

FAQ for San José Go Green Schools Program

Why should we recycle at school?

Nearly half of all school waste is made up of paper. Paper is easy to recycle. San Jose schools dispose of over 3,700 tons of paper annually. By recycling just 1 ton of paper we save:

- 4,100 kilowatts of energy
- 17 trees
- 6,953 gallons of water
- 463 gallons of oil
- 587 pounds of air pollution
- 3.06 cubic yards of landfill space

Source: Weyerhaeuser

Recycling bottles and cans saves energy and raw materials. It takes 19 times the energy to make an aluminum can from raw materials as it does to recycle a can. Glass can be recycled forever.

How can we start a recycling program at our school?

The City of San José Go Green Schools Program (SJGGSP) provides **free paper and bottle/can recycling containers** and technical assistance to set up and maintain your recycling program. San José K-12 public and private schools are eligible for this assistance. We provide preprinted cardboard boxes for paper recycling and heavy duty plastic containers for bottles and cans. San José schools can request recycling containers on-line and pick them up at RAFT, the Resource Area for Teachers.

Go to the website to order your recycling supplies on-line:

www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/gogreen/RecyclingSuppliesWelcome.asp

We recommend the following 5 steps as a course of action for starting a school recycling program:

1. Build a team – Ideally, the team should include a representative from each sector of the campus community e.g. parent, teacher, students, administrator, and custodian. The team should create a detailed and specific plan of action and a timeline for accomplishing goals. The person(s) responsible for specific tasks should be identified and deadlines set for completion of goals.

2. Start small and set goals – Conduct a waste audit to identify the waste generated by your school, and how much of this waste can be recycled, re-used, reduced or eliminated in the future. Realistic and obtainable goals should be created to measure progress and success of your program. Start small, create momentum, and build on your success.

3. Evaluate success and results – By quantifying and tracking your results you can show the effectiveness of the program. The results will show the success and value of the program, and garner interest and support from your campus community.

4. Form Partnerships – As shown in step 1, it is important to build a team among representatives on the campus, but don't stop there. Contact your community recycling coordinators to see what resources might be available to help with your efforts. San Jose Go Green Schools offers assistance and resources for setting up a recycling program for your school. For more information on San Jose Go Green Schools visit: <http://www.sjrecycles.org/gogreen/default.asp>

5. Find Funding – Funds are available through grants, fundraisers and loans. Free and low cost materials are also available to stretch school dollars. Environmentally and socially friendly fundraising organizations provide fundraising opportunities that are consistent with stewardship values.

San José Go Green Schools has a Mini-grant Program to promote environmental practices and programs in schools. For more information visit: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/gogreen/mini-grants.asp>

Another good way to fund your program is through redemption of recyclables. Your Green Team can set up a collection point at your school to collect recyclables such as used aluminum cans, ink cartridges, cell phones and other electronic waste. Local recycling brokers for these products will pay for the collection of these materials. For information regarding local recyclers and haulers visit: http://www.sjrecycles.org/business/rec_haul.htm

Or look in the San José Go Green Schools Resource Directory, www.sjrecycles.org/gogreen/default.asp.

How can we educate students about the environment?

Environmental Education connects students to the environment and can support any subject area. Studies document the positive impact environmental education has on student test scores, overall achievement and self-esteem. For a wealth of ways to connect students to nature while incorporating state curriculum standards, look in the San José Go Green Schools Resource Directory, www.sjrecycles.org/gogreen/default.asp.

What is composting?

Composting is nature's way of recycling organic material such as leaves, grass clippings, twigs, fruit and vegetable trimmings into a dark, crumbly, sweet smelling soil conditioner. Anything that was once living can be reused and recycled through the composting process. For more information visit San Jose's Environmental Services composting website at: http://www.sjrecycles.org/residents/home_compost.asp

Why should we start composting at school?

At school most waste is generated in the classroom and in the cafeteria. San Jose schools generate an estimated 4,500 tons of food waste annually. When food waste is turned into compost, it becomes a resource that can be used to replenish nutrients in soils to grow more food. Schools can compost food waste on a small scale using compost and/or worm bins.

How can we start composting at our schools?

Schools can compost food waste on a small scale using compost and or worm bins. Visit the City of San Jose compost website to learn about available compost resources provided: http://www.sjrecycles.org/residents/home_compost.asp
Or try the County's composting website at www.reducewaste.org or call them at **408-918-4640** for information on free workshops about how to compost.

What are the benefits of having a school garden?

School gardens can provide one of the most immediate and satisfying ways for students to encounter and learn about nature. School gardens give children the opportunity to develop life skills by contributing and working together to reach goals. They give children the opportunity to experience and appreciate the natural world. Through planting, growing, harvesting, and eating food grown in their gardens, children can take pride in their accomplishments. Also, through composting children learn about recycling their food waste and turning it into nutrient rich soil for their garden.

How do I grow a garden at school?

Lots of resources are available locally, including the Master Gardeners Program at their website www.mastergardeners.org/scc.html or at the Hotline: (408) 282-3105.

Other valuable resources are listed in the San José Go Green Schools Resource Directory, www.sjrecycles.org/gogreen/default.asp.

What does it mean to “buy green?”

Buying green means purchasing products, supplies, and equipment that are made from recycled and recyclable materials. Buying Green is an important part of the recycling cycle and not only helps to conserve our natural resources; it helps to ensure a strong market for recyclables. Buying recycled content paper is a good place to start.

How do we “buy green” for our classroom?

Check out the State Buy Recycled website for resources at <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BuyRecycled/StateAgency/Buying.htm> or look in the San José Go Green Schools Resource Directory, www.sjrecycles.org/gogreen/default.asp.

The Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT) is a great local organization that provides discounted recycled supplies and equipment for teachers. For more information on the extensive services they provide please visit: www.raft.net

Why is it important to take energy saving measures at school?

Most schools spend more money annually on energy bills than they do on school supplies. There are many simple ways to significantly reduce your schools energy bill and redirect the money saved into resources that foster education.

What can we do to save energy at school?

There are many no or low-cost steps that can be taken to reduce your school's energy bill such as:

- Turn off lights and computers in rooms that are not in use. Use daylighting and task lighting when possible.
- Turn thermostats off during holiday breaks. Close doors and windows when the HVAC is running.
- Install Energy Star programmable thermostats and motion sensors.
- Implement energy awareness programs to encourage staff and students to change their energy use.

Rebates are also available on energy upgrades of lights, HVAC, programmable thermostats and more. For more information visit PG&E's website for their School Resources Program. They can help schools reduce utility costs through facility improvements and operation/maintenance strategies.

www.pge.com/biz/rebates/schools/index.html

Or look in the San José Go Green Schools Resource Directory,

www.sjrecycles.org/gogreen/default.asp.