



Plastic Bottle Recycling

Case Study: **Franklin Academy, Wake Forest**

Recycling since: 2007

Type of facility: K-12 charter school

Recycles: plastic bottles; plastic yogurt containers through Terra Cycle; also composts food waste

Average Cost of Service:
Ranges from \$60-\$100 per month

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Location: Wake Forest, N.C.

Description

Franklin Academy is a Wake County K-12 charter school that serves 1,200 students and more than 100 staff members. On the initiative of two teachers, the school began to recycle paper and plastics, which were the items most found in its waste bins. The teachers created a proposal which outlined what they hoped to accomplish, who would be responsible, how funding would be obtained and why they felt like recycling was important for the school to undertake.



Implementation

The main recycling efforts are currently found within the fourth-to-eighth grade building, encompassing 500

students and 35 staff members. The idea is to help build the students' knowledge about recycling as early as possible. Within the entire school there are recycling bins in each classroom, administrators' offices and the gymnasium, where they collect a lot of plastic water bottles. The school uses small, lightweight plastic bins since they are easy to clean and because students (specifically those that are in the Environmental Club) are in charge of emptying the bins into the outside dumpsters. The environmental club ensures that the student members feel like they are an integral part of the system since it allows them to take ownership of the program.

Franklin Academy has worked with three haulers since collecting recyclables. Its first hauler discontinued plastics pick-up and the school decided to switch collectors to one who did. The school has also recycled with a commingling hauler. However, classroom collection remains separated by material. This is to prevent any confusion if the school switches to a hauler that doesn't commingle and to foster a "reduce, then reuse, then recycle" mentality (for example, students can safely 'dumpster dive' for a scrap piece of paper). Franklin Academy's external recycling bins have varied from six roll-out carts emptied weekly to a commingled dumpster provided by the haulers.

Results

Education and awareness is the primary reason Franklin Academy's recycling program has been so successful. Before recycling began there was staff training to get the teachers on board with the program. The school also held a recycling pep assembly, featuring the Recycle Guys' Dottie Bottle, informing the students what can and cannot be recycled. Also, inviting local media to do stories on its recycling initiatives increased parental involvement as well as helped the school get grant money and corporate funding, which pays for the bins and hauling the recyclables.

Franklin Academy is also a leader in school composting and vermicomposting, with compost collectors placed in every classroom and a vermicomposter in the main lobby.

