

Sustainable Recycling For Schools

Building or Re-building
self-sustaining school recycling
programs



Presented By:

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Question:

- Why Schools?
- What is it about recycling at schools that has attracted your attention?



Why Schools?

- Can be the largest waste generator in a town...
- Students are highly motivated...
- Builds for a future of well educated consumers and recyclers...
- Very real Social, Economic, and Environmental Benefits= Good ROI



Question:

- What does “Sustainability” mean in the context of a school recycling program?



Sustainability

- For our purposes, “sustainability” for a school recycling program means that each stakeholder is satisfied with the Return on Investment (ROI) they see in each of three “bottom lines”
- i.e. It will go on and grow...



Sustainability

- Each stakeholder may have different thresholds for “satisfaction”
- Everyone must “Buy In”
- ROI does not necessarily mean a profit or net-gain. Rather, “satisfaction threshold” may be at a reasonable loss...



Triple Bottom Line Theory

- Rather than looking at simply Economic Costs, 3BL suggests that all endeavors have costs and benefits in three areas:
- Economic; Social; Environmental
- Stakeholders may place different importance on each area
- People, Planet, Profit



Economic Bottom Line

- Most common “traditional” thinking.
- Economic Bottom Line is defined by financial cost/benefit analysis
- What does it cost? What do we get back?
- Measured in Dollars (or monetary units...)
- Can be measured in TIME...



Social Bottom Line

- Measured in costs and benefits to the community.
- Commonly includes fair labor practices, healthcare, community improvements, education.
- For our purposes, it includes educative improvements, community, community action, facilities, happy students and employees, etc.



Environmental Bottom Line

- Costs and benefits to environment
- Always measured in units... tons, Carbon, MMTCE, gallons, cars, BTU's etc.
- Usually measured in terms of reduction (trees saved, cars off the road, etc.)
- Includes both the immediate environment (air quality in the school) through to the planet.



Stakeholders in School Recycling

- Students
- Teachers
- Administration/ Facilities
- Parents & The Community



Students

- K-12, with occasional exception of College students
- Students are the masses in School Recycling
- Highly motivated/ Activists
- Like hands-on, fun, important work
- Must have their buy-in or programs will fail
- Most likely to adopt new behaviors for life



Special Note on Student Development

- Students' motivations and interests vary widely from K-12/College.
- Roughly, at younger ages, fun & positive associations are more important
- Roughly, at older ages, social concerns (both individual and at-large), self-efficacy, and self-direction are more important.



Teachers

- In-Class Teachers/ Faculty
- Motivated by meeting curricular guidelines, engaging students, ensure educative experiences, efficiency
- Typically the key facilitator of recycling programs and/or curriculum tie-ins
- Often engaged in extra-curriculars & community-
They are idealists and leaders



Administration & Facilities

- Principals, Administrators, Custodial Staff, Central Office Staff (School Boards)
- Motivated by costs, ease of program implementation, benefits to school/students, enforcing the will of the community- under pressure to meet social responsibility demands of the town...
- They are the Gate Keepers- but often can be motivated by students and faculty



Parents & Community

- Could be split into two/three groups: POYCs, PWOCs, and CAVEs...
- Generally motivated by costs, taxes, general student well-being, and desire for a sense of “community”
- Often this group is at the largest odds internally.
- Waste Managers?
- School Districts & SAU's



Waste Managers

- A unique group
- Tend to think of them in the Community Group
- However, their expertise and authority tends to set them apart.
- Often behavior change, costs, and PR/ community relations/ community change are highest motivators



School Districts and SAU's

- Control/Manage a bigger area/community
- Also driven to meet social responsibility and economic goals/ Fiscal Responsibility of their geographic areas.
- Have (and can generate) a high level of accountability



Hierarchies of Concerns

- Students:
 - Environmental; Social (personal and at-large)
- Teachers:
 - Social (education/students); Environmental; Economic (as they relate to demands on them)
- Admin/Facilities:
 - Economic/ Social; Environmental (especially where student health is concerned)
- Community:
 - Costs (taxes); Social (education); Environmental



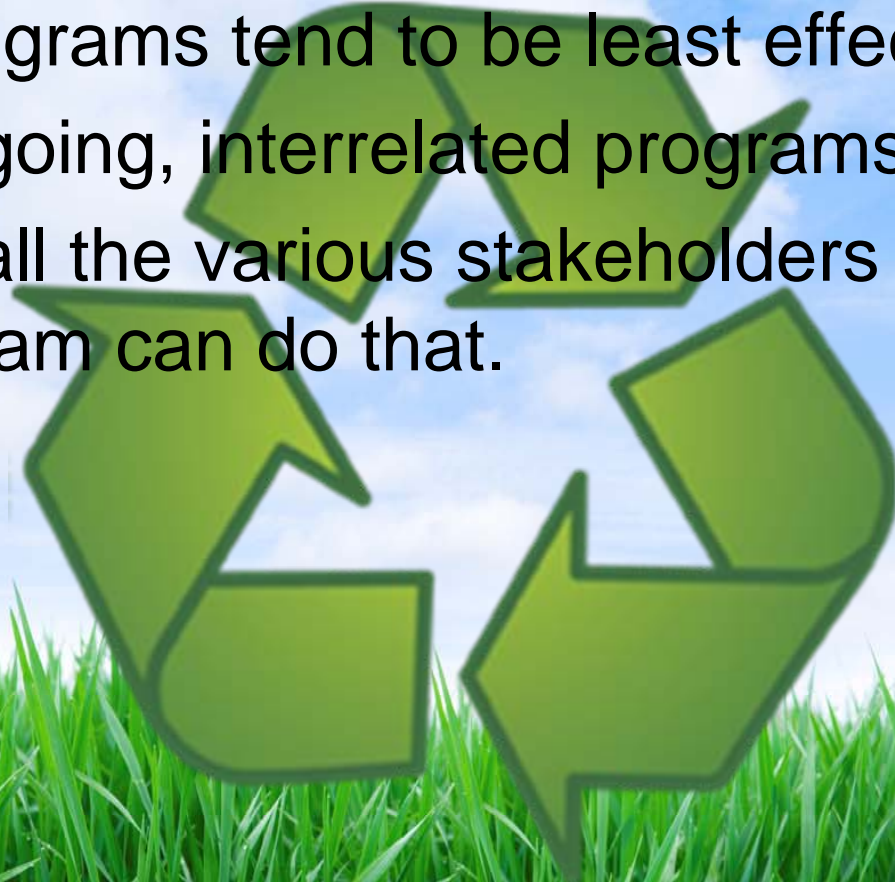
Program Design For Success

- Single-stream programs work best- in schools
- Partnering with local Transfer Stations works very well.
- Consistent Bins- Good Signs- Side by Side
- Tracking!! Baselines and ongoing assessments



Conclusion: Putting it all together

- One- off programs tend to be least effective.
- Instead, ongoing, interrelated programs work better.
- Must meet all the various stakeholders needs... but a broad program can do that.



The End

