



Communication Cycle

As your school initiates or expands recycling and waste reduction practices, it's important to keep students, staff, and parents informed about the changes and how they can participate. **Education** and **regular reminders** will help decrease garbage, increase recycling, and reduce contamination in recycling containers.

It's easy to use your school's existing communication methods to promote waste reduction, recycling, and other conservation practices. Below is a list of ways to share what materials can be recycled and to promote conservation practices. Use the education and outreach tools on the [Recycling Toolkit](#) page. Also see outreach ideas in the [Level One](#) and [Environmental Education](#) checklists.

Students

- Announce recycling expectations at assemblies, especially at the beginning of the school year.
- Include messages in PA announcements once each week or month. See sample PA announcements on the [Recycling Toolkit](#) page.
- Make recycling and waste reduction announcements at lunch time. See Fast Facts on the [Recycling Toolkit](#) page.
- Start a student green team that will conduct regular outreach and promotion. Invite staff to participate!
- Have student council or ASB help with education and promotion efforts.
- Write articles for student and parent newsletters.
- Create posters for classrooms, hallways and lunchrooms.
- Create a display of materials that can be recycled. Place it in a common area such as the library, lunch room or main office.
- Hold a recycling contest during a school event to test recycling knowledge.
- Celebrate America Recycles Day in November and Earth Day in April.



Staff

- Announce recycling and waste reduction expectations at a staff meeting. Have students participate! See the [Recycling Toolkit](#) page for a guide on presenting waste reduction and recycling messages at a staff meeting.
- Place signs on recycling containers in the staff break room.
- Periodically send emails to staff. See sample emails on the [Recycling Toolkit](#) page.
- Include recycling information in new hire packets, and include school recycling and waste reduction procedures in staff orientation meetings.

Continue the Cycle

Seven Tips to Keep the Improved Program Going Strong

1. **Assign leaders.** At the beginning of each school year, make sure there are two staff members to lead recycling and waste reduction efforts. Invite students to participate in a student Green Team. Take advantage of King County's [elementary school](#) and [secondary school](#) Green Team workshops, support, and recognition.
2. **Monitor your program and make adjustments.** See the [Recycling Toolkit](#) page for tracking and recycling rate worksheets. Note how full outdoor recycling and garbage Dumpsters are on pickup day. If garbage volume decreased and the outdoor Dumpster is not full on pickup day, call your district (public schools) or hauler (private schools) to reduce the size of the garbage Dumpster or collection frequency in order to cut costs.
3. **Note contamination.** Are recyclable materials in the garbage or is garbage in the recycling containers? Use the tips on page one and tips below to regularly educate students and staff.
4. **Continue school wide education.** Periodically send an email to remind staff about what materials can be recycled. Use morning announcements, staff meetings, and assemblies to educate students and staff. Include an article in a parent newsletter. Sign up for [King County's school education programs](#), including an elementary school assembly and classroom workshops.
5. **Continue to train and praise collection staff and students.** Whether custodians or students collect your recyclable materials, check with them two or three times each year. Find out if there are any problems. And recognize their efforts! Ultimately their work can make or break the program. The Green Schools website provides [certificates of recognition](#).
6. **Track successes and promote them!**
When you make changes, announce them. Use the recycling rate worksheet on the [Recycling Toolkit](#) page to calculate your improved recycling rate. To encourage continued success, promote your school's recycling rate and any garbage volume decreases to students, staff, and parents.
7. **Go to the next level.** There always are more ways to reduce waste and conserve natural resources. Observe what's still being thrown away, locate resources on the Green Schools Program website, and ask your Green Schools representative for help!

