

Starting a School Recycling Program



1. Building a “Green Team”

The Green Team is responsible for coordinating all aspects of your school’s recycling and waste reduction program. The following is a list of tips for starting and maintaining an effective Green Team.

1. Select an enthusiastic and organized staff member to be the team leader.

Your team should consist of a school administrator, teachers, the head custodian, students from every grade level, parents, PTA representative and the food service company.

2. Clearly define roles and responsibilities of the Green Team members.

The team is responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of the school’s recycling program.

3. Schedule regular meetings to discuss necessary tasks and progress.

It is important to communicate your plan of action and on-going program results to your school and district administrators in order to gain and maintain their support.

4. Determine who needs to attend the meetings by setting an agenda.

Some representatives, such as food service, only need to be present when discussing food preparation elements.



2. Identifying Recyclables

Before you begin your waste assessment, refer to the checklist to determine what types of materials can be recycled in Buffalo and to make note of which materials are generated at your school.



CAN BE RECYCLED:

PAPER

- White & Colored Paper
- Copy/Fax Paper
- White & Manila Envelopes
- Newspapers
- Cardboard
- Magazines & Catalogs
- File Folders
- Glossy Paper
- Paperboard
- Phone Books
- Pizza Boxes (no food)

CONTAINERS

Must be rinsed or empty

- Plastic Drink Bottles (#s 1-7)
- Milk and Juice Cartons (check with hauler)
- Aluminum Cans
- Steel & Tin Cans
- Glass Bottles & Jars
- Disposable Aluminum Containers

CAN NOT BE RECYCLED:

- CHIP BAGS or PLASTIC FOOD WRAP
- STYROFOAM
- PLASTIC PLATES OR UTENSILS
- WOOD

3. Waste Assessment

A helpful tool for this step is the School Recycling Survey prepared by the Buffalo Recycling Alliance, included in this kit.

1. Determine what waste is generated at your school.

It is important to know what type of waste is produced, how much of each type of waste is produced, and the source of such waste.

For example: How many plastic bottles do students and teachers use? Are there a lot of bottles in garbage cans?

2. Document the types of waste that are generated in each area of the school. Classrooms, administrative offices, hallways, the library, sports fields, and the cafeteria are all going to have different types of waste.

Assessments should be performed periodically as part of an ongoing evaluation of the success of the recycling program. This is called “tracking” and is explained in greater detail in step 8.

3. Make a list of existing waste containers. This will help determine how many of what type of containers are needed for recycling.

This will be useful for step 5: Bin Procurement and Placement.



4. Recyclables Hauling Services

Currently, each Buffalo public school makes its own arrangements for recycling. It would probably be more efficient, more comprehensive, and cheaper if the District made a single contract for recycling and waste disposal at all the schools. In the meantime, you should make sure that your school has a contract or contracts that includes all recyclable materials (not just paper and cardboard). Or you may be able to access free recycling from the City of Buffalo for some or all of your recyclables. Some of the larger contractors are listed below:

Cascades Recovery

(716) 681-1560
3241 Walden Avenue
Depew, NY 14053

Republic Services of Buffalo, Allied Waste Division

(716) 614-3333
2321 Kenmore Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14207

Modern

(716) 754-8226
4746 Model City Rd. Model City, NY
14107

Waste Management

(716) 674-5195
100 Ransier Drive
West Seneca, NY 14224



Other materials to be recycled including hazardous and electronic waste, should be disposed of properly (see resources section at back).

5. Bins, Decals & Signage

Your waste assessment will provide you with the information you need to develop a collection plan that will include types, quantities and locations of the waste containers. For easy identification, it is recommended that you color-code your waste bins.

Recycling Bin Selection and Placement

1. Once you have chosen an option for your school's recycling program, consider repurposing existing equipment or even making your own containers. If your school needs additional waste containers, use the resource page for more information.
2. Place waste and recycling bins next to each other to reduce contamination. The following are recommendations for your consideration.



Decals and Signage

1. Make bins easy to tell apart using decals and informational poster. The posters should be used to tell people what can be recycled.
2. Use pictures and color-code your decals and signage to coordinate with your waste bins. Below are some examples of simple decal and signage ideas.
3. Check the condition of signs and decals periodically to be sure they are visible and in good condition at all times.

CONTAINERS ONLY

Plastic Drink Bottles
Aluminum Cans
Steel & Tin Cans
Glass Bottles & Jars
NO STYROFOAM
NO PLASTIC PLATES OR
UTENSILS

PAPER ONLY

White & Colored Paper
Copy/Fax Paper
White & Manila Envelopes
Newspapers
Cardboard
Magazines & Catalogs Pizza
Boxes

TRASH ONLY

6. Waste Reduction & Reuse

A successful school recycling program must include waste reduction and reuse. Such programs save energy, reduce landfill space and usually result in a cost savings.

Ways to reduce waste and reuse items include:

- Save paper by printing and copying on both sides, reduce spacing, margins, and type size; and eliminate unnecessary copies by utilizing the school's email system or by sharing documents.
- Encourage the use of re-usable lunch bags and water bottles
- Host "litter-less" lunch days by encouraging students to eliminate disposable items



- Stock the teacher's lounge with re-usable cups, plates, and utensils
- Create a reuse office supply program to eliminate a supply surplus and excess purchasing
- Use rechargeable batteries for school equipment
- Save and reuse packaging items such as boxes, bags, foam peanuts, and shredded paper
- Have your cafeteria switch to reusable trays, utensils and crockery instead of throwaways whenever possible
- Start a food scrap composting program outside or take compost to a nearby facility or farm. See resources page for more information on this.



7. Collection & Tracking

A successful recycling and waste reduction plan must address the procedure for collecting recyclables and tracking the amount of recyclable materials diverted from your waste.

Developing a Collection System

Just like trash, recyclables from all areas of your school need to be collected from inside the school and brought outside to the appropriate dumpsters.

1. Involve the students in the collection of recyclables. A combination of rolling carts and bags allow the students to collect the recyclables and bring them to a centralized location inside the school. Typically, the custodians collect the trash and any materials generated in the cafeteria and kitchen.
2. Establish a collection schedule, with rotating responsibilities. The collections can be done before school, during recess periods, or at the end of the day. To minimize classroom disruption, consider the time of day the recyclables are collected. If class is in session, consider having the teachers place their recycling bins outside their classrooms at a predetermined day or time.

Tracking Results

1. Maintain records of month-to-month tonnage of recyclables and trash.

This information will help you evaluate the success of your program by calculating the schools' cost/benefit from the increasing volumes of recyclables.

2. Use a bathroom scale to weigh the bins of recyclables or estimate weight as follows: One full tote of paper = 150 pounds, one full tote of cardboard = 50 pounds, and one full tote of co-mingled = 100 pounds.
3. Create a tracking form to record the weight of each recycling bin for each month.

8. Building Awareness

Communicate your plans and expectations!
This will prompt members of your school to achieve ongoing participation in the recycling program.

Education and Training

- Provide staff and students with the School's recycling policy and remind them that everyone is required to participate.
- Clearly define what each staff member and students' role and responsibility will be in the school's recycling program
- Provide ongoing training for all staff and students (Schools may benefit by conducting training by department or grade.)
- Assure staff and students that their efforts and feedback will be encouraged, valued, and acknowledged
- Include periodic updates and reminders in company emails, memos, newsletters, bulletin boards and morning announcements

Publicity

Be sure to communicate with members of your school, such as students and parents, as well as the greater community

Share the program's progress, successes, milestones, and special green events/activities when possible

Keep members of the school informed through email, morning announcements, bulletin boards, school newspaper and website

Involve the community by distributing press releases, inviting the local newspapers to your school during special events, and postings on your website



9. Implementation & Kick-Off

Planning a kick-off event is one way to engage the entire school and to help make the new program exciting. Some things to consider as you plan for the official start:

- Plan for a scheduled school or district-wide kick-off event to make an official start to your program
- The principal of the school should make an announcement of the “official start” of the school’s recycling program
- If you are phasing-in parts of your recycling program, be sure to announce future dates for new additions to the program
- Involve the entire staff and students from all grade levels
- Plan ways to engage the members of your school by having students make a banner for the entry way; wear green for a day; start the day with an environmentally-focused assembly; or encourage teachers to have special green lessons planned for their class
- And always remember to lead by example

10. Recognition & Awards

Recognize those who are instrumental in the success of the program. Be sure to showcase any recognition or awards given to the school for its green achievements. Such recognition will boost participation and get more people excited.

Keep members of your school excited by recognizing them when they “do the right thing”.

Consider providing a non-monetary way of recognizing or awarding those involved in the school’s recycling program

Hold recycling contests between classes, grades and even teachers

Display recycling awards proudly...it is good public relations and will send a positive message to everyone!

Resources



Composting Facilities



Community Action Organization

(716) 881-5150
70 Harvard Place
Buffalo, NY 14209

Massachusetts Avenue Project

(716) 816-0961
271 Grant St.
Buffalo, NY 14213

PUSH Buffalo

271 Grant St.
Buffalo, N.Y. 14213
[716] 884-0356

Farmer Pirates

www.farmerpirates.com



E-Waste Recycling Facility



City of Buffalo Engineering Garage

1120 Seneca St.
Buffalo, NY 14210
*Open Monday-Friday 8-3pm

Other Important Contacts

City of Buffalo's Recycling Coordinator

Susan Attridge
(716) 851-5014
City Hall #504

Buffalo Recycling Alliance,

c/o Partnership for the Public Good
Sarah Wooton
(716) 246-1708
617 Main St. Suite 1200

Erie County's Recycling Coordinator

Gary Carrell
(716) 858-4805
95 Franklin St. Rm # 1080

Director of BPS Plant Operations

(716) 816-3027
64 Bailey Ave.