
Sacramento County | SacGreenTeam | Spring 2026 Edition

Strategies for the Cafeteria & Toolkit Opportunity!

Hello Superintendents, Principals, and Educators!

Know someone interested in receiving this newsletter? Visit our [Schools Resources webpage](#) to subscribe to our newsletter or update your [subscription preferences](#) anytime.

School Spotlight: Mary Tsukamoto Elementary – Incentivize and Empower Students to Sort Smart!



You don't need to reinvent the wheel! Here's how Mary Tsukamoto Elementary gets students motivated to correctly recycle food waste:

1) Leverage a Positive Feedback Loop: PBIS System in Action

The food waste recycling program is integrated into Mary Tsukamoto's existing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) System. Students earn "Shark Tickets" for:

- Correctly sorting their food waste
- Helping peers sort properly
- Demonstrating leadership at the sorting station

The "Shark Tickets" are redeemed for prizes every Friday during lunch – creating excitement, friendly competition, and positive peer influence!

By recognizing and rewarding the right behaviors it makes sorting smart part of the school culture.

2) Have Older Students and Adults Assist!



Vice Principal Vern Ahnin finds that non-shareable food in hard-to-open packaging, can be difficult for younger students, often leading to food being thrown away instead of recycled.

The solution? A supportive presence. Adults are stationed in the cafeteria to help guide students.

This also creates an opportunity for older students to step into leadership roles, modeling correct sorting of lunch items into the correct bin – reinforcing a culture of sustainability among peers.

3) Ensure Bins are the Correct Color

Students are directed to place food waste in the green (organics) bins and all remaining non-recyclable materials in the black (garbage) bins.



[Check out our interview with Mary Tsukamoto's Vice Principal to learn how the program is driving real results!](#)

Want your sorting program to be featured in the next Spotlight video? Reach out to [CommercialWaste@SacCounty.gov!](mailto:CommercialWaste@SacCounty.gov)

The Need-to-Know Nook

School Waste Program Implementation Toolkit Opportunity!



Free bins, supplies and on-site support!

We are looking for schools in the unincorporated area of Sacramento County to pilot our new toolkit program! Selected schools will receive free bins, supplies, and on-site assistance to launch or strengthen school waste sorting programs.

Email: CommercialWaste@SacCounty.gov

Get Ready for Earth Day with Sacramento County!

Spring is a great time to schedule a “Touch-a-Truck Visit” that includes a big SacGreenTeam residential collection truck, live operator demonstration, and fun waste and recycling education.

You can also arrange for free loose compost to give your school garden a nutrient boost!

Email: SacGreenTeam@SacCounty.gov



Compliance Corner!

Staying on Track with SB1383 – Internal Containers & Education

In [the last edition](#), we covered how to effectively use your three-bin collection system with your commercial waste hauler. But, what types of containers and education need to be provided? We have the answer!

Container Requirements:

Labeled and color-coded containers – organics (green) and recycling (blue) – must be placed next to garbage (black/gray) containers *wherever* recycling/organic waste is generated. For example, you likely don't need a recycling container in a restroom, classrooms or areas where students eat *must* include an organics container.

Education Requirements:

Schools must provide ongoing education to staff and students on proper organic waste sorting techniques and conduct periodic inspections of organic containers to monitor contamination.

We understand adding new processes can feel overwhelming. Our Schools Education and Outreach Team is here to help! Email CommercialWaste@SacCounty.gov.

CalRecycle oversees and enforces compliance for Local Education Agencies. DWMR provides education, outreach, and technical support to district offices and schools located in the unincorporated areas of Sacramento County.