

Greening Schools Program

Green Team Guidelines

June 2013



Introduction

The purpose of creating a Green Team is to empower and provide leadership opportunities for students to become more involved in waste reduction and recycling efforts in their school. Peer based learning and leadership provide more applicable motivation and incentive to increase support and participation in the reduction of school waste. These Green Teams will set standards of environmental stewardship for other students, the faculty and staff at each school and the extended communities and families that reach beyond the school buildings.

Methodology

1. **Obtain support at the administrative level of your school.** This may be as simple as coordinating a time with your principal or AP for students to help with recycling collection or making general announcements to encourage recycling in the cafeteria. Support from the top will create a more productive initiative. This should be the very first step taken to coordinate student involvement in waste reduction and recycling efforts at your school.
2. **Choose students in a way that will make this endeavor a privileged opportunity.** Students should view being part of a Green Team as an exciting and fortunate opportunity. A competitive component may be helpful to weed out those students who are less serious about this opportunity and support this endeavor as serious and respectable.
 - a. **Consider creating an application for students to “apply” for these positions (see attached sample)**
 - b. **Offer motivating factors that will come with being a Green Team member.** These factors will be age appropriate and school specific. Things such as offering school money, i.e. Owl Bucks, Wildcat Dollars, or a Tag Day (in schools where uniforms are standard, pizza party). CCEM will work with Green Teams to help fund and support motivational incentives.
 - i. **Green Team Member Kit**-CCEM can provide each Green Team with motivational items to help incentivize and reward the efforts of these students. This kit would include:
 - T-shirt
 - Reusable water bottle

- Green Team lanyard, identifying them throughout the school when collecting recyclables or educating students
 - Recycle Right Post-It notes
 - Other promotional items
- c. **Establish End-of-the-Year Award Recognitions for Green Students.** Outline criteria for Green student recognition and utilize procedures already in place at your school for End-of-the-Year Awards. Make sure that all faculty receive this information early in the school year in order to know what behaviors and initiatives a student deserving this award should be practicing.

3. Outline job responsibilities for Green Team.

Depending on how you decide to structure your team, this can be something as simple as a schedule for meeting and dividing up recycling collection within the school or more involved if monitoring cafeteria waste stations during lunch, which would include sign-up sheets and rotating lunch duty schedules. A few things to consider when thinking through these job descriptions are listed below:

- a. Decide when the recycling will be collected within the school
- b. Decide how teachers will know when the classroom recycling will be collected, i.e. maybe an announcement.
- c. Will students collect during school hours or after? If during school hours then teachers will need to probably set recycling bins outside of their classrooms. Make sure that workrooms, offices and media centers are serviced as well.
- d. Involve the day porter in some capacity to help with the logistics of collection. He or she may need to be more involved if younger students (elementary aged) will be doing the collection. In middle and high schools the day porter and custodial staff will be more involved with the collection procedures. Student involvement in the cafeteria is strongly encouraged but should not be initiated until proper and consistent scheduling can be established.

4. Educate Students and Staff

Students and staff should be knowledgeable about the importance of issues surrounding waste reduction and recycling. Education about what is recyclable and what is not, to what happens to your recyclables once they are collected should become common knowledge for Green Team members. As leaders, these students need to be able to provide accurate information about key issues related to waste reduction and recycling. CCEM recommends that the following steps be taken when forming a Green Team:

- a. Schedule an informational training from CCEM Greening Schools Program for Green Team students.
- b. Schedule an informational training to present at a faculty meeting. CCEM can provide a short Power Point and/or video for teachers that can be presented by a staff member or by the Greening Schools Representative from CCEM.

- c. Provide school wide recognition of the Green Team through a formal announcement made at an assembly program or other similar school wide event. PTA or PTO meetings, school web sites, sporting events are all great places to begin recognizing these teams and what they do.

5. Provide educational networking opportunities for the Green Team to build and share their knowledge

In order to keep students active and interested in the dynamics of sustainability, we suggest providing fresh and innovative activities to keep them thinking forward, outside of the box and into the future. CCEM has listed some suggestions for expanding your Green Team's perspectives:

- a. Invite guest speakers to a Green Team Meeting, scheduled after school or during a school special interest time slot. CCEM has a diverse network of sustainably minded organizations and businesses that we can work with to help you schedule educational programs. From plastic pollution and water sheds to biodiversity and solar energy, there are numerous organizations that would love the opportunity to energize and inform your students.
- b. Utilize these students to educate their peers throughout the school. Maybe once a week/month the eighth graders teach the sixth graders about "Recycling Right" or about a topic they may have just learned about, like plastic pollution in our oceans. They could create a PP or a video to educate another class or a small group of teachers. This educational networking creates ownership and pride for these students and helps to build interest and popularity for Green Teams.
- c. Get your Green Team to perform a waste audit. This would simply be a task of sorting through a sample of school generated trash (cafeteria trash or classroom trash) and classifying it into groups, such as recyclable paper, recyclable containers or landfill. This would be a valuable tool to show students a glimpse of the resources that are being thrown away without thought at their school. This could be the stimulus to create an awareness campaign in your school.