

Measure of Success: The East Bay MET School, Newport



The East Bay MET Green Team

When and how the program got started:

The program got started in 2008, after Linda Nilsson from the Environmental Awareness Foundation introduced the idea of forming a recycling group at the school. Principal Charlie Plant went further to envision a “Green Team” and with his strong support, Linda Nilsson co-coordinated the inaugural group with Met staff member Linsey Medeiros. Met Advisor Taylor Rock took group leadership reigns this year. The Green Team has traveled to Sweden, Washington, D.C. and met with RI officials to help develop green programs.

Getting bins and collection services:

Their waste contractor, Waste Management donated the large totes to get them started and the extra services for recycling pick-up. Students

held a fundraiser to purchase the many smaller bins found around the school. You can’t walk very far in the MET without bumping into a bin.



Tuesday morning recycling

Collecting recycling:

The Green Team meets every Tuesday morning. Their focus goes beyond recycling, but they are the main drivers of the MET’s program. Each Tuesday, Green Team members go room to room collecting individual recycling bins. They bring them out to the main lobby where major contaminants are removed, and recycling is consolidated.



A scale is used to weigh recycling

Measuring Success: Before setting the bins for pick-up outside, the students weigh them in order to track their progress. They initially log the week’s data on a whiteboard right by the scale to keep the process flowing smoothly. Afterwards, one member enters the data into an electronic spreadsheet for safekeeping. At the end of each trimester, the information is

added to their cumulative data for the year, and posted on a large data mural they have created in one of the school’s main stairwells. The mural uses creative conversions to make conservation more real to the other students. It shows the numbers, in terms of things like trees, landfill space, and oil saved.

	TREES	LAND FILL	OIL	WATER	ELECTRICITY	MONEY
Trimester 1 2012-2013						
Trimester 2 2012-2013						
Trimester 3 2012-2013						
Trimester 1 2011-2012						
Trimester 2 2011-2012						
Trimester 3 2011-2012						
Trimester 1 2010-2011						
Trimester 2 2010-2011						
Trimester 3 2010-2011						

Feedback is given creatively



Ceiling tiles share recycling info

How the staff and student body learn how to recycle:

Recycling is a topic in some morning “pick me-ups.” These are whole-school meetings on Monday mornings. The Green Team also posts reminders and inspiration around the school, including painted ceiling tiles.

Challenges:

The single biggest challenge they face is contamination in the recycling bins, like other plastics, paper towels and tissues. Getting students to empty out milk cartons is also difficult. To decrease contamination, the Green Team is considering delivering quick individual training sessions to each advisory (or student group) in the school.

Advice for other schools trying to get started:

Students, be stubborn! Keep asking and don’t give up. Also, find outside help. Talk to your teachers, or adults in other community organizations who might lend a hand.

A Team Effort: Rogers High School, Newport



The Rogers High School Green Team
Picture, L-to-R: Morgan Eschenheimer, Montana
Dreisbach, Indigo Boock, Tara Barnes

When and how the program got started: The program started in 2008 as one student's senior project. A student Green Team was formed and started meeting during some advisory periods and after school on Tuesdays. They now switched to meeting in advisory periods only, which are 1 hour periods held every 3 days.

Getting bins and a collection service: The bins were provided by the City of Newport's contractor, Waste Management and the collection service is provided by them as well, as part of the municipal program. Green bins are located in every classroom, while blue bins are in 10 other locations around the school, including one in each academic wing and one in the cafeteria.

Collecting recycling: The Green Team collects and consolidates recycling during their advisory period.

How the staff and student body learn how to recycle: Right now, education has mainly been done through individual classroom teachers; however the Green Team recognizes that some classrooms definitely do better with recycling than others. They now plan to place basic flyers they can photocopy above each bin, office-specific flyers in the teachers' rooms with pictures of items more frequently found there, and special 3-D posters in the cafeteria which will showcase actual recyclables on the wall "falling" into the correct bins – blue, green, or trash.



Paper dumpers out back

Challenges: Contamination! The biggest culprits are candy wrappers, potato chip bags, tissues & napkins, and bottles with liquids in them. The Green Team members empty, rinse, and recap many bottles before putting them out for collection. They have also been without a faculty advisor for sometime.

Advice for other schools trying to get started: Start small, even with just two bins in a main area like the cafeteria. Talk to teachers about what you want to do, and get in touch with your local recycling coordinator for support.

All Hands on Deck: Woonsocket High School, Woonsocket

When and how the program got started: The program at WHS has taken on many different forms over the years, but it has been in place since the 96-97 school year. There was already a program over at the Career and Technical Center, started back in the 90-91 school year, and it was a science teacher who brought it over to WHS.

Getting bins and a collection service: In the beginning there was no collection service, and so the science teacher was dropping off paper. This duty eventually passed on to a special education teacher, and then again to a foreign language teacher. After time, they were able to recycle more items and eventually the City of Woonsocket did begin collection services.



Student recyclers from various classes gather



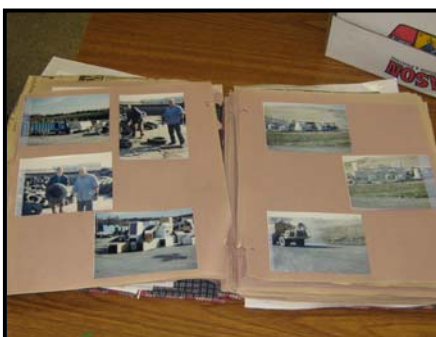
Down at the loading dock

Collecting recycling: Various classes have had responsibility for consolidating the contents of small bins into larger totes and getting them down stairs to the loading dock for pick-up. Presently it is done by students with special needs in 5 WHS classes (transition, self-contained academic, and sever and profound students). Each class has a designated section of the school that they are responsible for. Every Friday morning they put on their gloves, and go door-to-door in their section. They also help reduce contamination by removing trash items and emptying bottles before recycling.



Back-of-the-cafeteria recycling

Cafeteria recycling: Though the staff in the cafeteria are not school employees, they also recycle the various bottles, cans, and boxes they go through when preparing food each day. They work in conjunction with the transition students, going so far as to break down the cardboard for them. The cardboard is brought down to the loading dock and placed into a wooden dolly for pick-up.



Scraps books of recycling info

How the staff and student body learn how to recycle: In the past, video campaigns have been done on the school's closed-circuit TV station, and the teachers currently involved in the program would like to do this once again. Special needs students are the real recycling experts in the school, and have a lot of knowledge to share with others. They have created scrap books of photos and information they have learned in class and through regular field trips to RIRRC. These albums contain a lot of great

information that could be used in a future school wide awareness campaign. These students also have the 3Rs infused into much of their curriculum. One example is their annual paper making project where they, themselves, make new paper from old.



Mrs. Emmett displays paper-making kit

Challenges: Disruptions of class can be challenging on collection day. Teachers therefore have been given the option to put their recycling bins outside of their doors on Friday morning, so they won't be disturbed. For classrooms where bins are not left out, the students knock on the door and say "recycling." They remove bins from the classroom and empty them in the hallways. So as not to create a second disruption, all empty bins are left outside the door for teachers to take back in at their convenience.

What's next: While there are recycling bins located almost everywhere you look at WHS, from the teachers' rooms to the libraries, the one place they have not yet tackled is the cafeteria. They do not have enough large bins to cover this collection right now, but the teachers involved with the recycling program are currently considering a pilot where they would measure the potential amount of space that cafeteria recycling would require, in order to determine how many additional totes they would need to ask for.



News articles get the word out

Advice for other schools trying to get started: It was overwhelming at first and the lead teacher, Mrs. Merylene Emmett, found that there was no interest or awareness of the importance of recycling when she began. Her advice is to start one small scale project and plug away. If you can get one classroom to do it well and track the results, you'll have something to share with administration. It also didn't hurt that Mrs. Emmitt has always had a good rapport with the custodians, so having someone who is more likely to get their cooperation could be key. Because of the students' great effort in the program, the custodial staff seem very happy to help out when pick-ups are missed or they need extra help.

From Trash to Treats: Composting, Burrillville Schools

When and how the program got started:

The program was initiated several years ago when the school department was looking for solutions to problems associated with throwing garbage into dumpsters. Problems ranged from the smell of garbage in the dumpster and dealing with rodent issues, to the existing pick up schedule for garbage and ergonomic issues for staff lifting heavy barrels. With all these complications, the school department wanted to come up with a cost effective solution to them.



Student recycling line in the cafeteria



Food scraps go to a local pig farmer

Getting bins and a collection service:

The school department took the initiative to purchase garbage cans for each of the five schools. The local pig farmer was contacted to see if he could use the leftover food that was being thrown out. The farmer was excited about the idea but logistics and timing of pick up were issues. Working with him, the school department agreed to an annual fee for him to pick up food scraps at all buildings every day school was in session. He arrives daily at approximately 1:30pm. The fees were used to cover his fuel and maintenance costs of his vehicle. The proposed annual costs proved much more appealing than the costs of dealing with trash-related problems listed above

Getting staff and students to compost:

Working with the cafeteria staff initially, all leftover food waste was scraped into a single barrel. Once this process was mastered, other ideas caught on to try and expand it to lunch lines when kids were throwing their trash away. Custodians got involved with encouraging students and it became part of a daily routine. Barrels are then wheeled to the back doors where the farmer arrives. He then empties the barrels into a 55 gallon drum on his truck.



Kitchen staff consolidating leftover food



Pick-up is at 1:30pm each day

Tracking

We dispose of one 55-gallon drum which equates to approximately 500 pounds a day from all schools. This is confirmed by the pig farmer as he adjusts his herd head count based on the amount of food scraps generated. He knows exactly how many pounds it takes to feed his animals daily. He not only picks up from the school system, but also local restaurants and bakers.

Advice for other schools trying to get started:

Think outside the box. Look into solutions for each problem. List the problems that you have and or need to address. Analyze what you're doing as every situation has unique characteristics and you may find better, more cost effective solutions. Did we master the process at first? No! Continual process improvement is always good. Change is good when looked at in a positive manner!

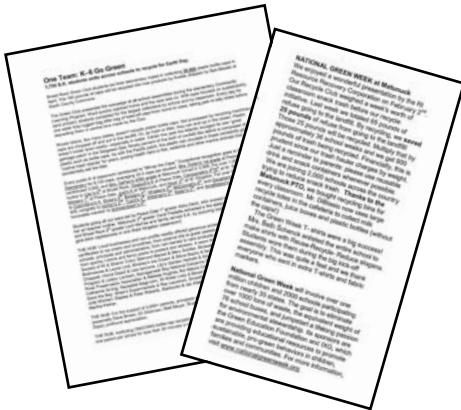
Make It a Big Deal: Matunuck Elementary School, Wakefield

When and how the program got started: While recycling was in existence at Matunuck Elementary School, it needed a big boost, and that is exactly what came during Green Week, 2009. The Green Education Foundations offers a free toolkit for schools: <http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org>, and Principle Debra Zepp found this site extremely helpful. She recommends it to other schools. Green Week was a great way to rally school-wide support and pride in reducing, reusing, and recycling – among other environmental initiatives. The art teacher even worked with students to design t-shirts for green week.



The Green Education Foundation's website was very helpful

Getting bins and a collection service: The PTO funded the initial purchase of recycling bins. Their hauler was already providing the collection service.



News articles got the word out

Measuring & Sharing Success: To help boost the recycling program, South Kingstown Recycling Coordinator Laura Pointek came to Matunuck Elementary School to do a pre-Green Week audit of the trash and give advice for setting up their new and improved program. Trash generated from snack time in classrooms was weighed before Green Week, using students standing on bathroom scales and tarring the scale to their weight before having them hold up a trash bag. This was done again after implementing the program, and the results were tracked and displayed. Before the program, snack trash was adding up to 65 pounds

a week, but afterwards it was only 40 pounds - they managed to decrease it by 25 pounds in one week. Articles were written for the school and local newspapers touting their success, and asking for more parents to get involved in the school's green efforts.



Cafeteria Recycling

Collecting recycling: Groups of older students are responsible for consolidating the classroom bins into the larger totes, and the custodial staff take these along with the recycling from the cafeteria. In the cafeteria, everywhere there's a trash can, there's a recycling tote right next to it.

How the staff and student body learn how to recycle: A lot of education happens around Green Week. Maxman and RIRRC educators were also brought in to speak to the whole school.

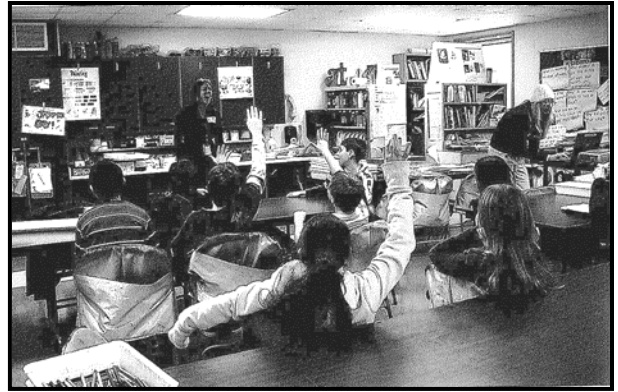


TerraCycle helps schools recycle snack wrappers.

Expanded recycling: Matunuck ES did not stop at the blue and green bins alone. Since snack wrappers are not accepted in the RI recycling program, they also implemented another special program in conjunction with a company called TerraCycle, to keep that material out of the landfill too. For more information visit: <http://www.terracycle.net/>. When it was still necessary to remove caps from bottles and jugs and place them in the trash, the school began a cap collection through Aveda's

special recycling program: <http://www.aveda.com/aboutaveda/caps.tmp> and it was extended to other schools too, starting a competition to see who could collect the most. There was also a big school-wide push to encourage students who pack lunch to bring food in reusable containers, and Principal Zepp reports that this behavior has stuck with many of the students and their families.

Other green initiatives: Mrs. Zepp also reports that while the school does use paper each day, they have found ways to cut back. For example, the “Friday Folders” sent home to parents each week are now “Virtual Friday Folders,” and are sent electronically to 85% of participating families. The school has also scored high on energy audits by conserving electricity. They started an afterschool “Go Green Ecology Club” for students, and in 2008 began their “Community Learning Program.” This initiative brought in environmental professionals to speak to students during their teachers’ common planning periods.



[Recycling professionals visit the Go Green Ecology Club](#)

Principle Zepp gives much credit for these initiatives to a dedicated parent that wanted to get this initiative going. She feels that if a parent is willing to put in the effort, then the school would want to support this involvement as much as possible. The hard work has paid off. Among other press and accolades, Matunuck ES was awarded a 2010 Green Innovator Award.



[Recycling is a part of the school's culture](#)

Advice for other schools trying to get started: Make a big deal out of it, and come at it from many different angles. It has to be something that students, teachers, staff, and parents can be excited about and take pride in.

Program Pioneers: Sherman School, Warwick

When and how the program got started: The new program got started in 2006. Before then, their contractor was not recycling. Sherman School served as the pilot project for the City of Warwick to determine how a school recycling program could work, and it has been a great success.

Getting bins and a collection service: The City of Warwick provided small bins for classrooms, larger totes for consolidated classroom bins, and a larger paper dumpster.



These bins brought to you by the City of Warwick

Collecting recycling: Students go room to room with the wheeled totes and collect the recycling twice a week.



Compost in the classroom for all to see

How the staff and student body learn how to recycle: Sixth grade teachers Stacey and Patricia Bastia are avid recyclers and do a wonderful job getting their students pumped about it! Their students learn the recycling ropes in class, where it is a part of the curriculum. This year they are also working on composting lessons and are setting up mini worm compost bins right in their classrooms. Both classes also come to RIRRC each year on a field trip to learn even more. These older students travel to other classrooms and teach the younger children in the school about recycling, and how to do it properly.

Challenges: Substitute custodians who aren't used to recycling in other schools can get confused. Stacey and Patricia make sure to check if there are any subs on recycling days so they can let them know not to trash the recycling.

One program leads to another: Because of the success of the recycling program, Warwick Mayor Scott Avedisian once again chose Sherman School to pilot a new waste oil recycling program. Students from Westerly Middle School who started a program, and have won various awards for setting it up (including getting to meet the President!), presented the program to the entire school in early November. The Sherman School earns profits for their PTO by collecting the cooking oil, and \$100 for each restaurant they can get to drop off oil at their school. As a perfect kick-off, the students were asked to bring in the grease from their Thanksgiving dinners.



Cooking oil is collected here