



## The Cycle

# Seattle Public Schools Recycling Newsletter



Volume 1, December 2005

*Welcome to all the new recycling coordinators and welcome back to all continuing coordinators. Thank you to everyone for your efforts and interest.*

### **Recycling, It's not just good for the Environment**

Although recycling has been available in SPS for quite a while, we now have an added incentive to recycle, the City of Seattle's mandatory recycling ordinance. In addition, recycling is less expensive. Yes, it is true. The district pays about twice as much for garbage service compared to the same recycling service. Recycling charges are also exempt from city and state taxes and county fees. Everyone probably knows that recycling is less wasteful and reduces pressure on landfills, but the money really talks.

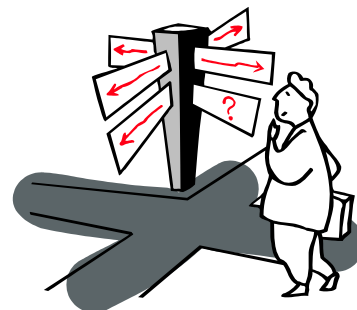
### **What is a recycling coordinator?**

So you have volunteered to be a recycling coordinator, what is it that you have agreed to do? The recycling coordinator position can be as extensive as you want to make it, and will likely vary from school to school. In the most basic sense you will act as a liaison between your school and myself. The recycling coordinator will receive information (from me) and distribute it to staff and students, answer your school's recycling questions, and ask for help when it is needed (again from me).

Some things you can do beyond that are, educate the students and staff, ensure there are an adequate number of containers in appropriate places, and confirm all containers are emptied when needed (including the recycling dumpster). You may need to include the Custodial Staff, Principal, or school volunteers (students, staff, or parents) in these activities. You know much better than I do how your school is run and what ideas are likely to work.

### **How do we do this anyway?**

The answer to that question depends on how well your recycling program is running and how much time and energy you are willing to contribute to it. The goal is to make sure the waste gets to the proper place. The two main ways to achieve this are through education and infrastructure. Here are some ideas. Remember, if your program is in its infancy, start small.



### Education

Put up posters,  
Discuss recycling at staff meetings,  
Talk about it in your classes (if you are a teacher),  
Hold an assembly,  
Make it a class project to educate and promote recycling

### Infrastructure

Have enough containers,  
Make sure the containers are emptied,  
Start a recycling club to help empty containers,  
Have a recycling evaluation/audit  
High schools can offer service learning hours for student who help with recycling

***\*\*\*Don't forget to keep an eye on the garbage dumpster. If a larger percentage of the waste is being recycled, your school custodian can probably reduce the number of garbage pick-ups. This is the way we save money. \*\*\****

### **HELP! Support and Tools for Recycling Coordinators**

If you still don't know where to start or have other questions feel free to contact me, the Resource Conservation Specialist, Beth Dolan (ph. 252-0618). I can provide you with recycling containers, signage, and labels. I am also willing to visit your school to clarify recycling issues and evaluate if you have an appropriate number of containers. Allied Waste (formerly Rabanco), our garbage and recycling hauler, also has education outreach programs that I can help you take advantage of. Just let me know what I can do for you.

### **Update: Recycling Education Pilot Program**

Last year I requested 6 volunteer schools to take part in a recycling education pilot. As with all projects, this has been a constantly changing work in progress. A survey was sent to the participating schools. The responses showed that what schools wanted most was education materials and outreach opportunities, the students and custodians to be more actively involved in recycling, an incentive program or stipend, and help reducing contamination.

Focusing on education and outreach has lead to two ideas that are coming together, one of which is this newsletter. The other thing that I will continue to work on this year is a website. Instead of having a very small, time intensive education program, the "pilot" program has morphed into a website where everyone can take advantage of it. This will be a place that we can post ideas, educational materials, and outreach programs. I am also developing a recycling toolkit and recycling club guidelines that will be available on the web. Through more effectively sharing information we can hopefully strengthen recycling programs and make them more sustainable.



***Happy Recycling. And Happy Winter Break too.***

