



## THE PROJECT: RECYCLING

John H. Kinzie Elementary ended their recycling program 7 years ago when the club that ran the program disbanded. Interested in reducing their school's waste, the Kinzie Green Team researched the impacts of recycling, conducted a school-wide recycling bin audit, and proposed a student-led, school-wide recycling program to the administration and facilities staff. Their proposal was accepted, and the team got to work making sure that each classroom had a recycling bin and educating students and staff on proper recycling habits. The school-wide program is now up and running, diverting significant waste from landfills and inspiring students and their families to consider their waste habits.

**Project Type:** Recycling  
**Students Involved:** 644  
**Staff Involved:** 3  
**Location:** Chicago  
**Grade Levels Involved:** 4th - 8th  
**Number of Students Impacted:** 644



We went from absolutely no recycling, to now recycling in every classroom, and every room in the entire school.

- Kayla McCaffrey



## PROCESS

The students convened the janitorial staff, administration, and the staff green committee to discuss options for a lasting system. They decided to bring two 95-gallon street bins into the school so that each classroom could empty their classroom bin into the larger bin. With their Illinois Green Schools Project mini grant, they were able to purchase the remaining bins that were needed to have a bin in every classroom, eating area, and rooms with copiers. Combining the data they collected on improper recycling practices with research on the Lakeshore Recycling System's recycling parameters, the students also attached recycling guides to each bin, created an educational video, and visited classrooms to promote proper recycling practices.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Concluding their first year in the Illinois Green Schools Project, John H. Kinzie Elementary now has recycling bins in every room, and a sustainable system to divert waste from landfills for the foreseeable future. Including students in the collection and education processes has increased enthusiasm and helped each member of the school community develop ownership and a sense of responsibility for their school's impact. The Green Team understands that there is still more education and correct implementation to be done, but while in previous years, educators could only teach about recycling as an abstract, this year, they can truly teach through action.

