



Green Schools Challenge November 2018:



Waste Reduction

Recycling materials is important, but what's also important is to reduce the amount of materials we use in the first place. Every so often it's helpful to take a look at our habits and see if there are opportunities to make a few simple changes that will reduce the amount of waste we generate.

Schools purchase large quantities of supplies, food and beverages, and it's important to take care in those purchasing decisions to make sure waste is minimized as much as possible. This month's activity gives you the opportunity to teach your Green Team about our current global waste problem, and gives you resources for taking action at your school.

1. **Design Your Own Activity**

Do you have an idea about how your Green Team could focus on waste reduction this month? Perhaps you see the need for people at your school to focus on reducing the use of one material in particular, such as paper. Perhaps you could have students note everything they eat in one day, and note the packaging or lack thereof for each item. Or ask students to name several commonly-disposed of items that could be re-used instead, like cups, forks, plates, napkins, etc. Feel free to create an activity that works for your school, and earn credit for it

Example Activities For Your Green Team

2. **Educate About the Great Pacific Garbage Patch**

Floating in the Pacific Ocean is a patch of plastic garbage three times the size of France. It contains 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic and weighs 80,000 metric tons. How did the Great Pacific Garbage Patch begin, how does it grow, and what can we do about it? Use these resources to teach students and staff about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch:

- [Follow this lesson plan](#) to teach your students about the GPGP.
- Take a look at [this resource document](#) for more information targeted to K-12 audiences.
- [Read about the 2018 report](#) that revealed the full scope of the problem for more information on the problem to include in your education efforts

3. **Do a Source Reduction Learning Activity**

Use art, common packaging, and ingenuity to raise your students' awareness of the importance of source reduction. Choose an activity from pp. 79-97 of [The Quest for Less, Unit 2: Source Reduction](#) for your group to do together.

4. **Say No to Plastic Straws**

Plastic straws are getting more and more attention around the country recently, as people realize how significantly these throwaway items are harming our oceans, rivers and lakes. Some possible activities this month are these: Ask students and staff to take a pledge to say no to plastic straws this month. Use the online pledge from the [OneLessStraw web site](#), a campaign that was launched by two third-graders and is now gaining momentum around the country. You could ask them to keep a count of how many straws they refused that they otherwise would have taken. At the end of the month, you could add up how many straws your team saved from going into our waterways!

5. **Reduce Packaging Waste**

Talk with the person who makes purchasing decisions at your school. Find out how some of the regularly-purchased items are packaged. If you find opportunities to reduce waste, ask this person if he or she would be willing to look for less wasteful alternatives.

6. **Submit Photos**

Take photos of your Green Team engaging in the Lights Out campaign, and email them to gogreen@kearneycats.com. You may see your submissions on the Green SchoolsChallenge photo site, or in the sustainability newsletter!

Let Us Know What You Did!

Report your progress and earn recognition for your school. [Fill out the Activity Reporting Form](#) to let us know which activity you did for this month!

Questions?

We're here to answer any questions you may have, talk through ideas or provide further resources. Just email gogreen@kearneycats.com.

RECOGNITION LEVELS

All KPS schools have the opportunity to earn recognition for their participation in the Green Schools Initiative each year. The more activities you complete, the more recognition you receive! For 2018-2019, the following three levels of recognition are available:

- **Level 1 (Green Performance)** - Participation in 5 activities during the year. Schools receive a framed certificate of recognition, \$50 for Green Team Activities next year, and \$100 for the Principal's budget.
- **Level 2 (Green Achievement)**- Participation in 6 - 9 activities during the year. Schools receive \$150 for Green Team activities next year, an award banner, and \$200 for the Principal's budget
- **Level 3 (Green Excellence)** - Participation in 10 or more activities during the year. Schools receive \$300 for Green Team activities next year, a large award banner, and \$400 for the Principal's budget. In addition, all schools that achieve Level 3 participation are placed into a raffle; the selected school receives \$450 to spend on district-approved items. Approved items could entail smart power strips, vending machine energy misers, native landscaping/trees, rain barrels, native plants for classrooms, and indoor/outdoor recycling containers. All items must be approved by the district office prior to purchase.