



# 7 Steps for a Successful Recycling Program

## Recycle More....Trash Less



### Step 1: Form a Recycling Team & get Top Level Support.

The best recycling programs are those that have support from the district and school based administration. They also involve many stakeholders, especially students, through curriculum or community service and leadership opportunities. A team-based approach is an efficient way to involve all the key people and decrease the workload for any person or department.

Who should be involved? A school's Recycling Team should be made up of at least the school principal or headmaster, senior custodian, cafeteria manager and the school-based Recycling Coordinator(s).

### Step 2: Join the [Green Team](#).

The Green Team Program is a FREE one-stop resource developed by MassDEP. This web-based program helps teachers, students and school administrators learn about, participate in, start or improve school recycling programs. The Green Team provides:

- A kit containing lesson plans, activities, posters, achievement stickers, teacher response forms, sample press release & magnets
- Clean air and energy conservation [lessons](#). Curricula and activities align with MA Department of Education curriculum frameworks in math, English, and science. "Slash the Trash" and Composting lessons are most applicable to recycling programs, but all of the lessons can be integrated to connect with recycling.
- FREE recycling equipment – small carts, plastic classroom bins, compost bins & even worms for compost!
- Awards and prizes to participating classrooms

### Step 3: Set Recycling Goals.

Goals that are effectively communicated encourage people to excel. Boston Public Schools has a goal of diverting at least 30% of all school's recyclable material from the trash as well as reducing the trash hauling costs by 20%. Schools should set a target amount of reusable and recyclable material to collect each year and keep a running total prominently displayed. Also consider setting goals for education, involvement and program expansion. Tracking your goals is the next step and maybe even more important – see Step 7.

### Step 4: Establish a System for Collection.

A successful recycling collection program is simple and well organized. The Recycling Team and BPS Facilities Department should work together to identify and access the required equipment as well as set up of the bins, carts, signage, etc. These efforts should be coordinated closely with the custodians to ensure an efficient and consistent system. Tips for setting up your collection program:

- **Blue = RECYCLING / Grey = Trash**
- Blue recycling barrels should NOT have a black liner bag. If you need a bag, use a clear one.
- Always have a trash can next to a recycling bin
- Put a single stream recycling sticker on each blue barrel
- Make sure signage is clear and consistent – use actual materials found in the school and develop signs in multiple languages

### **Step 5: Launch Your Recycling Program.**

Now that the school's Recycling Team is in place and they have accessed useful program resources, it's time to launch the initiative and communicate to everyone what the goals are, what it means, why it's important and how recycling will work. Tips for a successful launch:

- Make a brief presentation or initiate a discussion about recycling at a staff or faculty meeting
- Hand out a one-page document describing what materials can and can't be recycled
- Send flyers home with students to inform parents and others of program specifics
- Display posters in multiple languages
- Make announcements in homerooms or during lunch
- Host a school-wide assembly to educate the students:
  - Elementary Schools - Call Phoebe Beierle to schedule an assembly, 617-635-9138.
  - High Schools – The Alliance for Climate Education (ACE) is BPS' recycling partner for high schools. They feature an interactive climate change and energy/waste management assembly. Call Alan Palm to schedule an assembly, 508-296-8197.

### **Step 6: Educate. Educate. Educate.**

Meeting your school recycling goals is dependent on regular communication and education. Hosting an annual kick off assembly is highly recommended. Incorporating recycling into the curriculum and student leadership opportunities throughout the year is also key to the program's success. Tips for student engagement:

- *Curriculum* - Incorporate recycling lessons or projects into classes to help sustain the program over time and ensure that a larger number of students are educated and can take ownership of recycling.
- *Community Service Hours* - Many middle and high schools students need community service hours to graduate. Consider creating a recycling collection program each week and log the student's hours. This is a win-win opportunity!
- *Student Clubs* – Student led Green Teams, Recycling Clubs or Environmental Advisories can help implement and maintain the program by determining the placement of recycling containers, ensure consistent availability of equipment, collect recyclables on a weekly basis, develop signage, advertise recycling success (via school newspaper, bulletin boards), coordinate a school waste audit and other recycling initiatives in the school.

### **Step 7: Measure & Report on Your Progress.**

Each school's recycling coordinator and senior custodian are responsible for reporting monthly recycling data to the Facilities Department. Involve middle or high school students in conducting a waste audit to calculate actual recycling diversion rates.

Schools can help achieve the districts goals of reducing trash hauling costs by asking the custodians to check the trash dumpster before the pick up. Ask if the dumpster is half full? Less than half full? If your dumpster isn't full before each pick up, call Facilities and let them know. Each time we eliminate a dumpster pickup, the district saves \$30-\$50 – savings that can add up quickly!

For more information, visit [www.bostongreenschools.org/recycling](http://www.bostongreenschools.org/recycling) or contact BPS Sustainability Manager, 617-635-9138.