School Zero Waste Program

Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District

Gwen Lyons, School Program Manager
CVSWMD School
Program Overview

- Composting (food scrap collection)
- Educational Activities and Lessons
- School Solid Waste Scorecard
- Waste Stream Audits
- Faculty/Staff Training & Education
- Technical Assistance & Troubleshooting
- School Zero Waste Grant Program
- Waste Reduction Initiatives
  - End of Year Locker Clean Out
- Student involvement – Green Teams
How the Program Started

• USDA Grant Funding
• Pilot Program in 2004 – Montpelier Public Schools
CVSWMD provides:
- Outdoor totes, buckets and sawdust (during warm months)
- Training for students, faculty and staff
- Classroom collection buckets
- Posters & signage
- Hauling
- Monthly tonnage reports
- Compost Monitor (in new schools)
Food Scraps Diverted (since 2004)

1,722,726 lbs. (861.36 tons) (As of June 30, 2014)
School Solid Waste Scorecard

- Designed for CVSWMD to track how schools are doing in regards to waste management
  - 20 yes or no questions
- Focused on solid waste issues (compost, recycling, etc.)
- Has sparked:
  - Green Team creation
  - Closer relationships with administration
  - Competition between schools
  - Increased educational opportunities
Recycling Activities & Lessons

- **In-Class Lessons**
  - Intro to Composting (K)
  - Why Should I Recycle? (Grade 2)
  - Take out the Trash (Grade 4)
  - Solid Waste from a Historical Viewpoint (MS/HS)
  - Anatomy of a Landfill (MS)
  - 3R’s Lessons (3 parts)
  - Recycle Relay & Compost Tag
  - Individualized lessons:
    - Electronics & E-waste
    - Papermaking
Waste Stream Audits

- Students help sort through one day's worth of trash (excluding bathroom and nurses office trash)
- Helps determine what areas school needs to work on (composting, recycling, etc.)
- Great hands on activity for students/Green Team
- CVSWMD creates report with findings and suggestions for next steps
- Schools often complete a waste audit at beginning and end of the year to track progress
Green Teams

- Peer to peer education
- “Train the Trainers”
- Student buy-in
- Ownership of program
Waste Reduction Initiatives

- Locker Clean Out Day
- Compostable Napkins
- Terra-Cycle
- Hard to Recycle Materials
  - ARCC
Program Challenges

- Competing with cheap trash hauling contracts
- Meeting state standards in lessons (MS & HS)
- Integrating technology into lessons and programming
- Changing behavior that isn’t always replicated at home
- Changing behavior and mindset of adults in schools
Steps

1. Meet with Administration/Staff
   – Principal, maintenance & kitchen staff, teachers
   – Specific class/Green Team
2. Survey
   – Current practices
   – Recycling, composting, reuse
3. Waste Stream Audit
4. Decide what stream to target
5. Education
   – “Train the trainers”
6. Re-education as necessary
Materials Needed

• Waste Audit Materials
  – Tarps, scales, gloves, collection bins, calculator

• Lessons
  – Books, bin of assorted recyclables/trash (clean)

• Posters/Handouts/Flyers
  – Consistent message, statewide symbols

• Recycling Bins/Compost buckets
Tips for Program Success

1. Get students involved!
2. Work closely with maintenance staff from the start.
3. Talk with faculty and staff about expectations from them (being a good example, etc.)
Questions??

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