



Steps To A Successful School Recycling Program



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Resource Recovery

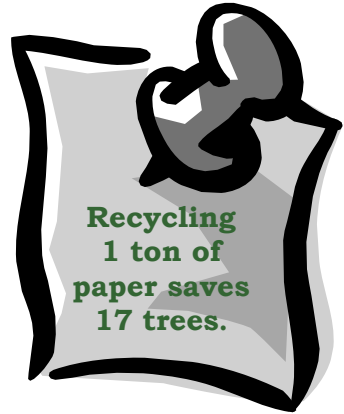


Developed by:





Everybody makes waste, including students & staff at school. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, each U.S. resident produces 4.6 lbs of municipal solid waste¹ per day! That equals a total of more than 230 million tons of trash a year!



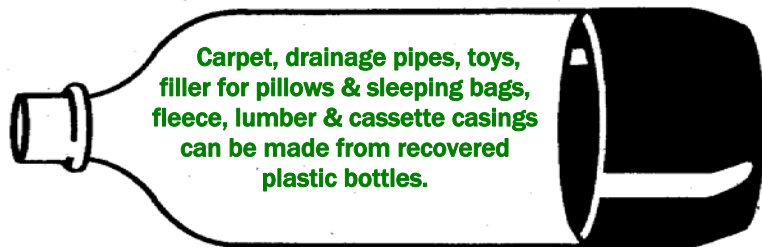
One important step we can take to reduce the amount of trash is to recycle. Recycling includes:

1. collecting recyclable materials that would otherwise be considered waste,
2. sorting & processing recyclables into raw materials such as fibers, and
3. manufacturing raw materials into new products.

BENEFITS OF RECYCLING

There are many reasons to recycle, including:

- ⊕ Conserving natural resources like timber, water, & minerals.
- ⊕ Reducing the demand for new landfills...less waste thrown out, fewer landfills needed to be built.
- ⊕ Saving energy & preventing pollution caused by the extraction & processing of virgin materials.
- ⊕ Expanding U.S. manufacturing jobs & increasing the U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace.
- ⊕ Helping sustain the environment for future generations.



Recycling Bin Companies

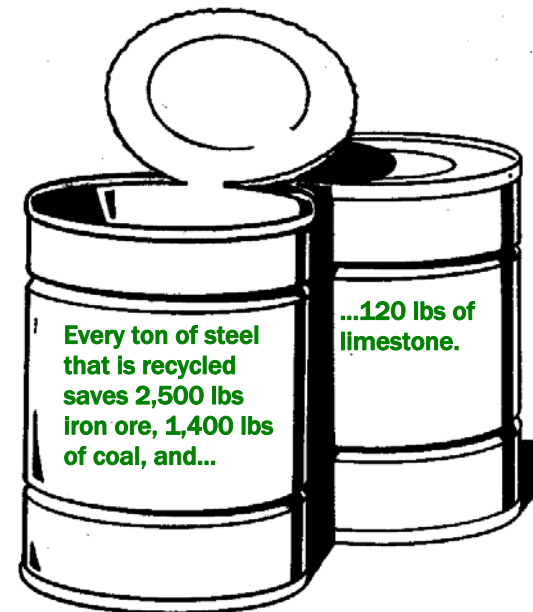
Thayer, Inc.
269-925-0633

Busch Systems International, Inc.
800-565-9931
www.busch-systems.com

Midpoint International, Inc.
888-646-4246
www.midpoint-int.com

AmeriMark Direct
800-228-0525
www.AmeriMarkDirect.com

This list is not exhaustive. Other companies are available.





Notes

- ¹ Municipal Solid Waste is waste from residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial sources.
- ² For instructions on how to conduct a school waste audit, call Berrien County Resource Recovery .
- ³ For instructions on how to make a Vermicomposting bin (worm bin) for your classroom, contact Berrien County Resource Recovery.
- ⁴ The Environmental Specialist is available to meet with staff to discuss recycling in your school. Contact info on back of booklet.
- ⁵ Earn the EARTH FLAG Award and be recognized for your efforts to recycle & practice the 4R's. Contact Berrien County Resource Recovery to find out how.

Recycling Facts & Figures For This Booklet Were Collected From:

- MI Recycling Coalition: www.michiganrecycles.org
- Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov
- American Forest & Paper Association: www.afandpa.org
- Steel Recycling Institute: www.recycle-steel.org

LEARNING BY DOING

Encourage students to make recycling a part of their everyday lifestyle by not only teaching about recycling, but also allowing the students to run their own school recycling program.

Each school's recycling program will be unique. There are various requirements to consider when developing or improving a recycling program, such as:

- ✓ Storage Space
- ✓ Time Commitment
- ✓ Recyclable Items
- ✓ Student Interest
- ✓ Administrative & Teacher Interest
- ✓ Budget (if needed)

Create or improve your school's recycling program by considering the steps outlined in this booklet.



1 Get The Entire School on Board

Gaining the support of school Administration, all teachers & staff, as well as the students is key to a long-term, successful recycling program.



Establish a "Recycling Team". This Team will be responsible for program planning, publicity, & operation. The Team could include the Principal, teachers (it is recommended to have at least 2 adults in charge of the program in case one is gone or leaves for an extended amount of time), Janitorial/ Maintenance staff, students, cafeteria staff, parents, etc.

If you're interested in **improving or regenerating enthusiasm** for the current recycling program, consider getting more students involved. Allow students to brainstorm ideas how to improve the recycling program & how to motivate & educate the entire school. If the maintenance or cafeteria staff are not involved now, get them on board. Parents may like to help out too!



HOW DO OTHER SCHOOLS DO IT?

At some Berrien County schools, the Student Council runs the recycling program. At one school in particular, the Principal is fully supportive of the program and is included in the planning & organizing meetings. The janitorial staff is also part of the recycle team & helps out when needed.



HOW DO OTHER SCHOOLS DO IT?

Student Council groups from two Berrien County elementary schools performed a *Recycling Fashion Show* skit in front of their respective schools. These assemblies were to kick off the new recycling program and educate students & staff on what can & cannot go in the classroom recycle bins.

Another Berrien County school has a giant graph in the hallway of the amount of recycling collected in their program. The students update the chart monthly.

5 Put The Program Into Effect

Set reachable goals for the program. Setting goals is very useful for encouraging students to excel. Involve all students in the recycling collection and make it *their* program. Maintain support from administration – even encourage a policy be added to include a pledge by all teachers and staff to recycle at school. When the goal is reached, reward the doers for all the hard work.



HOW DO OTHER SCHOOLS DO IT?

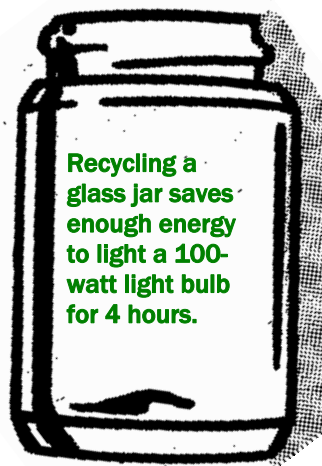
The elementary schools in one Berrien County school district work together with the High School Ecology Club to make their paper recycling happen. Paper is collected at each elementary school & at the High School by the students. The HS Ecology Club collects the paper from each school building & stores it in the school district's recycling shed. When the shed gets near full, the Ecology Club calls their paper recycler to come pick-up the paper from the shed... about 2 times a semester. GREAT team work!

4 Educate Students & Staff About Recycling Do's & Don'ts

Educate everybody in the school about the program. Even send notices home to parents about the program. Proper promotion of the program & education about why people should recycle will ensure that recycling becomes a part of everyday life at the school (and maybe at home).

Some ideas to promote the recycling program & stir up excitement include:

- < Putting recycling updates on staff meeting agendas.
- < Inviting the County Resource Recovery Educator⁴ to a staff meeting to kick-off the program & help answer questions.
- < Displaying recycling posters in the hallway.
- < Having a kick-off assembly to teach the entire school how to recycle properly.
- < Making daily/weekly announcements over the intercom.
- < Earning the Berrien County EARTH FLAG Award⁵.
- < Talking about recycling in class...even if it is not Earth Day.



2 Determine What To Collect & Where It Goes After Collection

Examine school waste. The Recycling Team should first examine the classroom, lunchroom, & other school areas to determine what kind of waste is generated the most. One way to examine your school waste and teach a fantastic Science & Math lesson is to perform a school waste audit².



Choose what to recycle or add to the current program. This choice will be determined by what kind of program your school has & where the recycle items will go after they leave the school. Start by contacting your current school waste hauler. Find out if they offer recycling services and if these services could be added to the school waste contract.

Other contacts for school recycling pick-up and/or drop-off services include:

- ☎ Best Way Disposal, Inc: 463-3232
- ☎ Gateway: Don Marsh or Dorothy Daughtry 471-2897
- ☎ Reliable Disposal: 465-3773
- ☎ St. Joe Recycling Center: Jackie Taglia 983-3820
- ☎ SE Berrien County Landfill Recycle Center: Andrea Williams 695-2500 X226

Other services may be available.

It is recommended to start with or add just one or two waste items to the program at a time to allow the Recycling Team and participants to get accustomed to the program.



HOW DO OTHER SCHOOLS DO IT?

Several schools in Berrien County have Vermicomposting Bins³. Students & staff can recycle some of their lunch left-overs by feeding them to the worms (great classroom lessons can come from having a worm bin). The finished compost is then used on plants in the school or on the school grounds.

One public school academy in Berrien County has contracted with a recycling hauler to have a recycling roll-off bin placed on their school grounds one weekend a month. This bin is open to the public to bring in recycling from homes such as paper, metal, plastic, etc. The school also uses this roll-off bin for their own recycling.

The star teacher at one Berrien County school volunteers to haul the school's waste paper & cardboard to a recycle drop-off site on her way home after school.



When determining where the recyclables will be stored until pick-up, consult the maintenance/janitorial staff, since this space is often within the area where they need to work. Ensure that the storage of the materials is not done in a hazardous way that may block exits or hallways. The storage area should allow the recycling team to have easy access at different times of the day.

3 Establish A Collection & Storage System

To keep the program running efficiently, your recycle collection system needs to be as simple and organized as possible. Clearly mark the collection containers stating what can (& in some cases CAN'T) be put in that bin. Place the collection containers in an area where students & staff can get to them easily. A school can create their own storage containers, ask their recycle hauler about providing them, or purchase them (see page 11 for a list of companies that sell recycling containers).



HOW DO OTHER SCHOOLS DO IT?

The special-needs students at one Berrien County school run their school's recycling program. Small teams of students collect waste paper & cardboard from each classroom once a week using a recycling cart on wheels.

Another Berrien County elementary school has paper recycle bins in each classroom made from old milk crates or other lightly used plastic bins. When the bins get full, the "Recycling Volunteer" students in each classroom for that week take the paper down the hall and empty it into a larger bin. When the hallway bins get full, the janitorial staff wheels the bin to the cafeteria storage area until recycle pick-up day.

The cafeteria staff in one Berrien County school has bins in the kitchen to recycle the kitchen waste such as steel, glass, cardboard & plastic.