



Planning Guide

For School-Site Go Green Teams

*Protecting Children's Health Through
Environmental Stewardship*

*"All schools prepare our children for the future,
but Go Green schools prepare the future for our children."*

*Jill Buck
Founder of the Go Green Initiative*





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How to Use This Planning Guide

This guide is a tool for schools that are implementing the Go Green Initiative, either for the first time, or for a new school year. Use this tool in conjunction with the information on the Go Green Initiative website, which is regularly updated with fresh information and resources (www.gogreeninitiative.org).

This guide is the product of extensive piloting and feedback from parents, teachers and principals, as well as environmental specialists. We welcome any feedback on this guide, and will always be on the lookout for creating optimal tools that help you achieve success.



This guide will walk your Go Green Team through each principle of the Go Green Initiative, and ask you to complete planning exercises. Your Go Green Team should consist of at least one representative of the following campus stakeholders: parents, teachers, administrators, custodians and where age appropriate, students.

By the time your Go Green Team completes this guide, you will have a month-by-month activity plan and budget to support your overall Go Green goals. *It is not necessary to implement all five of the principles of the Go Green Initiative in the first year*, though your Go Green team may find it perfectly reasonable to do so. The important thing is that your Go Green Team is comfortable with your plan, and willing to energize each sector of the campus community around shared goals. The Go Green Initiative is not a sprint toward environmental stewardship. Rather, it is a daily walk at a sustainable pace toward a better future.

When your Go Green Team has completed this guide, please email, fax, scan or send a double-sided hard copy of Appendix C (Budget and Monthly Calendar) on recycled-content paper to:

The Go Green Initiative Association • C/O Jill Buck, Executive Director
P.O. Box 1604 • Pleasanton, CA 94566
Fax: 925-226-3942 • executivedirector@gogreeninitiative.org

Your Go Green Team responses are kept strictly confidential, and are used only by the Go Green Initiative Association to determine what services, training and resources we can provide to better serve our Go Green schools.



Generate Compost



Composting is nature's way of recycling. Through basic composting (brown and green waste) and vermi (worm) composting programs, children learn about ecology, biology and waste reduction. The educational opportunities with vermicomposting are obvious, especially in science and math; however, there are many other activities that support state curriculum standards. For example, basic composting bins can compliment a school garden project.

Composting is not difficult, but does take some research and a bit of practice. If your school does not have composting on-site, we recommend that you start with a small composting bin and work your way up. Start composting in a school garden with leaves and grass clippings. Encourage teachers to get involved through staff development training with a view toward having smaller vermi-composting bins in various classrooms.

Once teachers and students become comfortable with composting in classrooms, you will have developed the necessary campus culture to compost lunch waste. When your campus is ready to compost lunch waste, it is worthwhile to find a local composting expert to advise your campus on the placement, procedures and maintenance of a larger composting effort. Call your local recycling coordinator to assist you in finding technical assistance.



Preliminary Questions:

Does our campus currently generate compost...

In our school garden? Yes No

In classrooms? Yes No If yes, in how many classrooms? _____

With lunchtime food waste? Yes No

Goal-setting Section:

We could increase efforts to generate compost by...

Realistically, in one school year we can expect our campus composting to consist of...

List any possible obstacles to campus composting:

List the information/resources/support needed in order to overcome these obstacles:

We can reward our campus community for composting by...

The following people will lead our campus composting efforts (2-3 people):

- _____
- _____
- _____



Recycle



With diminishing natural resources and a desire to manage our waste disposal sites better, recycling has never been more important. Recycle items such as paper, plastic, aluminum, cell phones, electronic waste (e-waste), and printer cartridges to reduce toxic greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy. For instance, manage e-waste by finding creative solutions to divert obsolete computer parts, cell phones and other peripheral devices from the waste stream. Schools that recycle provide much-needed materials to manufacturers who produce new products from recycled materials.

Recycling is the “low hanging fruit” of the Go Green Initiative, and the most obvious indicator that a school is working toward environmentally responsible goals. Often schools have some sort of recycling occurring on campus, but in many instances it revolves around a few enthusiasts, instead of an “all hands” effort. The intention of the recycling principle of the Go Green Initiative is two-fold: to model good recycling behavior for children, and most importantly, to allow them frequent opportunities to participate in campus recycling. If your recycling program relies upon a custodian, a teacher, or a small club of students to rifle through the garbage picking out recyclables, you’re not teaching students necessary recycling lessons. That’s like saying your campus has a school lunch program that only serves food to 1% of the population. A successful and meaningful recycling program must involve the whole campus. Furthermore, while there are hundreds of recycling curriculums, poster contests, assemblies and coloring books, there is no teaching tool like the daily, hands-on practice of recycling everything that cannot be reused.

Recycling can be a lucrative fundraiser for your school. Recycling brokers, as well as printer cartridge and cell phone recyclers pay schools that collect these items. However, it is important to find companies with reliable and trustworthy reuse and recycling methods. Not all companies manage the life-cycle of the recyclable items they collect, and your school would not want to end up using a company which ships the cell phones you collect overseas for unregulated and unsafe disposal. Contact the Go Green Initiative Association (“Contact Us” page of our website) to find out which companies we recommend, based upon a rigorous vetting process for all Go Green partners.



Preliminary Questions:

Do we currently recycle...

Paper? Plastic? Aluminum? Cell Phones? Printer cartridges? Other?

Do we buy recycled content products, such as...

Paper? Office products/school supplies? Other?

Goal-setting Section:

What materials will we recycle on campus this year?

How will we quantify how much of each material we recycle/divert from the waste stream?

(See Appendix B, pgs. 18-19)

Where on our campus will we place the collection points for each material?

How will we involve students in our recycling/waste diversion efforts?

Can our recyclable materials be used as a fundraiser?

Who will remove our recyclables from campus?

Note: start with your current waste hauler. Use the checklist called "Negotiating with Your Waste Hauler," found in Appendix A, pg. 17.

If you are unsatisfied with the service your waste hauler offers, consider using an independent broker. Your local recycling coordinator and/or the yellow pages will help you locate alternative services.

How will we design our recycling/waste diversion plan to minimize the impact on our custodians?

How will we ensure that our campus community, including parents, is well informed of our recycling plans?

List any possible obstacles to campus recycling:

List the information/resources/support needed to overcome these obstacles:

We can reward our campus community for recycling by...

The following people will lead our campus recycling efforts (2-3 people):

- _____
- _____
- _____

Note: Use the Quarterly Progress Report on the "Services" page of the website to quantify your success in waste diversion and recycling (www.gogreeninitiative.org).



Educate



When students, teachers, custodians, school officials and parents work together to make their schools environmentally friendly, they are more likely to incorporate the same behaviors into their off-campus lives. In this way, schools serve as a catalyst of desired behaviors for the community at large. Our goal is to create environmentally responsible school communities throughout the nation and across the globe.

In order to accomplish that goal, environmental education cannot be aimed at students alone. Parents, teachers, custodians, school administrators, and community members should be involved in the education process.

Send parents information via school emails and web sites, and offer them valuable training in environmentally responsible behavior by ensuring that recycling is practiced at school functions and waste is kept to a minimum. Invite parents to staff development training sessions and school assemblies on environmental topics. Involve parents with Go Green Initiative practices when they visit and/or volunteer in the classrooms so they can be a part of their child's environmental education.

Offer teachers opportunities to receive staff development training on a variety of topics that will help them create classrooms that model environmental stewardship. From classroom recycling programs, to teaching children how to help improve indoor air quality, teachers can create an Earth-friendly microcosm in the classroom that will set the standard children will grow to expect from the rest of their world. Environmental education should not be relegated to science teachers and teachers with an environmental interest. Every classroom, regardless of the subject, can be set up to reflect environmentally responsible operating practices. For instance, in every classroom collect paper and plastic water bottles for recycling, turn off the lights when not in use, and give assignments on recycled-content paper (using both sides) when possible.

Custodians are vital members of any school's Go Green Team. Involve custodians in staff development training on environmental subjects and enlist their input when educating decision makers on realistic approaches for waste diversion and campus recycling. Offer special training to custodians in such subjects as: integrated pest management, indoor air quality, Green Seal/EPA approved cleaning products, energy consumption, etc.

School administrators have many concerns apart from environmental stewardship on their campuses, so they need streamlined educational opportunities. When a Go Green Team sets its goals for the year, they should work together to provide their principal, superintendent, and others involved with purchasing, the information they will need to make intelligent decisions. For instance, if a school's Go Green Team decides they want to recycle as much paper as possible, they should supply their school administrators with information on what services the school's waste hauler already provides for paper recycling, and a recommendation on how to



implement or enhance the paper recycling program on campus. The Go Green Team should serve as a fact-finding body, providing education and options to the school administration for final decisions.

There are a variety of ways to educate community members on environmentally responsible behaviors. When Go Green schools utilize the Public Relations Kit, provided on the “Services” page of the web site (www.gogreeninitiative.org), the expectation is that local papers will take notice of the Go Green Initiative at your school. Community members will learn how your school is working to benefit the entire community through waste diversion activities and will often look for ways to support your efforts. Many Go Green schools have set up community collection points for recyclable materials that schools are paid to collect, such as cell phones, printer cartridges, and aluminum.



And, of course, students must be educated in environmentally responsible behavior. In many cases, this education isn't in the form of curriculum – though we highly recommend some curriculum programs. The most effective education students receive is through habitual practice of environmental stewardship, and through adult modeling of responsible behavior. Just as we insist that children practice brushing their teeth daily before they understand the concepts of plaque and cavities, we can teach children to separate their recyclables and to participate in composting even before they have any formal training on the intricacies of those topics. The Go Green Initiative believes that practical, hands-on learning will achieve maximum impact. It does no good whatsoever to teach students about recycling if their campus isn't set up for recycling. It will achieve nothing to teach children about conservation if every week they bring home inch-thick packets of flyers to their parents on single-sided (vs. double-sided) sheets of paper. A lesson on energy conservation is meaningless to students if their classroom air conditioning runs non-stop to achieve 65 degrees. Seeing is believing for kids. They need to see adults practicing environmental stewardship daily in order to believe it is important.

Preliminary Questions:

Do we host parent education workshops on environmental topics, e.g. at-home recycling, pesticide use, composting, etc.?

Yes No

Do we help teachers acquire environmental education materials for their classrooms?

Yes No

Do we have staff development training for school staff regarding environmental education?

Yes No

Are there environmental education topics woven into science/math/social science curriculum and standards for students?

Yes No



Goal-setting Section:

We will focus our environmental educational efforts on the following subjects this year:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

We will educate our school staff in these principles by:

We will educate our students in these principles by:

We will educate our parents in these principles by:

We will educate the community around our school in these principles by:

Some of the obstacles to our educational plan are:

We can overcome each obstacle by:

We can reward our campus for engaging in environmental education by...

The following people will be in charge of organizing our educational efforts (2-3 people):

- _____
- _____
- _____



Evaluate the Environmental Impact of All Activities

This element of the Go Green Initiative is truly the crux of the program. Evaluating each activity's environmental impact challenges every member of a school campus community to consider the environmental impact of routine decisions, purchases, and daily actions. These honest evaluations make the Go Green Initiative unique from all other environmental education programs. Instead of a narrow checklist of prescriptive pabulum from individual(s) *outside* the campus community, this program invites critical thinking and problem solving skills from *inside* the campus community.

Many of the projects that come under this element of the Go Green Initiative are ones that a lone parent, teacher, custodian, principal or student could not successfully address. But when a campus community forms a Go Green Team consisting of members from all sectors of the campus, and that team reaches consensus to work on issues like those described below, success is inevitable. Furthermore, when many Go Green Teams in a school district or region join together with shared goals for addressing environmental impacts, then the stage is set for addressing larger issues involving multiple campuses.



In order to begin work in this area, identify products and practices that could threaten the health and welfare of children and the world around them. Consider improving the campus environment with activities such as eliminating excessive energy consumption, evaluating the toxicity of pesticides used in classrooms and on playgrounds, and improving air quality through increased carpooling efforts. Develop strategies for your teachers to help them create classrooms that send a clear message to students that environmental impact is a consideration for classroom actions. Work with school boards and facilities managers to create policies that support the concept of sustainable development and LEED certification for existing buildings and new construction (see U.S. Green Building Council website for more information: www.usgbc.org).

If the U.S. Census Bureau is correct, in the next four decades the world's population will swell to 9 billion. If the world's natural resources are evenly distributed among each person, people in the year 2050 will only have 25% of the natural resources available to them that people in 1950 had. Simply put, it won't matter what profession our children choose, each of them will face the reality of managing the environment around them. If our public schools are to adequately ready the next generation for the challenges they will face, then we must teach them the skills they will need to manage the resources at their disposal.



Preliminary Questions

Do we evaluate the environmental impact of...

Pesticides used in/around the school? Yes No

Indoor air quality? Yes No

Our carpooling program (or lack thereof), and its impact on outdoor air quality? Yes No

Amount of paper used? Yes No

School lunch waste? Yes No

Energy consumption? Yes No

Green building opportunities when remodeling/constructing? Yes No

Litter on campus? Yes No

Service ware/flatware used for school meal service and school social functions? Yes No

Supplies used/purchased for classroom and office use? Yes No

Our disposal of green waste? Yes No

School's impact on indigenous wildlife and efforts to mitigate the impact? Yes No

Other? _____



Goal-setting Section:

We will evaluate the environmental impact of the following areas:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

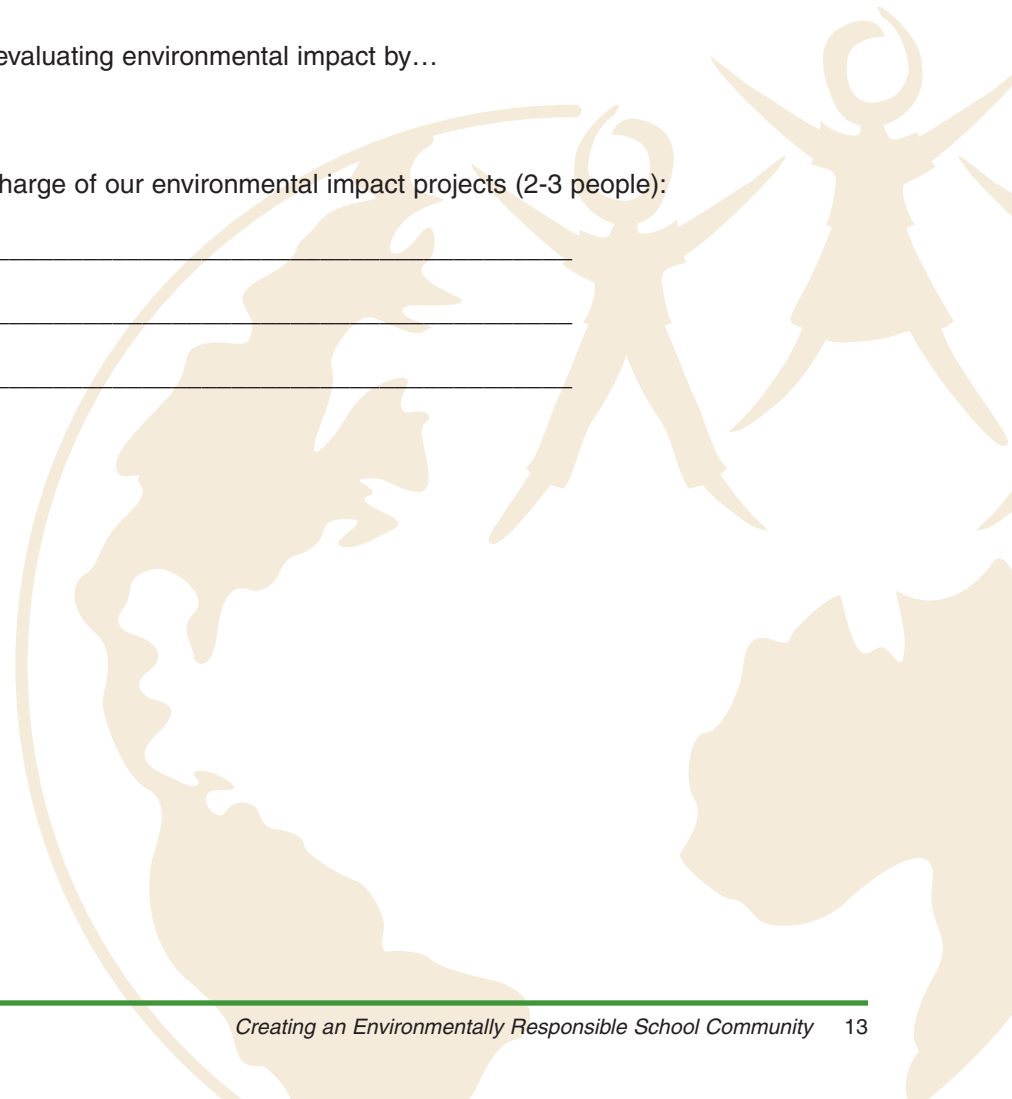
Some of the obstacles to evaluating the environmental impact of these items will be:

We can overcome each obstacle by:

We can reward our campus for evaluating environmental impact by...

The following people will be in charge of our environmental impact projects (2-3 people):

- _____
- _____
- _____





Nationalize Principles of Responsible Paper Consumption



Paper gets special treatment in the Go Green Initiative because it is the recyclable material most prevalent on school campuses. We use paper for textbooks, notebooks, worksheets, scratch paper, art projects, library books, flyers to parents, internal communication, and for some, paper airplanes! Paper on school campuses isn't going away; it's a valuable commodity and serves its purpose. Because paper is so important and valuable to the way we do business, it is critical to use it with respect, so that we can teach children how to manage paper consumption responsibly.

We all know that paper comes from trees, and that by recycling paper, we might save some trees. I say, "*Might save some trees,*" because there are variables to that statement. First and foremost, if we're all sending paper away for recycling, but no one is buying recycled-content office and classroom paper products, paper manufacturers won't see the demand for recycled-content office paper and will instead use all that recovered paper to make items like bath tissue and cereal boxes. It's important to increase the amount of recycled-content office paper we purchase in order to ensure a strong market. As demand for recycled-content paper increases, the demand for the fiber to make recycled paper also increases, thereby encouraging paper recycling. Years ago, it used to be true that recycled-content paper was inferior in quality, value and functionality compared to virgin paper, but that is simply not so today. All of the nation's top paper mills make recycled-content paper products that are as bright, clean, and safe as virgin papers for copy machines. Recycled-content office paper is also increasingly as cost-effective and comparably priced as virgin paper. As an institution, schools purchase so much paper that if schools began buying recycled-content paper, the laws of supply and demand would dictate that the price of this paper would come down.

Another variable in the "saving trees" argument is the fact that we need a continuous infusion of virgin fiber (new trees) in the paper supply. If you took a piece of virgin paper, and kept recycling it for reuse, you could only do that about nine times before the fibers would become too short to hold together in the form of a piece of paper. The truth is, unless our society becomes completely paperless, we cannot discontinue using trees for paper products through mere recycling. Still, if we must use paper, then we should buy recycled-content paper, and recycle all the paper we can. If your campus provides ample collection points for paper and proper training to the campus community, it is possible to remove 100% of the reusable, recyclable or compostable paper from your waste stream.

In communities in which parents and teachers have access to the Internet, it is a good idea to reduce paper use by communicating via email and school web sites. When that approach is not entirely possible, you can



print on both sides of the paper or utilize half sheets where practical. At the Charter Go Green School, Walnut Grove Elementary, the PTA had been spending nearly \$10,000 per year printing weekly flyers for parents. After “going Green,” they reduced that amount by over 75%, and had enough money to realize one of their long-term goals and hire a part-time art teacher. For families without Internet access, they made hard copies of all communication available in the office and opened their school computer lab for a few hours each week for parents who wanted to check the school website and email from teachers.

There are many ways to implement this element of the Go Green Initiative:

- Consider purchasing recycled-content paper and office products.
- Use technology to communicate electronically as much as possible.
- Seek ways to provide Internet access to all school families.

Preliminary Questions:

Do we buy recycled content paper? Yes No

Do we recycle paper to the largest extent possible? Yes No

Do we make a conscious decision to reduce the amount of paper consumed? Yes No

Do we maximize paperless communication options? Yes No

Goal-setting Section:

We can reduce paper consumption by:

We can purchase recycled content paper by:

We can maximize paperless communication by:

We can recycle paper in classrooms and offices by:

Some of the obstacles to changing our paper practices are:

We can overcome each obstacle by:

We can reward our campus for responsible paper consumption by...

The following people will be in charge of organizing our change in paper practices (2-3 people):

- _____
- _____
- _____



Go Green Team Approval

Working Together for Children

We, the undersigned, commit to working together to create an environmentally responsible campus that protects children’s health through environmental stewardship. We understand that our endeavor will take time to implement, and will not happen overnight. But, over the course of the next few weeks and months, we know that we will be successful in creating the awareness and concern in our community that will facilitate positive changes in the people and institutions around us, on behalf of our children’s future. We further commit to creating a school community that will demonstrate environmentally responsible behavior for our children everyday, and that through this modeling of excellent practices, the children in our community will learn to be good stewards of the resources around them.

Administrator(s)	Teacher(s)
•	•
•	•
•	•
Parent(s)	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	Student(s)
•	•
Custodian(s)	•
•	•
•	•



Appendix A:

Negotiating with Your Waste Hauler

The following “hauler questions” will help you establish the service you need from your waste hauler, in order to achieve maximum success with your campus recycling program. Even if your garbage contract is handled by your school district, and not your individual school site, the following negotiation points will help you intelligently participate in decision-making processes involving garbage and recyclable material removal from your campus.

- ✓ What recyclables do you currently collect/have a market for? (Examples: paper, glass, plastics, aluminum, e-waste, printer cartridges, cell phones, etc.)
- ✓ How do you prefer to have recyclables...
 - Separated?
 - Prepared?
 - Collected?
 - Readied for pick-up?

Examples: special containers, how do we maintain acceptable levels of quality in our collection method?
- ✓ When/where will you pick up recyclables? Is there a charge, or will your cost for pick-up be absorbed in the profit you make from the recyclables we collect?
- ✓ If we reduce our garbage volume as a result of removing recyclables from our waste stream, what can we expect our savings to be?
- ✓ Will you pay us for recyclables we source separate, i.e. can we use recycling as a fundraiser?
- ✓ If we sell recyclables, for which you have an established market, to another broker, will there be a negative impact on our garbage contract with you?



Appendix B:

Waste Diversion Quantification Guidance

Paper

In order to properly quantify the amount of paper your campus is recycling, and thus diverting from the landfill, it should be separated from other recyclables for quantification purposes.

- If your campus uses 96-gallon tote carts for paper recycling, you can approximate the weight of a full tote at 250 lbs. An acceptable quantification method is to keep a weekly tally sheet that tracks how full each of the 96 gallon containers are before they are emptied, and extrapolate the total weight of the paper you are recycling each week.

Example: If you have five 96 gallon carts, and 3 are full, 1 is 50% full and 1 is 25 % full for the week, your calculation would be: (3 x 250 lbs.) + (1 x 125 lbs.) + (1 x 62.5 lbs.) = 937.5 lbs. for the week.

- If your campus recycles paper along with other recyclables, i.e. single stream recycling, then quantifying your paper recycling is more difficult. However, if you do not quantify the amount of paper you are pulling from the waste stream, it will be difficult to report your recycling success to your campus community or set goals for improving your waste diversion efforts.

Example: If you have small containers where paper is collected in classrooms and school office spaces, e.g. cardboard book boxes work well; you might consider consolidating the paper in some fashion and weighing it each week on a bathroom scale. You may even consider asking each classroom and office space to track their paper recycling on a chart posted in the space. This will allow the students and adults in those spaces to see a visual reminder of their progress in pulling paper from the waste stream.

Plastic

In order to properly quantify the amount of plastic your campus is recycling, and thus diverting from the landfill, it should be separated from other recyclables for quantification purposes.

- The weight of a container full of plastics varies greatly from week to week, so extrapolation methods that work for paper are not applicable to plastic. The fluctuation in weight is attributable to variables such as: whether or not the plastic beverage containers are empty when discarded; whether or not the plastic containers are crushed before being discarded; etc.
- Plastics can be collected in bags and weighed on a bathroom scale.
- Plastics can be collected in bags and taken to a transfer station for weighing (and often for profit for the school).
- If your waste hauler is amenable, plastics can be collected in a special dumpster that is hauled away when full, taken to a transfer station for weighing, and a report can be sent back to the school for quantification purposes.



Aluminum

Quantification for aluminum can be done in the same manner as plastic.

Cell Phones

Cell phones may be quantified by counting the number of phones recycled. Weighing the phones is not necessary for purposes of submitting the Go Green Quarterly Progress report.

Printer cartridges

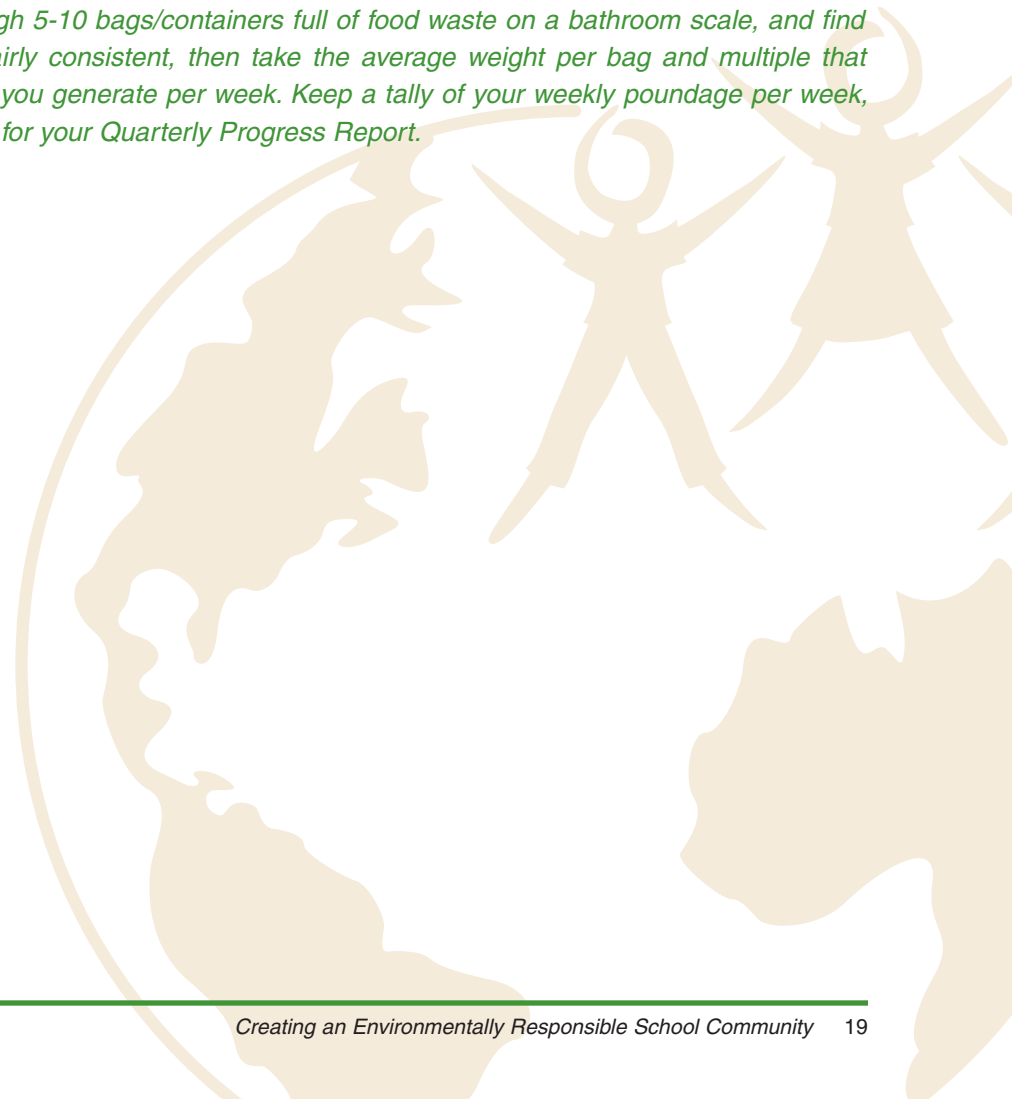
Printer cartridges may be quantified by counting the number of cartridges recycled. Weighing the cartridges is not necessary for purposes of submitting the Go Green Quarterly Progress report.

Lunch Waste/Food Scraps

Food waste that is collected at lunch (or breakfast) is fairly simple to quantify.

- If you collect the food waste in bags before putting the food waste into a compost bin or other secondary collection container, simply weigh 5-10 bags to find an average weight of a full bag/container of food waste. Once you have an average, you can simply extrapolate data.

Example: If you individually weigh 5-10 bags/containers full of food waste on a bathroom scale, and find that the weights of each are fairly consistent, then take the average weight per bag and multiple that number by the number of bags you generate per week. Keep a tally of your weekly poundage per week, and consolidate those numbers for your Quarterly Progress Report.





After completing pages 20-23, please email, fax, or send a hard copy (double-sided on recycled-content paper) to:
 The Go Green Initiative Association C/O Jill Buck, Executive Director
 P.O. Box 1604 • Pleasanton, CA 94566
 Fax: 925-226-3942 • executivedirector@gogreeninitiative.org

Appendix C:

Go Green Budget Planning Tool

You will find the excel spreadsheet version of the following table on the Go Green Initiative web site (www.gogreeninitiative.org). Click on the “Services” page and look under “Go Green Toolkit.” The advantage to using the excel spreadsheet version is that it is easy to add or delete rows and it is designed to automatically tabulate your budget subtotals under each element of the Go Green Initiative and your overall program budget. However, feel free to use the table below if you prefer doing manual calculations.

Generate Compost		
	Resources needed	Cost of each item
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	Subtotal for Composting	\$
Recycle		
	Resources needed	Cost of each item
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	Subtotal for Recycling	\$



Educate		
	Resources needed	Cost of each item
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	Subtotal for Education	\$
Evaluate Environmental Impact		
	Resources needed	Cost of each item
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	Subtotal for Environmental Evaluation	\$
Nationalize Principles of Responsible Paper Consumption		
	Resources needed	Cost of each item
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	•	\$
	Subtotal for Responsible Paper Consumption	\$
	Total Go Green Budget	\$



Monthly Activity Calendar

Month	Generating Compost List Activities Person(s) in charge	Recycling List Activities Person(s) in charge
September		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		





www.GoGreenInitiative.org



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