



PROGRAM GUIDE

YORK REGION
1-877-464-9675
york.ca/sm4rtliving


York Region

The Regional Municipality of York has a long-term plan to reduce waste and divert waste from landfill.

A very important part of this plan is supporting sustainability **leaders like you** to reduce waste and increase diversion in schools.









INTRODUCTION

The Trash Blasters program provides inspiration, tools and resources to assist you and your elementary school to:

- Reduce waste
- Encourage proper waste sorting
- Engage staff, students and parents in waste reduction, recycling and reuse activities

We are thrilled you are participating in this program! This Program Guide tells you everything you need to know to participate in the program and access tools and resources that can help you blast trash from your school.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES DOWNLOAD online at york.ca/wasteeducation

RESOURCE NAME	DESCRIPTION	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
School Pledge	11" x 17" pledge for the school with space for principals signature	
Classroom Pledge	11" x 17" pledge for the classroom with space for teacher and student signatures	
Program Posters	11" x 17" program promotion poster <i>Can be displayed in classrooms and throughout the school</i>	
Waste Challenge Tracking Sheet	Five unique waste reduction challenges for students <i>Progress tracking sheet can be displayed in classroom. Blank version also available to create your own challenges</i>	
Student Certificate	Recognize student achievements with a certificate	
Litterless Lunch Information Card for Parents	Includes suggestions to promote the concept of litterless lunches to parents	

OTHER RESOURCES

Trash Blasters Eco Team Presentation

45 to 60 minute train-the-trainer presentation for your student leaders (Eco Team / Eco Club) *Subject to availability



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

FALL

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Complete and submit the [program registration form](#) and submit via email to ENV_TrashBlasters@york.ca. This registration form should be signed by participating school principals and lead teachers.

SIGN AND INSTALL THE PLEDGE TO BLAST TRASH FROM THE CLASS

The start of the school year is the time to establish a commitment to improve waste reduction efforts. To assist you, download the [school pledge poster](#) from york.ca/wasteeducation.

This pledge should be signed by the school principal and installed in a highly-visible, central location. Consider signing the pledge in front of an assembly of the whole school as you introduce the *Trash Blasters* program to your students!

[Classroom pledge forms](#) are also available for download. Every student in the class can show their commitment to waste reduction efforts and will be reminded of it every day when the poster is located near the waste bins.

GO ABOVE
& BEYOND

Communicate your school's pledge to blast trash by:

- › Declaring your commitment on:
 - Your school's web page
 - E-newsletters to parents
 - School announcements

- › Take a picture of the signed and installed pledge and tweet it to @YorkRegionGovt and YRDSB/ @YCDSB with the hashtag **#TrashBlasters**



CONDUCT A WASTE AUDIT

Conducting a waste audit will help you visually estimate the amount of different materials in each waste stream, and will help you identify opportunities to improve sorting and reduce waste. A baseline waste audit is the foundation for developing a waste action plan.

TIP: *Wait until your lunch programs are up and running before completing your first audit (for future comparison purposes)*

To conduct your waste audit, use the following resources:

- [Recycling Council of Ontario - Waste Audits for Schools](#)
- [Green Education Foundation – How to Conduct a Waste Audit](#)
- [IWMA – How to Conduct A Classroom/Lunchroom Waste Audit](#)

GO ABOVE
& BEYOND

- Share results of your waste audit with staff and students during morning announcements and school assemblies
- Take pictures of your waste audit and share them on social media tagging @YorkRegionGovt and @YRDSB/@YCDSB with the hashtag:

#TrashBlasters



FALL/WINTER

DEVELOP A WASTE REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

Based on the results of your waste audit, develop your waste reduction priorities and action plan.

**Please note that the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) already requires all principals/schools to complete and submit a YRDSB Waste Reduction Work Plan. In developing your Waste Reduction Action Plan for the Trash Blasters program, please consider how to support implementation of the YRDSB Waste Reduction Work Plan completed by your principal.*

We know that food waste and packaging associated with lunch and snacks are significant contributors to the overall waste challenge at schools. It is strongly recommended that you incorporate initiatives to address food waste in your Waste Reduction Action Plan.



Here are some ideas to include in your Action Plan:

- Use SMART goals:
 - S = Specific
 - M = Measurable
 - A = Attainable
 - R = Relevant
 - T = Time-based
- Organize a litter roundup event on your school grounds
- Go Above and Beyond – York Region's My Healthy Lunch Challenge
- Organize a waste info poster contest
 - › Students get creative by crafting posters that can be installed by waste stations or in another visible location in the school
 - › Posters can focus on how to reduce waste in the first place, sort properly or about the life-cycle and end-of-life management of products
- Host a stuff swap or reuse event for students and teachers
 - › Consider swapping/ reusing clothes, toys and books



EXAMPLE OF A LITTERLESS LUNCH:



IMPLEMENT YOUR WASTE REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

Your waste audit helped you understand your challenges and opportunities. Your action plan helped you map out how you're going to address the challenges. Now it's time to follow your plan and take action!

Key considerations:

- Communicate your actions and results to the whole school on a regular basis by:
 - › Creating waste reduction campaigns within the school
 - › Hosting events and information sessions to educate students, teachers and parents about waste reduction initiatives
 - › **TIP:** Visit york.ca/wasteeducation for ideas for crafts, announcements, newsletter articles, videos and more!
- Regularly measure your waste to determine if your actions are effective or if you need to adapt your action plan:
 - › Use a waste audit template (see page 4 for suggestions or design your own version)
 - › You may choose to measure each classroom, or a sample of classrooms, on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis
 - › You may choose to track performance on a class-by-class, or a grade-by-grade basis
 - › You may choose to upload the waste measurement data you accumulate onto a shared Google Doc, so the school community can access the data
 - › Conduct a second waste audit and compare the results with your first waste audit statistics



- Document your initiatives and tell the story of your challenges and successes
 - › Highlight your progress and lessons learned
 - › Share your efforts during morning announcements, at school assemblies, on your school web page, newsletters to parents, a blog, and/or social media using **#TrashBlasters**
 - » Highlight:
 - Waste measurement results
 - Waste reduction progress
 - Classrooms reducing the most waste and how they are doing it
 - Upcoming waste initiatives and contests
 - Reminders to reduce waste



SPRING

CONTINUE WITH YOUR ACTION PLAN

Continue actions identified in the waste reduction action plan.

CONDUCT A FINAL WASTE AUDIT

Conduct a final waste audit to see overall year-to-date progress. Communicate progress to the school and the community via announcements, assemblies, newsletters and/or social media.

PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Let York Region Environmental Services know your successes and challenges and what you liked and did not like about participating in the program.

Contact ENV_TrashBlasters@york.ca or call **1-866-665-6752**