



Three Options for Collecting Recyclable Materials in Schools

Option 1

- Students collect recyclable materials from classrooms and move them to central indoor recycling containers.
- Custodian takes central indoor recycling containers and empties them into outdoor recycling Dumpster(s).
- Custodian also empties office recycling containers and lunchroom recycling containers.

Advantages	Barriers
Eases workload on custodian.	Fire and safety codes must allow containers in hallways.
Can be fit into regular classroom duties.	Requires student awareness of fullness of central container (i.e., students should not empty classroom recycling containers when central indoor recycling containers are overflowing).
Students can become more aware of what is and is not recyclable – and can monitor how well students and staff are keep garbage out of the recycling containers.	
Students are not lifting heavy containers and are not outside near Dumpsters.	

Recommendations for overcoming barriers

- Consider safe location (consistent with fire and safety codes) for central containers.
- Instruct students to avoid emptying classroom recycling containers into central indoor recycling containers when the central containers are too full.
- Build time into custodian schedule for regular removal of central indoor recycling containers.



Option 2

- Custodian collects recyclable materials from classrooms, offices, lunchroom and other central areas and empties them into outdoor recycling Dumpster(s).

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Barriers</i>
Streamlines recycling.	Requires two separate collection containers for custodian – one for garbage and one for recyclable materials.
Does not interfere with student class time.	
Custodian is already visiting every classroom and area of the school to pick up garbage, so this is a natural fit. See below for suggestions.	Custodians cannot also be in charge of education (it's not part of their job description and they don't have time), so support from other school staff members is required. When custodians notice contamination (garbage) in recycling containers, other staff or a student group need to remind the student body and staff members about what is and is not recyclable.
Solid waste (garbage and recyclable materials) is most likely included in the custodial job description.	

Recommendations for overcoming barriers

- Use double or tandem dolly to carry two containers side-by-side simultaneously – one container for garbage and one for recyclable materials. This will make it possible for the custodian to collect both garbage and recyclable materials at the same time.



Note: For each school participant, the King County Green Schools Program provides recycling containers and dollies up to \$200 per school.

- Assign one student per classroom to place garbage and recycling containers by the door before collection. This simple action decreases custodial time needed for this task.

Option 3

- Students collect recyclable materials from classrooms, offices, lunchroom and other central areas and take them outside to empty into outdoor recycling Dumpster(s).

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Barriers</i>
Eases custodial workload.	Can take students away from class time.
Empowers students to take responsibility.	Can be a liability issue to have students outside and by the Dumpsters. It is easy for students to hurt themselves with heavy lids or heavy lifting.
	When recycling collection is handled entirely by students, the recycling program is harder to sustain over the long-term.

Recommendations

Although option 3 has been successful in select schools, King County strongly recommends options 1 and 2, which have custodians emptying recyclable materials into outdoor recycling Dumpsters.

Experience has shown that when recycling collection is handled entirely by students, the recycling program is harder to sustain and long-term success is less likely. Other significant deterrents include:

- (1) The potential for affecting class time.
- (2) The danger and liability involved with having students outside, lifting heavy containers and lids.

However, if this is the only option, here are suggestions.

- Make sure that staff members provide ongoing guidance and support for the student collection.
- Consider using a class (such as a Life Skills class) that could build recycling collection into a skill that is being developed.
- Consider scheduling recycling collection outside of class time -- possibly before or after school by an environmental club or ASB group.

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