment, podium, chairs for officials, stage needs for special guest, etc.) and provide an agenda.
14. Coordinate with office and/or custodian about where to set up the recess activity stations near the playground, requesting the use of 2-4 tables.
15. Gather all items needed for the assembly (presentation, props, framed certificate, prizes, etc.).
16. Create announcements to be read over the PA system during the assembly week.



*Day 1: all-school assembly:*

1. Set up the stage area, A.V. system, and computer equipment one hour before the assembly.
2. Prepare the 5-year or 10-year certificate in its frame (see samples below). When district and/or community officials arrive, ask them to sign it.
3. Assist special presenter with setting up (if applicable).
4. Once all students and staff are assembled in the meeting space, have the principal introduce the celebration organizer/assembly MC.
5. General outline to be covered by the celebration organizer/assembly MC:
  - a. Congratulate the school community and review what it means to be part of the school's Zero Waste program and projects.
  - b. Recognize the principal, teachers, custodians, kitchen staff, and students for their different roles in supporting the program.
  - c. Ask the dignitaries (district/community officials) to each speak for 2-3 minutes.
  - d. Present the school's award certificate to the principal.
  - e. For the 5-year assembly, present a slideshow about the specifics of the school's Zero Waste projects. Describe the positive difference the program makes for the community and the environment. For the 10-year assembly, have the special guest present their program.
  - f. Wrap up the assembly by asking 5-7 composting, recycling, and/or waste-reduction questions of the students, handing out prizes for correct answers.
  - g. Remind teachers to sign up for class refresher presentations and where to find the sign-up sheet.
  - h. Review the rest of the celebration week's activities.
6. Collect the class refresher sign-up sheet (or have it emailed to you) once completed.





*Days 2-4: reinforcement activities:*

1. Recess activities:
  - 5-year celebration - Facilitate a cloth napkin-making activity (for K-6<sup>th</sup> grade students) during recesses for two days to allow all students to participate. (See Making Cloth Napkins, Chapter 13.)
  - 10-year celebration - Facilitate a game show activity featuring a spinning wheel with images of waste items attached (can, chip bag, etc.). Students spin the wheel and are then asked a Zero Waste question about the item they landed on. If they get two out of three questions correct, they may enter a prize drawing for movie tickets, school t-shirts, recognition by the principal, etc.
2. Present individual class refresher presentations for teachers at the times registered on the sign-up sheet.
3. During lunch, have adult or student group volunteers pop-quiz students with recycling, reusing, and composting questions. These volunteers can also help monitor the waste station.
4. Have a student group or adult give PA system announcements with motivational messages throughout the celebration week.
5. Consider other activities such as waste-sorting relays, a “Wear Green” day, etc. (See Reinforcing Collection Programs Over Time, Chapter 27 for ideas.)

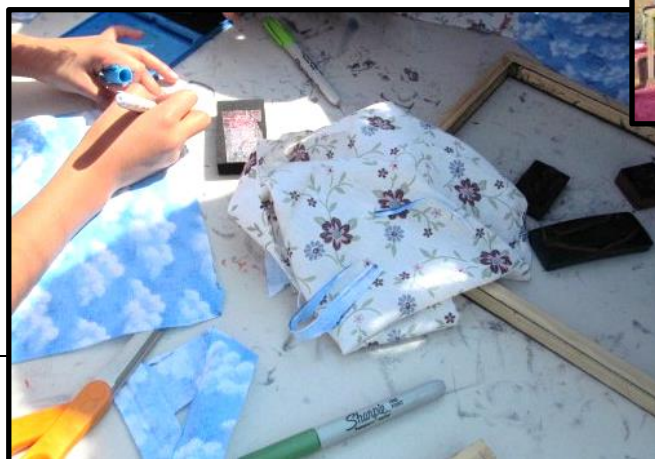
**Assessment:**

Asking students questions about their school’s Zero Waste program and about how Zero Waste practices help the environment will serve as the project’s assessment.

**Related Activities:**

Making Cloth Napkins – Chapter 13

Reinforcing Collection Programs Over Time – Chapter 27





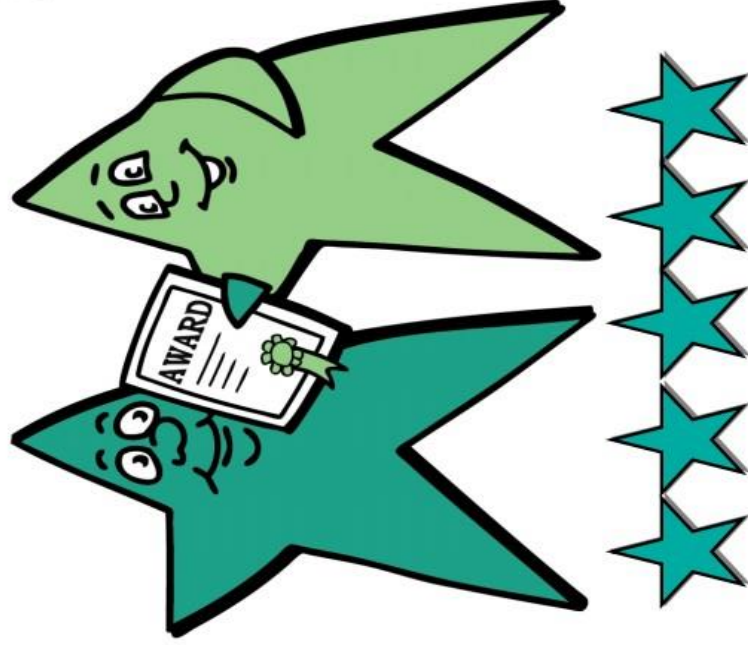
# CONGRATULATIONS

for completing

# 5 Years

as a

# Zero Waste School



Awarder's Signature

Other Signature

Other Signature

# CONGRATULATIONS

for completing

## 10 Years

as a

## Zero Waste School



Awarder's Signature

Other Signature

Other Signature

# Celebrating Earth Day



eco-cycle

## Snapshot

Every year, Earth Day is celebrated on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. An Earth Day Celebration can be used to kick off or add momentum to your school's Zero Waste efforts.

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

**Objective:** Students will celebrate Earth Day as a way of honoring their efforts to protect the environment.

**Age Groups:** K-12<sup>th</sup> and adults

**Setting:** Classroom, School building

**Project Duration:**  
Vary by activity

**Materials:**  
Vary by activity



## Why This Project Matters:

Earth Day was first celebrated in the United States on April 22, 1970 by 20 million people. Today, it is estimated that more than one billion people around the world celebrate Earth Day. According to the Earth Day Network, it is the “largest civic observance in the world”. Earth Day is a chance to focus on making positive actions for the environment. Through celebration, children may be inspired to learn more and make changes in their own lives.

## Project Summary:

An Earth Day celebration can be used as an opportunity to bring Zero Waste practices to a classroom, school building and/or school community. It can be the public starting point to kick-off a special event or to implement a long-term project. It can also be used as a culminating event for projects such as a Waste-Free Lunch Contest or a special recycling drive. The entire week surrounding Earth Day, known as Earth Week, and the entire month of April, known as Earth Month, extend the celebration and allow for more opportunities to engage in new actions.

## Implementation:

1. Choose a Zero Waste project you would like to implement in conjunction with Earth Day. See project ideas below.
2. Decide if a formal kick-off or wrap-up event will be needed for the chosen Zero Waste project. If so, determine if it will be in the form of a school assembly, class party, PA announcement, display case, festival, etc. Consider if any data from project results or progress will need to be collected and reported.
3. Gather materials needed for the project and the kick-off/wrap-up event. Secure a space and time for the event(s), if necessary.

4. Create promotional materials such as posters, announcements, skits, and videos for the class or school community. Emphasize the connection to Earth Day.
5. If it is not possible to implement a large project, Earth Day can still be celebrated with simple activities like singing “Happy Earth Day” (to the tune of “Happy Birthday to You”) or enjoying a healthy snack of fruits and vegetables at an Earth Day party. The main goal is to get students thinking about ways they can show appreciation for the environment.
6. When planning Earth Day activities, tie them to science, health, or social studies curriculum. Help students and the school community understand that saving the environment is good for the health of people AND the planet.

#### Extensions:

- Write letters to local businesses or public officials about why it is important to take care of the Earth. Thank them for any new actions they have taken to help preserve our planet’s biodiversity and natural systems.

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*Recommended activities in this Zero Waste Schools Guide to implement and celebrate Earth Day:*

Eco-Wise School Supplies – Chapter 1  
 Waste-Free Lunch – Chapter 2  
 Refillable Water Bottle Project – Chapter 3  
 “One or None” Paper Towel Campaign – Chapter 5  
 Paper Reduction Campaign – Chapter 6  
 Getting Artsy with Reuse – Chapter 8  
 Reducing Junk Mail – Chapter 10  
 Repurposing in the Classroom – Chapter 12  
 Making Cloth Napkins – Chapter 13  
 Green Cleaning: Non-Toxic Schools – Chapter 15  
 Lessening Litter – Chapter 16  
 Purchasing Policy – Chapter 17  
 Schoolwide Recycling Collection – Chapter 18  
 Special Materials for Recycling – Chapter 19  
 Creative Crayon Recycling – Chapter 20  
 Making Recycled Paper – Chapter 21  
 Compost Collection – Chapters 23-25  
 Conducting a Waste Audit – Chapter 30  
 Zero Waste Field Trips – Chapter 31  
 Compost Delivery – Chapter 32

#### Assessment:

On Earth Day, students will be able to state at least one action they can implement to take care of the Earth.





# Special Considerations for High Schools

## Snapshot

Starting a schoolwide recycling and/or composting program at a high school is an important and effective step toward Zero Waste that requires special considerations.



**Objective:** Students and staff will have the tools to properly sort their waste at school. They will understand the multiple ways that recycling and/or composting helps the environment and the importance of reuse as an additional Zero Waste tool.

**Age Groups:** 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Setting:** School building

**Project Duration:** Ongoing

### Materials:

- Examples of recyclable, compostable, and trash items found at school
- Collection bins for recycling and/or composting (5-8-gallon for classrooms, larger for other areas)
- Signage/labels for bins
- Poster-making materials

## Why This Project Matters:

As students progress from elementary school to middle school to high school, it is important to have continuous access to waste-reduction options. High school systems are much more complex than those at the elementary and middle school levels. Larger buildings, open campuses, diverse schedules, and larger student populations must all be considered when designing a successful waste diversion system at the high school level.

## Project Summary:

To design a successful program at the high school level, a school must choose a reliable waste hauler, acquire and label recycling and/or compost bins, determine the appropriate locations of the bins, and facilitate an efficient maintenance system. Regular training of students and staff is essential. Regular reporting of waste diversion rates will motivate and encourage greater participation. The concept and practice of reuse is another vital tool in working toward Zero Waste at the high school level.

## Implementation:

### Getting started:

See Schoolwide Recycling Collection, Chapter 18, and Schoolwide Compost Collection, Chapter 25, for detailed instructions on launching a recycling and/or compost collection system.

### Specific things to consider at the high school level:

- Great care must be taken when determining the location for recycling and/or compost bins in a high school building. While recycling bins may be universal, compost bins may need to be limited to locations where food waste and non-recyclable paper are generated the most. Custodial needs and buy-in must be part of any plan. First, consider the type of waste generated in each space.
  - Academic classrooms – Place recycling and/or compost bins in classrooms only if students are permitted to have food and drinks while in class.

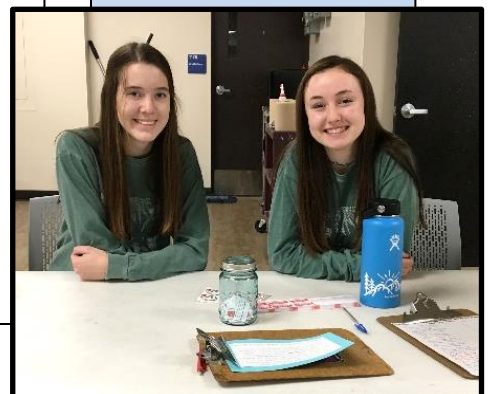


- Art rooms – These classrooms tend to generate compostable papers (paper towels, construction and other art paper) and recyclable papers, making them good locations for both compost and recycling bins.
  - Food prep classrooms – If food is being unwrapped, cooked, and prepared, the generated compostable and recyclable items can be diverted from trash.
  - Science classrooms – These often feature lab areas that would benefit from having a compost bin since they tend to produce large quantities of paper towels.
  - Lunch areas – If students are permitted to eat lunch in spaces other than the cafeteria, consider placing recycling and/or compost bins in these locations, in addition to placing them in the cafeteria. Outside eating areas should also be considered.
  - Restrooms – If paper towel dispensers are installed, a compost bin will be useful in diverting waste. Make sure trash bins are also available to avoid contaminating the compost.
- After determining where recycle and/or compost bins will be effective, collaborate with the head custodian to determine the best collection process. Compost bins with food waste must be emptied daily to avoid pest issues.
  - While ‘dump’ buckets are utilized in elementary and middle school cafeterias to empty liquid from drink containers before recycling, high school cafeterias often have multiple waste stations and ‘dump’ buckets may not be practical. In educational messaging, stress the importance of emptying all liquids before recycling.
  - While it is often effective and practical for elementary and middle school teachers and students to empty classroom recycling, this is not true at the high school level where teachers often share classrooms and are not responsible for any one space. Since students move between classrooms frequently throughout the day, imposing on instruction time for students to transfer waste is often discouraged. Eco-Clubs, special-needs classes, or other student groups work well in this role, utilizing non-instruction time and decreasing any burden placed on custodial staff.
  - Clear signage at all grade levels is crucial. Take care in placing posters on the wall above or near the waste stations. When waste bins are rearranged, which is common in high schools, the signs may no longer correspond to the containers they are near. Misalignment of signs and bins may cause an increase in contamination. Large signage on the bins themselves solves this issue.

### **Extensions:**

Expand educational reach by working with various departments, clubs, and subgroups that represent different segments of the school community.

- Sponsor school-wide campaigns or contests that promote reuse of reusable water bottles, lunch containers, unwanted school supplies, etc. (“Choose to Reuse!” campaigns).
- (Continued next page.)



### *Training and implementation:*

See Schoolwide Recycling Collection, Chapter 18, and Schoolwide Compost Collection, Chapter 25, for ideas on educating the entire school community, including working with student groups.

### *Specific things to consider at the high school level:*

- Posters with three-dimensional examples are helpful when educating elementary and middle school students, but they are often less effective and have less longevity in high schools. Instead, consider using signage with photos and realistic images of waste items.
- Utilize peer-messaging opportunities to foster buy-in from the student population including student-produced social media posts, videos, signage, and logos.
- Assemblies are not an effective educational tool for most larger high schools. Consider other avenues such as short presentations in homeroom classes or advisory periods to both launch and retrain in the program.
- Work with school administration to determine the most effective way to deliver information to all students. If presenting in classrooms, choose a subject that all students are required to take every year, such as language arts, social studies, or science.
- Recruit student volunteers to support their peers in sorting waste properly in the cafeteria. Since high school students have variable schedules that sometimes include off periods, some might be available to volunteer during lunch. Various high school clubs require service hours to maintain membership, so this role could provide opportunities for earning those hours.
- High schools with open campus policies, where students may leave campus and return throughout the day based on their schedules, often have increased waste from outside sources (fast food wrappers, cups, etc.). Work with a student group to conduct a waste audit. Determine which of these outside items are the most common and incorporate them into educational messaging.
- While elementary and middle schools may use durable food service ware when striving for Zero Waste, this is not always practical at the high school level. When durables are being used at high schools, coordinate with food service staff, custodial staff, and school administration to determine successful mechanisms for students to return durables to the kitchen.

### **Extensions:** (continued)

- Work with business classes to promote and design business models which support reuse and/or a circular economy.
- Collaborate with engineering classes to design or redesign products that increase recyclability or reuse.
- Sponsor special art projects utilizing reused or recycled materials for art classes.
- Work with the athletic, art, music, theater, science, or social studies departments on ways to promote Zero Waste messaging to the entire school.

(Continued next page.)





- Utilize screens and monitors in common areas throughout the school to display signage, short videos, and messaging. Librarians will often support this method of education.

#### *Maintaining the program:*

See Schoolwide Recycling Collection, Chapter 18, and Schoolwide Compost Collection, Chapter 25, for detailed information on maintaining interest and engagement in the program while also increasing volumes and lowering contamination of the materials collected over time.

#### *Specific things to consider at the high school level:*

- Collaborate with administration to determine the most effective mechanism for annual education, especially for incoming freshman. Some schools utilize their Freshman Seminar program. In-person, live-virtual, or pre-recorded presentations given annually can educate each incoming class. Follow-up activities and prize drawings may be used to encourage participation and assess knowledge.
- Continue to support teachers that want to involve their students in the program by providing presentations, field trips, and special projects such as creating announcements, videos, contests, and volunteer opportunities.
- Collaborate with clubs to support Zero Waste during their after-school activities. For example: serve a Zero Waste meal to theater students during rehearsals using reusable or compostable food service ware. Ensure students have access to recycling and/or compost bins during the event.
- Set up a table with literature and recycling/compost/reuse examples in the cafeteria. During lunchtime, engage and educate students as they pass by.
- Continue to check in with custodial staff to develop ongoing best practices specific to their campus.

#### **Assessment:**

Work with custodians, haulers, and a student group to track volumes of recycled, composted, and landfilled material. Ask students and staff about how they interface with the program.

#### **Related Activities:**

Locker Leftovers/Classroom Cleanout – Chapter 9  
 Schoolwide Recycling Collection – Chapter 18  
 Schoolwide Compost Collection – Chapter 25  
 Conducting a Waste Audit – Chapter 30

#### **Extensions:** (continued)

- Coordinate with booster clubs to purchase items that are recyclable or compostable for school sporting events.
- Support Zero Waste events such as homecoming and prom where the decorations and refreshments create no waste.
- Recruit student clubs like National Honor Society to act as “waste goalies” to help with proper waste sorting in the cafeteria or for sports and other school events. Volunteer hours can be applied to their service hours.

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