



Ideas for School Green Teams:

Waste Reduction:

- Collect paper that has been used on one side and reuse as a draft drawer in your copy machines and to use as note pads.
- Get software to convert faxes to pdf's rather than print them.
- Automatically set up documents to have 0.5" margins.
- Get rid of disposable lunch trays and plastic silverware and replace with durables.
- Have staff memos and daily announcements sent via email or posted instead of individually printed.
- Replace paper towels with air dryers in bathrooms.
- Replace milk cartons with milk dispensers.
- Teach students and parents about waste-free lunches.
- Create a donation station where people can drop off or pick up used clothing, games, sporting equipment, etc. Donate any undesirable items to a thrift store or homeless shelter.
- Email school newsletters instead of print them.
- Teach staff, students and parents how to get off junk-mail lists.
- Work with your suppliers to reduce how much packaging they use when sending your orders.
- Encourage the use of rechargeable batteries in your school and to students.
- Reuse large mailing envelopes.
- Work with your school office to get all bills sent electronically.
- Set your printers to default to double sided printing.
- Eliminate the sale and use of bottled water in your school.
- Donate excess food from kitchen to food banks.
- Post signs in the bathrooms to remind students not to use too many paper towels.
- Set up a "No Thank You" table (also known as "Offer Versus Serve") in the cafeteria to minimize food waste.
- Sell reusable water bottles as part of a campaign to reduce plastic water bottles.
- Purchase reusable gloves & aprons for kitchen staff.
- Replace disposable cups, plates and utensils throughout school with durables.

Recycling:

- Start a collection program for less commonly recycled materials like chip bags, candy wrappers, pens, cell phones, plastic bags, printer cartridges, rechargeable batteries, greeting cards, etc.
- Have your green team monitor the recycling efforts of your school's recycling by having them check for recyclables in the classroom/office trash and contamination in the recycling. Report these weekly findings to the classes.
- Check that all classrooms, the office, library, hallways, etc. have recycling bins.
- Clearly label all school recycling bins and place them next to garbage cans to reduce contamination.
- Set up special recycling drives at the end of the terms &/or school year to collect large volumes of paper.

- Ensure that recycling is available at extra-curricular activities like sporting events, school dances, fairs, etc.
- Require outside groups that use your school after-hours to recycle.
- Set up periodic student visits to classrooms to see if they have a lot of recyclables in their garbage & if they have contaminants in their recycling. Report your findings to the classrooms.

Composting:

- Compost vegetative waste at your school like fruit peels, coffee grounds, grass clippings, leaves and kitchen waste.
- Compost cafeteria waste (if food composting is available in your area).
- If your school has a garden, set up a compost system.
- Set up a worm composting system.

Water Conservation:

- Work with your custodian to sweep or blow dirt from paved areas instead of use a pressure washer.
- Check that your school has faucet aerators throughout the school.
- Test all toilets for leaks.
- Verify that your kitchen does not use a garbage disposal.
- Mark the storm drains at your schools &/or neighborhood to remind people not to dump motor oil or other waste.
- Keep the garbage dumpsters clean and away from storm drains.
- If your school does car-washes as a fundraiser, take steps to prevent waste-water from entering storm drains.
- Set up the irrigation system to automatically avoid watering on wet days.
- Water early in the morning to avoid evaporation in the heat of the day. Avoid watering when it is windy.
- Regularly sweep school parking lots to avoid excessive debris in the storm drains.
- Plant native plants throughout school grounds.
- Install low-flow shower heads in locker rooms.
- Install timers on bathroom faucets and locker room showers.
- Analyze your school's seasonal water use.
- Ensure that all toilets low-flow (1.6 gallons or less).
- Install rain barrels or another water capture system to use water that falls on the roof.
- Post signs in bathrooms reminding students to conserve water.
- Calculate stormwater runoff – measure area of roof and other impervious surfaces—and the amount of rain you receive (use in Math classrooms). Think about ways to divert the stormwater away from the stormwater drains and put it back to use.
- Research pervious surface alternatives for all impervious surfaces (concrete, asphalt, roofing) and calculate the amount of stormwater reduction if replaced.
- Install a rain garden.
- Determine how much water is used per year to water lawns/fields. Recommend replacing any non-field lawns with shrubs or native plants and calculate the water savings (in volume and \$).
- Determine water savings (in volume and \$) for one year for one of the following: faucet fixtures (aerators and motion sensor), low-flow toilets and waterless urinals, low-flow shower heads, or irrigation systems.
- Design a display for the foyer, commons, cafeteria or other public space to educate students and staff about your school's water quality and/or conservation actions.
- Do a community litter pick-up.

- Plant a tree.
- Create a bioswale, nativescape, greenhouse, green roof or a school garden. If you don't use the food from your school garden, consider donating it to a food bank.

Energy Conservation:

- Have your green team monitor classrooms each week to see if they left lights, computers or other items on when nobody is around. Report these weekly findings to the classes.
- Establish a policy to require monitors to be turned off after 5 minutes of inactivity and computers after 2 hours of non-use.
- Invest in solar panels.
- Have computers, lights and copy machines set to automatically turn off at the end of the day. If you can't do this, make this the responsibility of your custodian or other staff that works after hours.
- Conduct an energy audit using the Oregon Green Schools form &/or asking the Energy Trust or PGE to conduct an audit.
- Set up periodic student visits to classrooms to see if they have left lights, computers, etc. on when nobody is there. Report your findings to the classrooms.
- Put up prompts like stickers to remind people to turn off lights and computers.
- Install motion sensors in seldomly used rooms
- Install LED exit signs.
- Set thermostats to maximize energy efficiency.
- Install light sensors or work with staff to take advantage of natural daylight and only use the necessary amount of lighting.
- Delamp lights that are not needed.
- Install daylight controls for exterior lighting.
- Establish a policy to only purchase Energy Star computers and appliances.
- Eliminate mini-fridges unless needed for medications.
- Consolidate staff refrigerators in order to eliminate unnecessary ones.
- Check that all refrigerators have adequate seals and have the custodian's annual maintenance list include cleaning the refrigerator coils.
- If your refrigerator is older than 1993, use the EPA calculator to determine if your refrigerators are in need of updating.
- Check that refrigerator temperatures are between 38-42 degrees Fahrenheit and freezers between 0-5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If you have vending machines, ask your distributor to delamp the machines.
- Install Vending Misers on all school vending machines.
- Eliminate T12 lights and magnetic ballasts and replace with T8 lights with electronic ballasts.
- Check all school faucets hot water to ensure that the water temperature is between 120-130 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Check that all heating/cooling vents in classrooms are not blocked.
- Create a district-wide policy to save energy.

Hazardous Waste:

- Check that your custodians are using cleaning products that are 3rd party certified.
- Eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides on your school grounds.
- Establish a recycling program for electronics and fluorescent lights.
- If your school has a chemistry or biology lab, conduct an inventory and analyze contents for safety. Check that your lab chemicals are stored in metal acid storage cabinets.

- Verify that your school has a policy to safely dispose of hazardous materials.
- If your school is older, evaluate it for asbestos, mercury, lead paint and other environmental hazards.
- Replace any mercury thermostats and recycle them.
- Verify that your school's art department uses ACMI certified products.
- Eliminate urinal cakes and anti-bacterial soaps containing triclosan.
- Train custodians how to safely clean up broken fluorescent tubes.
- Eliminate artificial fragrances and toxic markers in classrooms.

Green Procurement:

- Establish a school-wide policy to purchase copy paper, toilet paper, paper towels and napkins with post-consumer recycled content.
- Source food locally and organic when possible.
- Use refurbished ink/toner in copy machines and printers.
- Establish a sustainable purchasing policy for your school.
- Purchase renewable power.
- Generate renewable energy such as solar power.
- Post reminders in school supply cabinets reminding staff to purchase supplies that contain recycled content.
- Purchase credits to offset your school's carbon emissions.
- Establish your school as a community supported agriculture (CSA) drop-off location.
- Create and distribute a "No PVC" back-to-school list.

Transportation:

- Prohibit bus drivers from idling.
- Establish "No Idle Zones" for parents.
- Install safe, covered bicycle parking.
- Create safe bicycle routes and publicize to students and their parents.
- Participate in a Walk & Bike to School Day.
- Encourage employee carpooling.
- Work with fleet to have busses and other vehicles use alternative fuels, hybrids, electric power, etc.
- Remove mercury switches from all older vehicles in fleet.

Communication:

- Have students give classroom presentations &/or announcements at assemblies on how to recycle, water/energy conservation, etc.
- "Green Page" on website, newsletter articles, monthly green tips, etc.
- Displays in school entry, hallways, staff break room, etc. Examples include waste audit or energy audit results, new recycling efforts, recycling art projects, etc.
- Prominently display Oregon Green Schools certificate, decals, etc.
- Quarterly presentations on green team efforts to staff.
- Create a Q&A forum for staff, students and parents to get their environmental questions answered.
- Reach out to other schools to help them with their environmental efforts.
- Paint a mural with an environmental theme.
- Create an environmental fair or event for students and parents.