



Congratulations to the 2017 DC Reduce First Challenge Paper Edition Winners and Participants!

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(Washington, DC) – The Department of General Services commends eight (8) DC Public Schools (DCPS) and the one (1) public charter school that participated in the Reduce First Challenge – Paper Edition.

“By moving beyond recycling and taking steps to ‘Reduce First’, District students and staff continue to demonstrate their capacity for community leadership,” said DGS Director Greer Gillis. “These classroom leaders serve as role models to us all in the District’s transition towards zero waste.”

“This challenge is a great learning opportunity for students and the DCPS Recycles! program,” said Zach Dobelbower, DGS Associate Director for Energy & Sustainability. “DGS is very excited to be able to share these student-created paper-saving solutions with DCPS and public charter schools throughout the District.”

For the Reduce First Challenge – Paper Edition, students applied the scientific method to solve a real world problem: *how to reduce paper waste in their schools*. They tested their solutions by weighing wasted paper from recycling bins before and after implementing their paper-saving strategies. During this challenge, students learned how to use scales and take weight measurements, and learned about how the paper that they use is broadly connected to the world around them.

All nine participating schools developed unique and creative strategies for reducing paper use and waste in classrooms.

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Paper-saving solutions developed by DC students and staff include:

- Use both sides of all pieces of paper.
- Create a scrap bin to collect paper that's only been used on one side, and make it available for reuse.
- Encourage teachers to print fewer handouts and use digital teaching tools whenever possible.
- Send out school newsletters digitally or on half sheets of paper.
- Use materials from the recycling bin for arts and crafts projects instead of new paper.
- Educate adults and students about the benefits of using less paper.

Three schools received special recognition for their enthusiasm, creativity, and success in reducing paper waste in their schools:

BEST PERFORMANCE AWARD: Cardozo Education Campus

The Best Performance Award is given to the school that reduced the most paper from their baseline measurement. The baseline measurement, taken during week one of the challenge, measured the amount of wasted paper before any actions were taken to reduce paper waste.

During the four-week competition, students at Cardozo were able to achieve a 75% reduction in paper waste in participating classrooms. The students achieved this by making bilingual posters to encourage paper saving and recycling, and by presenting to individual classes about how and why to use less paper.

MOST REPLICABLE SOLUTION AWARD: Tyler Elementary School

The Most Replicable Solution Award is given to a school whose waste reduction solution is easy for other schools to implement.

Students and staff at Tyler Elementary School brainstormed together and produced paper-saving solutions that could easily be put to use in classrooms throughout the District. Teachers reminded students each morning to use less paper, and Tyler students began using both sides of all pieces of paper.

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MOST LEARNING AWARD: School Without Walls at Francis Stevens

The Most Learning Award goes to the school who critically engaged with the questions and problems posed by the challenge in a way that encouraged increased student participation and growth.

The Student Sustainability Corps at the School Without Walls at Francis Stevens developed creative strategies for reducing paper use and waste that also benefitted their peers. They used scrap paper to create over 30 Japanese stab bound books for first graders, who used the books to practice writing and penmanship. The Sustainability Corps students noted that by creating these books from scrap paper, they saved several hundred new sheets of paper. The Sustainability Corps students also sought to learn more about recycling in their school by conducting a student survey about recycling.

The full list of schools that participated in the challenge includes:

- Ballou High School (Ward 8)
- Brookland Middle School (Ward 5)
- Bruce Monroe Elementary School at Park View (Ward 1)
- Capital City Public Charter School (Ward 4)
- Cardozo Education Campus (Ward 1)
- Dorothy I. Height Elementary School (Ward 4)
- Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School (Ward 5)
- School Without Walls @ Francis Stevens (Ward 2)
- Tyler Elementary School (Ward 6)

In previous challenges, DCPS and public charter school students witnessed increased participation in recycling programs and utilization of proper protocols in recycling. By participating in this challenge, schools highlighted the importance of reducing first—a critical step on the path to zero waste.