



DATE: July 14, 2022

TO: Programs and Administration Committee
Planning Committee/Recycling Board

FROM: Angelina Vergara, Program Manager

SUBJECT: StopWaste Schools Program Overview

SUMMARY

The StopWaste Schools Team provides K-12 students with environmental education programs that encourage and empower teachers, students, and their families to take action at school, at home and in their communities. Over the past two years, the Schools Team further developed opportunities to engage with schools throughout Alameda County both online and in-person, increasing access to StopWaste tools and resources. At the July 14 Recycling Board and P&A Committee meetings, the Schools Team will provide an overview of the services it provides, including supporting schools to comply with SB 1383 and advancing efforts to empower youth to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials that would otherwise go to the landfill.

DISCUSSION

The StopWaste Schools Team engages youth throughout Alameda County to advance the “4Rs” – reduce, reuse, recycle, and rot (i.e., composting). Engaging youth at an early age in schools helps to empower future leaders with tools and resources to increase environmental sustainability and support waste reduction practices at home.

The Schools Team offers both in person and online opportunities for students and teachers to engage in waste prevention and reduction efforts. In spring 2022, after a year and a half of virtual programming, the Team relaunched in-person school programs, including transfer station field trips at Waste Management’s Davis Street Transfer Station. At these events, students, teachers, and chaperones learn about the waste stream and how they can take action to reduce waste individually and collectively at home, at school, and in their communities through upstream solutions.

The Schools Team has also relaunched in person activities such as “waste audits” at schools, which help classrooms analyze their school’s waste stream and opportunities for increased waste diversion. The Team also teaches students about the role of compost and healthy soils in producing healthy local food and sequestering greenhouse gas emissions.

The pandemic was also an opportunity for the Schools Team to develop hybrid learning approaches in order to increase access to its programming countywide. The Team offers virtual workshops, transfer station tours, and trainings for schools designed to help students, teachers, and their families understand the main sources of solid waste and simple things students can do in the classroom, the cafeteria, and at home to minimize waste and do proper sorting.

Importantly, the Schools Team also engages with administrators at the school district level, helping to incorporate the 4Rs into school operations and into school curriculum.

The Team's presentation will provide an overview of their services and approach to empowering youth and other members of the school community to become environmental champions and stewards.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.