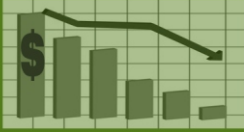


Educating Students about Waste Reduction



Education is the key to making waste reduction programs work effectively. Students, staff and parents who understand the reasons are more likely to follow through and support the program.



What schools are doing

Clara Barton Open School - Minneapolis



Clara Barton R.O.T. team receiving WRAP Award from Paul W. Oberg, CEO of Jeffers Foundation.

When the program at Clara Barton Open School was first implemented, the R.O.T. (Reduce Our Trash) team visited every classroom to educate students and teachers about how to reduce waste. For the first three months, they staffed each of the seven sorting stations with trained parent volunteers to provide guidance until sorting became a habit. Three posters at each station served as a constant visual reminder of what can and cannot be recycled/composted. The R.O.T. team, Barton's science teacher, and students gave presentations at assemblies at the beginning of the year and mid-year to show how much trash was reduced. One math teacher turned the "pounds recycled" into a math lesson, and the students helped with the calculations. At the beginning of each

school year, the team members offer to come into the classrooms to provide a program refresher. For the most part, Barton teachers incorporate mindfulness about waste reduction into the everyday classroom setting. Teachers organize class field trips to the district's composting site. To reach parents, they set up an 'info-table' and recycling station at their summer picnic, kindergarten round-up and parent information night.

Carondelet Catholic School - Minneapolis

A key factor in this program was a zero waste campaign called Let's Slash Our Trash! Children were educated on S.M.A.R.T (Save Money and Reduce Trash) lunches, encouraged to use reusable containers, and avoid single-serve wrappings. The end goal was to have as close to a zero waste lunchroom as possible. Information was posted on the school website with tips for packing SMART lunches and avoiding ziplocs, juice boxes and other items that couldn't be reused or composted. Kindergarten students had a special lesson on SMART lunches and could receive a smiley face stamp if they had a SMART lunch (one or less pieces of trash) that teachers checked weekly. The young students were very motivated to get that smiley face.

Lakes International Language Academy - Forest Lake

To enhance participation in LILA's food recycling program, the school provides training at the beginning of the year; classroom teachers show the Regional Emmy Award-winning video *Boxes, Bottles, and Banana Peels* and allows time for discussion. Teachers, students and lunchroom staff discuss ways to reduce food waste, including sorting waste properly, saving food for later consumption, and encouraging students to take only the amount of food they need.

View online at:

<http://www.isd623.org/pcs/welcome/environment.cfm>.

Pillsbury Elementary School - Minneapolis

Teachers are instrumental in helping to reduce lunchroom waste by including information on waste reduction and healthy eating in their daily

instruction. They teach their nutrition curriculum through a series of classes and a school-wide assembly introduces their “YUM” nutrition program to promote healthy eating. Staff and students make posters to display in the hallways and lunchroom to answer the question “What is organic, recyclable, or trash?” After studying contaminated water, one classroom visited the park next door and picked up trash to help keep our water cleaner. Students are able to see the organics come full circle when deliveries of compost arrive for their school gardens. They also have a small compost bin on school grounds so students can actually see organics turn into soil.

Resources

EPA - Tools to Reduce Waste in Schools

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/toolkit/tools.pdf>

EPA - Students: More Projects, Ideas and Activities

http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/student_proj.htm

EPA - Reuse + Recycling = Waste Reduction (A guide for schools and groups)

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/school.pdf>

FoodWise Program - Eagle Bluff ELC

<http://www.eagle-bluff.org/top/projects/foodwise/>

Reducing Waste in Schools Webinar (NYC schools)

http://www.epa.gov/region2/webinars/pdfs/Cafeteria_Waste_Webinar.pdf