

Cool School Challenge



Step 2: Create a Climate Action Plan

Based on the results of your classroom audits, develop a Climate Action Plan for each classroom to successfully reduce their CO₂ emissions over the course of the school year. Take a look at where most of their emissions are coming from and where it might be possible to change habits and behavior. Turning off half the lights, for example, reduces emissions from lighting by half. Eliminating unnecessary waste - either by conserving, using materials more efficiently or recycling - can reduce the amount of trash that ends up in the landfill which in turn reduces greenhouse gases.

Give each classroom a goal that is attainable - but not too easy. A reduction goal of 2000 lbs or more per classroom is usually a good place to start. It might be helpful to give teachers a 'menu' of options to choose from, so they can select the actions that are most appropriate for their classroom. Some sample tips are provided on page 29.

Cool Ideas

- The success of the action plan in each classroom depends not only on the teacher, but on all the students who learn in that classroom. Getting them on board is important to meeting your Action Plan goals. If the teacher is willing, arrange to visit their class to speak directly with those students and brainstorm ideas to enhance their experience of the Challenge, such as classroom competitions, games, events, etc.
- Post the Climate Action Plan in a visible location, so everyone is aware of the goals.
- Create "tip signs" near light switches and recycling containers, for example, with reminders to turn things off and recycle properly.
- Identify the "low hanging fruit" and include them in your action plan. Just turning off one panel of lights is an easy way to cut down on electricity use and emissions, and it's something just about every classroom should be able to do for a few hours each day.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS YOU MIGHT INCLUDE:

SOLID WASTE TIPS

⇒ **Reduce.**

- Every pound of waste that goes to the landfill creates 3 pounds of CO₂ pollution.
Generating less waste = Fewer greenhouse gas emissions

⇒ **Reuse.**

- Using one ream of regular copy paper generates 13 pounds of greenhouse gases. Print and photocopy on both sides of the paper and get twice the use of your paper, and fewer emissions.
- Use a reusable water bottle or cup instead of buying individual water bottles.
- Use a reusable coffee tumbler for hot drinks instead of paper, plastic or Styrofoam cups.

⇒ **Recycle.**

- Recycle Recycle Recycle! If the classroom doesn't recycle, start! Every pound of material recycled rather than thrown away prevents 3 pounds of CO₂ pollution.
- Recycle disposable water bottles.
- Use recycled paper. One ream of paper made from 100% recycled material generates 5 lbs less CO₂ pollution than regular copy paper.

TRANSPORTATION TIPS

⇒ **Drive less, and walk, bike, bus, or carpool instead.**

- Every gallon of gasoline reduced prevents roughly 20 lbs of CO₂ emissions.
- Walking and biking are zero-emission ways to commute!
- Sharing a ride with one other person halves your emissions; carpooling with 2 others reduces your emissions by one-third.

ELECTRICITY

⇒ **Use the lights less, when possible.**

- Turning off half the lights will reduce lighting emissions by 50%.
- Turning off one-third of the lights will reduce lighting emissions by 33%.
- Turn off lights when the classroom is empty - during lunch, planning periods, etc.
- Turn off lights at the end of the day.

⇒ **Slay energy vampires.** Plug appliances into power strips, and turn the strips off at night. This will significantly reduce phantom loads.

⇒ **Flip the switch.** Turn off computers and printers at the end of the day, rather than putting them in sleep mode.

HEATING TIPS

⇒ **If the classroom has an adjustable thermostat:**

Turn down the heat. For every degree you turn down your heat, you could reduce your CO₂ up to 350 lbs/year (depending on your electricity provider).

