

Recycling is a component of Sustainable Materials Management, as collecting materials to be reprocessed and made into new products saves energy, water, conserves natural resources, and reduces the amount of waste going to landfills – which reduces methane gas that warms the atmosphere. Recycling also allows individuals to demonstrate responsibility by reducing waste and taking pride in showing respect for our Earth!

Establish a “green team” (a faculty sponsor, students, food service and custodial staff) to involve a variety of people to set goals, provide training/education, and oversee the success of collected materials. Be sure to get support from the principal. To ensure a successful program, all hands must be “on deck” and all levels must be “on board”!

Talk with the school district’s operations director to see if recycling is included in the solid waste contract. If so, identify the acceptable materials to be recycled and educate school administrators, staff, teachers and students. If recycling is not included or is limited, ask to negotiate recycling provisions for a manageable fee.

Conducting a waste audit allows the team to identify which materials could be taken out of the waste stream, because you can’t manage what is not measured! See swancc.org for instructions.

Common materials to recycle at a school can include:

- Office paper, magazines, junk mail, cardboard (flattened)
- Aluminum cans
- Milk cartons and juice boxes
- Plastic bottles
- Glass bottles
- Food scraps for compost

Be sure materials are **empty, clean, dry, and loose** – Not in plastic bags.

Purchase recycling bins and containers for classrooms, offices, work rooms and high-traffic areas, such as the cafeteria, gym, hallways, concession and vending machine areas, outdoor sports fields, etc. Place a recycling bin next to a garbage can – allows the option to “think before you throw” anything away – at the “point of pitch”. Recycling receptacles should look different than garbage cans and be marked as to what materials are accepted.



Promote Recycling Program

- Make a video of what can be recycled and where bins are located. Show during student assemblies, parent/teacher meetings; on the school's T.V. network, social media platforms, and to new students and their family;
- Morning announcements - recite an environmental-related quote, fact or brag about waste reduction successes to enlighten and inspire, at least one morning per week;
- Contribute an article or establish a "green" column in the school newsletter outlining program details – include photos;
- Make posters of do's and don'ts to put in lunch rooms, lounges, hallways and classrooms;
- Be sure that acceptable materials are listed on all recycling bins and containers;
- Establish "Ambassadors" – students to assist younger students during lunch periods;
- Keep track of recycling tonnage using visual graphs in common areas of the building;
- Contact a reporter from the local paper to inform them of the school's new dedication to reducing waste through recycling and helping the environment; and
- Invite town officials to come and tour the school's recycling program.
- Borrow SWANCC's *Sustainable Products Kit* to see over 50 items made with recycled or sustainable materials.

