

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**



Conduct a Waste Study!

Growing Healthy Schools Month is the perfect time to engage students and the school community to get a recycling program going right. Although waste reduction and proper recycling is a habit to cultivate all year round, we hope this month inspires you to plan something **special** that will take your school’s recycling program to the next level. Below are some recommendations on activities and projects. More information will be available at <http://dgs.dc.gov/page/dgs-healthy-schoolz>. Contact: Beth Gingold, beth.gingold@dc.gov

Activity/ Project	Supporting Resources
Recycle Right!	Participate in DC’s Classroom Recycling Competition! inspired by the Green Schools Alliance Green Cup Challenge. Have students conduct weekly classroom bin checks and submit the results to win! Use the results to make action plans to improve your school’s recycling program <i>DCPS schools:</i> Fill out the DCPS Recycles! Honor Roll checklist to determine whether your school already qualifies or what you will need to do in order to make the list on Earth Day. Submit your results to DGS to get advice on making changes, or come up with your own action plan!
Reduce Cafeteria Waste!	Do a simple cafeteria observation to visually determine what types of food are being wasted OR do a full blown cafeteria waste audit to measure how much food is being wasted. Generate ideas to take action (e.g. share tables, food recovery, organics recycling).
Right-size Dumpsters!	If you want to have a real impact on the operations of your school – saving money and resources - help your operations team determine the right size containers for your actual hauling contract. To do this, you will need to monitor the fullness of the hauling containers. <i>DCPS schools:</i> Fill out DGS’s dumpster tracking form . <i>Other schools:</i> create a similar form modified for your program.
Explore the story of stuff!	Have students select an object and learn where it comes from and where it goes after they throw it away. See the DCPS Waste Story Map to learn where waste from DCPS really goes. For background see the story of stuff http://storyofstuff.org/
Compost!	Demonstrate the natural process of breaking down organic “waste” into valuable compost! Work with students to set up and manage worm bins or an outdoor compost bin in your school garden. Refer to the DCPS Recycles! On Site Compost Handbook , the DPR Community Compost Cooperative Network , OSSE’s Farm to School Program and School Garden Program and resources such as Cornell Composting in Schools .