

December 9, 2024

Joint Commission on Plastic Bottle Waste
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Educating Students on Proper Bottle Disposal in Schools

Chairs McKenney and McEntee,

I am writing today in regards to plastic bottle waste and the need for recycling education in our schools. I feel that it is imperative to have recycling programs that properly educate the next generation on the importance of protecting our environment from pollution. Proper recycling education must start with those in elementary school and shouldn't end there, we should have this curriculum for grades K-12. I believe the earlier we educate students the more likely they will be to develop better habits and practice recycling in their daily lives.

By incorporating effective recycling education into the school environment, we not only encourage environmental stewardship, but also empower students to take responsibility for their actions. This can be part of a science program as well as health.

1. Integrate Recycling into the Curriculum

Creating a recycling curriculum in schools, whether through Science or Health classes on ecosystems, environmental studies regarding waste management. Students can learn the principles of recycling and how their actions affect the world. This will give them a deeper understanding of why it's important to dispose of bottles properly.

For example, the curriculum can offer age appropriate lessons on the life cycle of plastic or the impact of waste on the environment. Resources could include videos or interactive worksheets and provide students with a better understanding of the need to recycle.

2. Create Visual Cues Around the School

Students learn well with visual reminders. In key areas—such as the lunchroom, hallways, and classrooms—placing brightly colored bins with clear, large labels (e.g., "Plastic Bottles," "Glass Bottles," "Aluminum Cans") can guide students in correctly sorting their recyclables. Using pictures or icons alongside text will help younger students who may not yet be reading.

By ensuring that recycling bins are easy to identify and accessible, we make it simple for students to properly dispose of their bottles without confusion.

3. Classroom Activities

Interactive activities are a great way to engage students in learning about recycling. Students can participate on "Earth Day" activities in our community. Students can sort materials into the correct bins as they have been taught through the curriculum in Science or Health classes. Holding discussions where students are able to talk about the importance of recycling, how they can help reduce waste and protect our environment.

Having the curriculum taught to our students on how to properly dispose of bottles and other recyclable materials is an important step in protecting the future of the environment. With hands-on learning experiences and consistent reinforcement this will ensure that our students not only understand the importance of recycling, but also actively practice it in their daily lives. As you continue your discussions on plastic waste recycling please consider the need for proper recycling education.

Sincerely,

Maya Etheridge

Student, Barrington High School

Cc: Members of the Joint Commission on Plastic Bottle Waste