

RECYCLING & ZERO WASTE INFORMATION



**AUG-SEP
2025**



SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT / RECYCLING PROGRAM / WWW.SDUSDSUSTAINABILITY.COM



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WELCOME ...

...to the **AUG-SEP 2025** Back to School edition of the Recycling & Zero Waste Information & Resources for San Diego Unified teachers, staff, students, parents, and volunteers!

This document is designed to provide information and updates to the SDUSD community regarding waste diversion, recycling, composting, funding opportunities, environmental education resources, and other relevant information.

Check out the variety of resources and information “insdie” to give you ideas and inspiration!

- Recycling Challenge
 - Focus on Recycling
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- More Opportunities & Resources
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- and More!

Visit our Website





SDUSD RECYCLING CHALLENGE



Recycle @ School
SDUSD Recycling Program

Your school Could Win a Trophy & Bragging Rights! This school year, the District's Recycling Office is once again geared up to bring you the 2025-26 Recycling Challenge to encourage schools to divert as much as possible from landfill disposal. This can be done through expanded recycling efforts, reducing the amount of waste generated, and sustainability education!



All schools that receive waste and recycling pickup through the District's contract with Ware Disposal are automatically entered in the Challenge.

2024-25 WINNERS!



HENRY HIGH



CHALLENGER MIDDLE

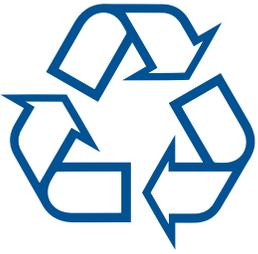


SANDBURG ELEMENTARY

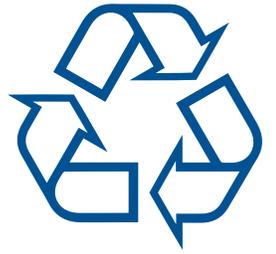


For more information on the 2025-26 Recycling Challenge...

[CLICK HERE](#)



RECYCLE @ SCHOOL!



ECO-FRIENDLY

IT'S EASY TO BE GREEN

Recycling at school is easy! Remember to **think before you toss!**

RECYCLE CLEAN ITEMS:

Make sure bottles, cans, paper, cardboard, and plastic containers are relatively clean (no food, no liquids, no yuck!). Empty and rinse appropriate items if possible. Place MIXED recyclables in blue recycling bins.



RECYCLE @ LUNCH & IN CLASS:

Encourage proper recycling in classrooms and at lunchtime! Numerous resources and signage are available for download or can be sent to your school to assist in this effort!

FIND RESOURCES HERE



Recycle @ School



YES!



NO!



Mixed Paper & Cardboard



NO tissue, towels, napkins, paper cups or plates, or laminated paper



Rigid Plastic



Glass



NO sporks/cutlery, straws, baggies, bags, wrappers, food bags, bubble wrap, or other film/squishy plastic



Metal



NO ceramics, drinking or mirror glass;
NO liquids or food



www.sdusdsustainability.com



SCHOOL GREEN TEAMS!



Steps for Starting a Green Team at Your School

- 1. Set Your Goal:** Define your club's main objectives, like boosting recycling awareness and cutting campus waste. Check out Grades of Green Eco-Toolkit on [How to Form a Green Team](#).
- 2. Gather Support:** Engage teachers, students, and administration to gain support and recruit members.
- 3. Plan Activities:** Outline club activities, such as classroom recycling collection, beverage container fundraising drives, grade-level competitions, poster contests, and educational campaigns.
- 4. Promote America Recycle's Day and Earth Day on Campus:** Celebrate [America Recycles Day](#) in November and [Earth Day](#) in April. Encourage participation from members and students.
- 5. Educate:** Share with classes or student groups the importance of recycling and sustainability efforts and how to recycle at school.
- 6. Encourage Solutions:** Motivate students to develop solutions for any challenges related to expanding recycling on campus.
- 7. Share Accomplishments:** Let students and faculty know of your team's accomplishments.
- 8. Stay Active:** Keep the club engaged year-round with ongoing projects and collaborations.

[More Info Elementary](#)

[More Info Secondary](#)

Helping Schools Love Food Not Waste: Food Share Table Guide

Food waste is a widespread issue, affecting not just the nation but also schools. At the same time it's estimated that around 80,000 children are facing food insecurity in San Diego County. The disposal of unconsumed school food and beverages not only leads to heavy trash bags, heightening the risk of injuries to custodial staff, but also contributes to the production of methane gas in landfills, a key factor in climate change.

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? Consider establishing a FOOD SHARE TABLE at your school.

What is a Food Share Table?

A Food Share Table is situated in a central location for students to place any unopened, pre-packaged, or uneaten food or beverage from their school meals. This allows other students to select these items for free during meal times.



Food Share Table Kits are available!

- 1) Cooler (rolling or soft-side)
- 2) Reusable "Ice" Packs
- 3) Cart or Table (Coming Soon!)
- 4) Food Bins (for room temperature items)
- 5) Signage
- 6) Food Share Table Guide



For more information contact: Janet Whited at jwhited@sandi.net



Is your school interested in setting up a Food Share Table? Acceptable food can be shared among students!

What is a Food Share Table?

- Location for students to place any unopened, pre-packaged, or uneaten food or beverage from their **school meals**.
- Items can be taken by other students to eat during meal times, keeping good food from going to waste.

For more information on setting up a Share Table, check out this [Food Share Table Guide](#).





EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT



Through their [LAUNCH Eco-Toolkits](#), Grades of Green helps teachers and students to spearhead eco-projects at their school.



What is LAUNCH?

Grades of Green's LAUNCH Eco-Lessons program provides fun and interactive step-by-step eco-lessons for K-12th students. By using LAUNCH Eco-Lessons, students will grow their environmental knowledge to take action on alleviating the Climate Crisis. LAUNCH is FREE for all students, teachers, and parents around the globe!

Want to start or expand lunchtime sorting and recycling at your school? Check out Grades of Green's [Lunchtime Sorting K-5th LAUNCH Lesson HERE](#).

LAUNCH Lesson Details

Grades of Green LAUNCH Eco-Toolkit

Lunchtime Sorting

Help reduce waste in landfills by bringing a Lunchtime Sorting Station to your school!



 <p>Skill Level</p> <p>Grades K-5, led by a teacher, parent or school administrator</p>	 <p>Climate Crisis Topic</p> <p>Waste</p> 	 <p>Project Time</p> <p>Three weeks, up to a full school year</p>	 <p>What You'll Need</p> <p>Trash cans, buckets, boxes and/or art materials</p>
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eco-cycle®



Educating and engaging children and their families is crucial for changing wasteful habits. The [Zero Waste Schools Activity Guide](#) from Eco-cycle aims to help schools, camps, and youth organizations work towards Zero Waste creatively and affordably, reducing landfill waste and preserving natural resources.



GRANTS/CONTESTS CHALLENGES/AWARDS



The Earth Prize

The Earth Prize is an annual, global \$100,000 environmental sustainability competition for students between the ages of 13 and 19, which rewards the teams whose projects have the most potential to address environmental issues. Learn more and pre-register for the 2026 competition [here](#).

Registration Open: SEP 1 - NOV 30, 2025



The Global Student Changemaker Contest

The **2025** Educated Choices Program (ECP) Global Student Changemaker Contest is officially accepting entries! Students aged 12-18 are encouraged to watch an ECP presentation and create a project showcasing how this knowledge impacts their lives and the world around them. The theme of this semester's contest is "Creative Communication in Food-Related Education." Get all the details to enter and share [here](#).

Application Deadline:



Project Green Challenge

High school students can sign up to receive themed challenges each day in October that are geared to inspire students to work towards a healthy, just resilient planet and future. Prizes are awarded daily!

New Challenges go live daily: OCT 1-30, 2025



MORE OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES



Project Learning Tree

Back-to-School Eco-Activities

As schools resume, the new academic year is a great chance to inspire students to adopt eco-friendly habits. From using sustainable supplies to creative projects with recycled materials, encouraging students to assess their environmental impact can be fun and effective.

These activities serve as an excellent foundation for fostering sustainability awareness, with ideas that can be integrated throughout the school year.

Click [HERE](#) for more information!

Biodiversity Course on Khan Academy

Designed for high school students, teachers, policy makers, and anyone interested in learning more about the diversity of life, each tutorial in our free [Biodiversity course](#) includes video lessons, articles, and quizzes, as well as activities that encourage students to explore the natural world.



This is a great way to celebrate [California Biodiversity Day on SEP 7th!](#)



MORE OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES



Coastal Cleanup Day!

SEP 20, 2025

By 2050 there could be more plastic than fish by weight in the world's oceans if we don't defend our waterways from litter.

I Love A Clean San Diego is coordinating the Coastal Cleanup events all over the County. Click [HERE](#) to join in to protect our watersheds and coastline.



Solana Center
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION



Solana Center School Presentations

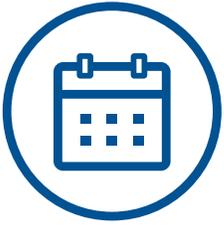
Solana Center is partnered with the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department to offer free composting and organic waste recycling education programs for students in grades 1-8.

The Grow, Eat, Compost, Repeat program is an interactive presentation that dives into the importance of landfill diversion, composting, and how proper waste sorting at school and at home can help the community and the environment.



For more info contact: Sarah.vanhorn@solanacenter.org



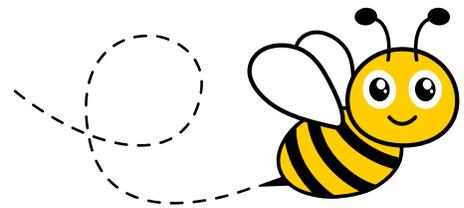


DATES TO CELEBRATE



AUGUST 2025

- 11th [First Day of School!](#)
- 12th [World Elephant Day](#)
- 16th [National Honey Bee Day](#)
- 19th [World Humanitarian Day](#)
- 24th-28th [World Water Week](#)



SEPTEMBER 2025

- 1st [Labor Day Holiday](#)
- 4th [National Wildlife Day](#)
- 7th [California Biodiversity Day](#)
- 20th [Coastal Cleanup Day](#)
- 21st-28th [Climate Week](#)
- 29th [International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste](#)





ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESOURCES



California Academy of Sciences: Flipside Science

Flipside Science is a youth-powered series that tackles complex environmental topics and empowers viewers to make a difference.

California EEI

The California Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI) is a part of a statewide effort to foster environmental literacy among California K-12 students. They provide educators with a free standards-based curriculum that teaches history and science through an environmental Lens.

California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI)

CAELI works statewide to create systems change in support of environmental literacy with a focus on access, equity, and cultural relevance for all students.

Green Schools National Network

Check out the ideas and articles for tips, strategies, and resources for incorporating sustainability topics in K-12 curriculum.

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)

NEEF is full of resources for educators, including: [Environmental Education Resources](#)

The Nature Conservancy

Explore the world with the Nature Conservancy's Virtual Field Trips. Designed for ages 9-15, but customizable for all ages. Each field trip contains a video, teacher guide, and student activities.



DISTRICT RESOURCES



Composting at San Diego Unified Schools - Best Practices

This helpful guide includes great information and resources about bringing composting programs to your school. Additional resources include:

- [Cafe to Compost Flier](#)
- [Compost Sign](#)



Recycling Signage & Resources

Download printable recycling signs that can be attached to recycling and trash bins or posted on the wall.



Nutrition Education Resources - San Diego Unified

Check out Food & Nutrition Services webpage for videos, curricula, books, and links to help bring nutrition education to your classroom!



Sign up to receive the San Diego Unified Food & Nutrition Newsletter

[CLICK HERE](#)