



**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY**  
**SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD MEMORANDUM**



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**Date:** June 21, 2018  
**To:** Jason E. Brown, County Administrator  
**From:** Vincent Burke, P.E., Director of Utility Services  
**Thru:** Himanshu H. Mehta, P.E., Managing Director, Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD)  
**Prepared By:** Stephanie C. Fonvielle, Recycling Education and Marketing Coordinator, SWDD  
**Subject:** Expansion of the School District of Indian River County Recycling Program

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**BACKGROUND:**

Children who are taught to recycle at a young age can be some of the most devoted and effective advocates for recycling. With this in mind, the Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD) collaborated with the School District of Indian River County (SDIRC) to launch the IRC School Recycling Pilot Program (Pilot Program), where recycling containers were purchased for the classrooms, offices, hallways, cafeterias and outdoor areas at four pilot schools. The Pilot Program was funded by two monetary grants: the Think Green Grant from Waste Management and the Carton Council's School Carton Recycling Grant Program. The Pilot Program was launched in January 2018, directly after the students returned from winter break. The immediate goal of the program was to increase recycling at the pilot schools and subsequently decrease the amount of garbage at the schools. On a broader scale, the purpose of the Pilot Program was to establish a robust campus-wide recycling program that would serve as a model and facilitate the expansion of recycling to all the public schools in the district.

**ANALYSIS:**

*Results of Pilot Program*

Starting a month after the launch, several follow up phone calls and staff meetings were made to each school to see how the program was progressing. Surveys were also sent to the teachers, staff and students to evaluate their opinions of the program. Overall the response from the teachers, staff and students was very positive. Some of the students noted that it took longer to dispose of their garbage and recycling in the cafeterias. This increase in disposal time in the cafeterias was anticipated by SDIRC and SWDD, and staff expects that the disposal will go more quickly as the students become more familiar with the system. The teachers indicated that there were a few challenges with improper recycling in the outdoor containers, but overall, the students were recycling properly in the classroom, and the teachers noticed a reduction in the amount of garbage in their classrooms. Over 90% of the teachers recommended expanding the program to other schools.

One of the main goals of the Pilot Program was to increase the amount of recycling at the pilot schools while subsequently decreasing the amount of garbage. Prior to the Pilot Program, the recycling dumpsters

were mostly full, and the recycling dumpsters were being emptied once every other week. After the Pilot Program, the recycling dumpsters were still mostly full, but the frequency of recycling pick up was increased to weekly, indicating recycling increased about 100% at each school. Using this change in frequency, it is estimated that over 5,000 lbs of recycling from these four pilot schools is being diverted from the landfill each month. This is based on an 8 cubic yard container and an approximate density of 95 lbs per cubic yard for mixed recyclables.

Theoretically, an increase of over 5,000 lbs of recycling should be reflected as an equivalent decrease in garbage collection. The daily emptying of multiple dumpsters of varying fullness proved to make it difficult to pinpoint a weight estimate for garbage. To assess the changes in garbage collection, SWDD staff interviewed Jeff Cox, the trash technician for SDIRC, who is responsible for emptying the garbage dumpsters on a daily basis. Mr. Cox confirmed that there was “a definite reduction in the amount of garbage” he collected at the pilot schools. Mr. Cox estimated a 45-50% reduction at the elementary schools, a 30% reduction at the middle school and a 35% reduction at the Freshman Learning Center. Using Mr. Cox’s observation and his estimates on the fullness of a container on a typical day, SWDD staff feels confident that at least 5,000 lbs of material, if not more so, is being eliminated from the garbage waste stream each month.

On average, SDIRC disposes of approximately 1,560 tons of garbage to the county landfill each year. In March of 2017, Republic Services provided a letter to SDIRC that stated they recycled approximately 6.71 tons of recyclable materials per month, which would total about 80.52 tons per year. Using these figures and including miscellaneous recyclable items such as yard waste, SWDD staff estimates that SDIRC currently recycles about 6% of its waste. This is likely an underestimate considering it does not include any additional recycling such as scrap metals and electronics recycling, but it does demonstrate that there is an area for improvement.

### *Expanding the Recycling Program*

The Pilot Program was designed to serve as a model to be expanded to the remaining 16 public schools in the district. In the weeks and months following the program launch, numerous schools reached out to SDIRC and SWDD staff asking how they could bring the recycling program to their school. A few schools have already discussed plans to initiate recycling efforts in their schools based on the model set by the Pilot Program. SWDD staff met with Superintendent Dr. Mark Rendell and confirmed that there is an interest from SDIRC to expand the recycling program; however, to date staff has not yet met with the school board to present the results of the Pilot Program. Dr. Rendell is fully supportive of the school recycling expansion project and plans to take a similar item to his board at the next available meeting, which is July 26, 2018.

Using the pilot schools as a guide and considering the number of students in each school, SWDD staff estimated that there would be a one-time cost of approximately \$38,000 to provide the remaining 16 public schools with the same recycling containers and equipment used in the Pilot Program. SDIRC recently entered into a contract with Waste Management, and Waste Management has offered to provide 64-gallon carts for the cafeterias and 35-gallon carts for the outdoor areas, a total monetary savings of \$9,700. Recycle Across America (RAA) has a donation program that offers 100 free recycling labels per school, and at this time, they have committed to providing free recycling labels for four schools, or 400 labels, which is a saving of \$700. The RAA school donation program is based on corporate sponsorships and additional in-kind donations for the schools may be available at a future date.

With these in-kind donations, the remaining cost to expand the program to the 16 public schools is tentatively estimated to be \$27,600. SWDD staff would like to propose that the SWDD Board consider a cost-sharing agreement with SDIRC to cover half of the costs for the purchase for recycling containers and

equipment at the remaining 16 public schools. At this time, the tentative estimated cost to the County would be about \$13,800; however, staff will work more closely with the 16 schools to refine the cost estimates after they receive direction from the SWDD Board and the School Board.

**FUNDING:**

Funding for the recycling containers is available as a sustainability item in the SWDD recycling account under Other Professional Services, Account No. 41122534-033190, which is funded from SWDD assessments and user fees. The account has a total budget of \$988,800.00, with \$25,000 designated as Sustainability & Recycling Initiatives.

Description	Account Number	Amount
Other Professional Services	41122534-033190	\$13,800

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Solid Waste Disposal District (SWDD) Board consider and authorize the following:

1. Conceptually approve to provide 50% funding, which is estimated at \$13,800, to cover half of the one-time costs for containers and materials for the remaining 16 public schools based on support from Dr. Mark Rendell, School District of Indian River County (SDIRC) Superintendent, for the expansion of the program.
2. Direct staff to work with Dr. Rendell to request a 50% funding match from SDIRC. Tentatively, this approval will be considered at the next SDIRC meeting on July 26, 2018.
3. Upon agreement by SDIRC, direct staff to work with the County Attorney's office to prepare a cost sharing agreement to be approved first by SDIRC, and then by the SWDD Board at a future meeting as early as August 14, 2018.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Estimate of Recycling Materials for the remaining 16 Public Schools