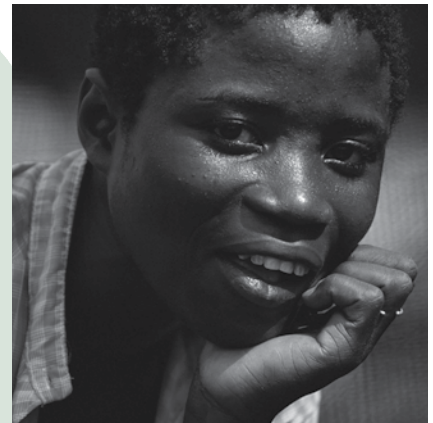
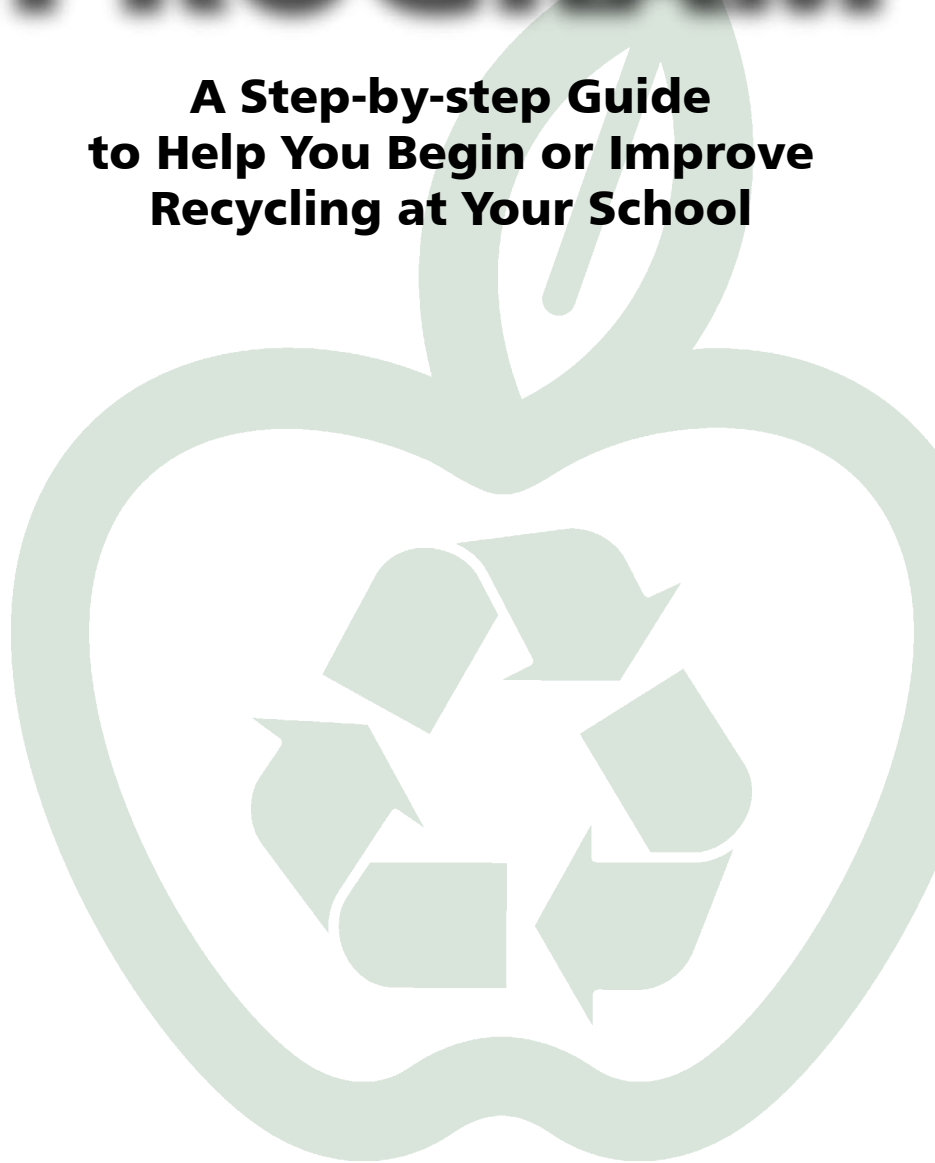


Starting a

SCHOOL RECYCLING PROGRAM

**A Step-by-step Guide
to Help You Begin or Improve
Recycling at Your School**



A Publication of the
**S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's
Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling**



Why recycle?

Let's count the ways.

Recycling conserves natural resources, saves energy in the manufacturing of new products and reduces or eliminates pollution associated with the extraction and processing of raw materials. Recycling reduces the need for landfills and incinerators. Recycling decreases greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change.

Recyclables have value. By using recyclables as valuable raw materials, recycling creates jobs, strengthens the economy and helps sustain the environment for future generations.

Why recycle? Why not?

Why recycle at school?

Schools are essential in making recycling work in South Carolina.

Recycling and schools make a practically perfect partnership. A school recycling program provides a learning experience for everyone involved. By recycling at school, students, teachers, staff, administration and parents can learn not only the basics of recycling, but of sustainability, resource conservation and environmental stewardship.

School recycling programs also provide opportunities for teachers to offer valuable hands-on, real-life projects to students.

In addition, recycling may help schools and school districts save money through avoided disposal costs. Remember, the less you throw away, the less you should have to pay to have garbage hauled away. Depending on what is recycled, there may be a chance to earn revenue from the sale of the collected items (e.g., printer cartridges and aluminum cans).

By recycling, schools can make a significant contribution to South Carolina's recycling efforts and help the state meet its goals while helping the state's economy and protecting the environment.

Need help?

"Starting a School Recycling Program: A Step-by-step Guide to Help You Begin or Improve Recycling at Your School" – developed by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling (Office) – can serve as a basic starting point.

Beyond this publication, the Office provides grant funding, technical assistance, education programs as well as printed material to set up, implement and expand school recycling programs. See page 6 in this guide, visit www.scdhec.gov/recycle or call 1-800-768-7348 for more information.

Four Questions to Answer Before Starting a School Recycling Program

Ready to start a recycling program at school? There is not just one way to set up a successful school recycling program. There are, however, four questions that need to be addressed at the beginning of the process: (1) what items (e.g., paper, aluminum and steel cans, plastic bottles and cardboard) are available for recycling; (2) how will the items be collected and stored; (3) will a local recycling program or company (market) accept the collected items; and (4) how will the items get to market (will they be picked up or will they need to be delivered)? Here are some recommendations to help you answer those and other frequently asked questions on how to set up a successful school recycling program.

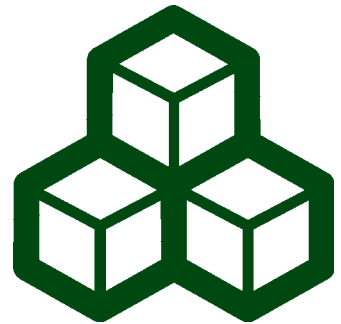
1. What can be recycled?

Determine what is in the trash and identify recycling opportunities throughout the school (e.g., classrooms, cafeteria, vending areas, library, gym, athletic fields, offices and teachers' lounges). The most common items recycled at schools are paper, aluminum cans, plastic soft drink and milk bottles, office and notebook paper, cardboard and printer cartridges. Start small and let the program grow. Choose an item or items (e.g., cardboard, paper or aluminum cans) that are easily collected and have a market.



2. How will the recyclables be collected and stored?

Determine what type and the number of recycling bins or containers that are appropriate for the items that will be collected. Where will the bins be placed? See "Location, location, location" on the next page for more information. Convenience is a very important factor. The easier it is for someone to recycle, the more likely it is that they will recycle. Determine who will be responsible for emptying the containers and moving the items to storage (e.g., a large recycling container in the parking lot) prior to going to market.



3. Where will the recyclables go?

Remember, collection is only part of the program. Determine what markets are available locally. The quickest way is to contact your city or county recycling coordinator (visit www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm for a listing) or call the Office at 1-800-768-7348. Depending on the items collected for recycling, more than one market may be needed. Some markets may require items to be sorted while others may allow them to be mixed.



4. How will the recyclables get to market?

Does your community have a recycling program or company that picks up material? Will staff or parent volunteers have to take the material somewhere (e.g., a recycling drop-off site)?



Setting Up a School Recycling Program

The homework is finished – that is, the four questions previously listed have been answered. What’s next? Here are additional recommendations to set up and begin a school recycling program.

■ Build a team.

The key to any successful school recycling program is to have everyone participate. That involvement starts at the beginning. Create a recycling team to design the recycling program that would be best for the school. A good team can help build a sustainable program. Ideally, the team should include a representative from each sector of the school (e.g., teachers, students, parent/teacher organizations, administration and housekeeping staff). The person(s) responsible for specific tasks should be identified. Select one person to be the team leader.



so look into decreasing the frequency of garbage pickups and allocate any savings towards the recycling program.

■ Choosing bins and containers ...

How many? What type? Converted waste baskets or small cardboard boxes with signage can be used. The right container makes a big difference. Choose one that is not too big, but is able to hold several days worth of material. Consider containers with restricted openings – like round holes on lids for plastic bottles or aluminum cans and slots for paper – to reduce contamination (keeping out garbage and recyclables that belong in other containers).



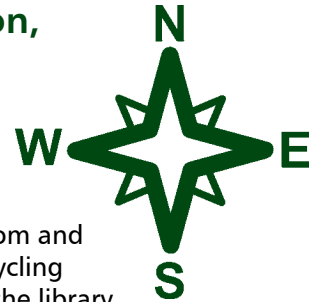
■ Who’s going to pay for this?

First, talk with your county or city recycling coordinator or solid waste director about recycling services that may be available. Look for funding from the school budget and parent/teacher organizations. You also may want to consider partnerships with school vendors, local businesses and civic groups. In addition, consider applying for grant funding from the Office. See “Need help?” on page 6 for more information on available grant funding. Remember that the school may potentially save money on avoided disposal costs and may even generate revenue on the sale of recyclables. Recycling will reduce the school’s waste stream,



■ Location, location, location ...

Place the recycling bins and containers in areas where recyclables are generated. Each classroom and office should have a recycling container. Don’t forget the library, teachers’ lounge and cafeteria. Larger collection bins should be placed in hallways or in high-volume areas (e.g., vending or copier room). Place the recycling bins and containers near trash containers or copy machines to make recycling the easy choice.



Composting at School ...

Composting is the controlled natural decomposition of organic material such as leaves, yard trimmings and grass clippings as well as fruit and vegetable scraps. It has many benefits including reducing waste and saving money. Composting is a viable, proven option for schools to consider whether it is a single classroom effort or a school-wide program. For more information, visit www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/pubs/school_composting_tas.pdf.



■ Clearly label recycling bins and containers.

Each container should be clearly marked indicating what item(s) should be placed inside. You may want to consider bilingual signage and use graphics to show what material is to be placed in each container.



Make announcements. Make and hang signs, posters and banners throughout the school. Write stories for the school newspaper. Place the information on the school's Web page and in the handbook. Present information about the program at school orientation, assemblies or parent/teacher meetings. Have guest speakers (e.g., recycling coordinator or solid waste director). Start or work with a recycling club or environmental club. Take advantage of Earth Day (April 22) and America Recycles Day (ARD – November 15) to reinforce the recycling message.

■ Students need to be involved.

It is important for students to recycle and help run the program from the beginning. This reinforces the hands-on emphasis of the program with students learning new habits and values. Select student monitors or volunteers who can: (1) empty the bins and containers; (2) oversee the containers to check when they are full or have contaminants; and (3) help educate other students about the program and encourage participation.



■ Keep records and set goals.

Track how many pounds or tons of material is recycled to help evaluate the program's performance and set benchmarks for improvement. Records also will help determine cost savings (from avoided disposal costs) as well as revenue generated (from the sale of recyclables).



■ Communicate and educate.

The success of the program depends on how well everyone participates. Tell students, teachers, administrators and housekeeping staff – everyone at school – about the program, what is accepted, how the items need to be prepared and so on.



■ Reward the doers.

Let students know that everyone wins in recycling. Incentives – such as T-shirts, stickers, recycled-content pencils and posters – can be given to students or classes that participate. Other incentives include field trips to a local recycling center or a pizza party.



Recycle and buy recycled, too.

Collecting recyclables is only part of the recycling process. Recycling also involves processing the recyclables, making them into new products and then marketing, purchasing and using the new products. When people buy products made from recycled materials, they are closing the recycling loop. If no one buys recycled, recycling will not work. Schools are encouraged to do their part. South Carolina has a new environmentally preferred purchasing policy as well as a guide for recycled-content products at www.mmo.sc.gov/MMO/MMO-index.phtm.



Need help?

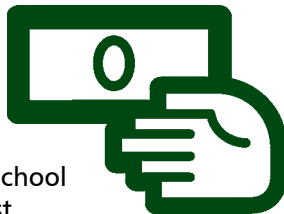
DHEC can help schools set up, maintain and expand recycling programs through technical assistance, educational materials and grant funding. The Office provides hands-on technical assistance (e.g., finding markets, providing information on bins and containers) to set up recycling programs as well as posters, signage and other material.

DHEC offers “Action for a cleaner tomorrow: A South Carolina Environmental Curriculum Supplement” (“Action”). Developed by teachers and the agency in conjunction with the S.C. Department of Education, “Action” can serve as a starting point for introducing environmental education in the classroom. The award-winning, activity-based interdisciplinary curriculum supplement is correlated to the state’s science standards. “Action” is only available as part of a training provided by DHEC.



In addition, DHEC’s “Action in the Classroom” provides fifth- and seventh-grade students an overview of recycling, buying recycled, waste reduction, reuse and landfill disposal in South Carolina.

The Office’s Recycling Education Grant Program provides funding – when available – to any K-12, public or private school or school district. The funding may be used for recycling containers, composting projects as well as supplies to support “Action” lessons and school recycling or environmental clubs. All projects must include a used motor oil recycling awareness component. “Take Action: Recycle Used Motor Oil Classroom Lessons and Activities” supports this required component and is available at www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/pubs/oil_tool_kit.pdf.



1-800-768-7348 ■ www.scdhec.gov/recycle

Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling
S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

Printed on **RECYCLED** Paper

DHEC OR-0774 6/10