Guide for Increasing Recycling or Waste Dumpster Pulls

The district’s goal is to reduce the total amount of refuse materials (waste + recycling) hauled from our schools. Increasing recycling is very important, but it is also crucial to decrease waste.

Before a school requests an increase in the number of times a waste or recycling dumpster is emptied, the school must ensure that there is a valid case for the increase. Several measures can and should be taken before requesting a permanent schedule change. Schools should also use the ‘as-needed’ or ‘extra’ pickup system prior to requesting a permanent schedule change; the extra pickups will provide a good indication as to whether or not a permanent change is warranted.

When requesting a permanent increase in recycling dumpster pickups, schools will be asked to give up a trash day. If all things are equal (there hasn’t been an increase in enrollment or programming), the total waste should be fairly consistent. If, however, the school has implemented the trash reduction strategies outlined below AND a strong case can be made for adding a recycling pickup without reducing trash pickups, exceptions will be made.

Schools with trash compactors will likely see an exception to many of the aforementioned rules; the one-for-one rule doesn’t apply.

**Trash Reduction Strategies.** The steps below offer key ways a school can reduce the amount of material going to the waste dumpster.

1. **Cafeteria recycling.** Ensure your cafeteria-recycling program is capturing all relevant recyclables. There are many helpful resources on the Green Schools Initiative website.
2. **Tray stacking.** Participate in tray stacking for elementary schools, which greatly reduces the volume of waste occupying a dumpster.
3. **Before and after school.** Make sure recycling is also present at your before- and after-school programs.
4. **Educate everyone.** Does everyone know what is and is not recyclable? If not, a little education can go a long way.

Finally, before requesting an additional recycling pickup, schools should ensure that recyclables are appropriately compacted before being placed in the dumpster. The most relevant example of this is flattening cardboard boxes beforehand.

In order to make changes to your waste and recycling dumpster schedule, please contact Shelley Bengtson at 402-557-2800.