



*EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD*  
*Altamont Landfill Settlement Agreement*

**Grant #:** 18-36  
**Date:** 6 July 2019  
**Grant Name:** Thousand Oaks Elementary Cafeteria Waste Diversion  
**Grant Contact:** John Elliott, johnelliott2050@gmail.com  
**Grant Objectives:** Funds will be used to replace the two primary cafeteria waste sorting stations and support cafeteria waste diversion and education.

**Please submit a narrative report (approx. 2-4 pages) addressing the following questions for the project or activities, using this form. This grant report may be used to keep both the Altamont Education Advisory Board informed about your activities and the impact of our support. Photographs are encouraged. If you have any questions concerning these guidelines, please contact the Board Contact person at [altamonteab@gmail.com](mailto:altamonteab@gmail.com).**

1. Please report the outcomes of the funded project. In doing so, please refer to the grant objectives included above.
2. Describe what you did to accomplish your objectives and any significant course changes you made along the way.
3. What methods were used for evaluating and documenting progress towards these outcomes?
4. What were the most important things you learned?
5. Please outline any significant changes in your organization since the grant was made. In particular, please describe any changes in key leadership positions in the organization and/or program.
6. In addition to measuring the outcomes of the funded project, we are interested in how grants directly improve the lives of the people in your community. Please share one or more stories or quotes that show how this project has made a difference in the lives the people your program serves.

**Please send completed progress report forms in PDF format to Lauren at [altamonteab@gmail.com](mailto:altamonteab@gmail.com) with “Final Report-Grant #18-xx” in the subject line before June 30, 2019.**

# Thousand Oaks Elementary Cafeteria Waste Diversion

6 July 2017

Submitted to:  
Education Advisory Board  
Altamont Landfill Settlement Agreement

Submitted by:  
John Elliott  
Thousand Oaks Elementary

## Outcomes

Thousand Oaks Elementary School is building on four years of activities that have focused on providing a consistent and clear waste diversion infrastructure (compost and recycling) and involving students in learning and teaching about waste diversion. Precious activities have included:

- A classroom waste sorting program that emphasizes improving infrastructure for compost and paper recycling, with regular support by students to empty bins
- A cafeteria waste sorting program that has focused on new waste bins and signs and an education program for fourth graders who learn about waste diversion and help other students divert waste at lunchtime
- Installation of three-bin outdoor waste diversion stations

This grant application was used to:

1. Replace the two primary cafeteria waste sorting stations with a more sturdy and permanent solution
2. Support waste diversion and education

The current grant installed a very robust solution for cafeteria sorting. The solution includes two sorting stations made of powder-coated steel that support metal signage (provided by Berkeley Unified School District), hold standard Rubbermaid bins, and include an option to hold a 5-gallon liquid dump. A photo of the two stations (one behind the other) is provided below.



These bins replaced a previous solution that worked very well and supported proper waste diversion, but were not sufficiently durable. In December of 2017, the older sorting station was damaged and became unusable. Here is a picture of the old sorting station.



The cafeteria sorting station improvements, along with recycling and composting infrastructure that have been funded by the Altamont Board through grants in previous years, has put the school in a better position to motivate and educate kids about waste diversion. In early February 2019, parents and teachers were inspired to identify opportunities for environmental activism and waste reduction at school by organizing and empowering students to create GREEN TEAM KIDS.

Here are some of the accomplishments in the first school year of GREEN TEAM KIDS:

- Empowered 35 elementary students to take personal responsibility as young activists
- Diverted 100s of plastic spoons through SPOONTACULAR (metal spoons in classrooms for the breakfast meal)
- Collected 100s of markers to recycle through Crayola's colorcycle program
- Made waste management more efficient in all classrooms and the cafeteria by deploying BUSD's new bins and signage
- Created learning opportunities for students to understand ecosystems and pollution by piloting an interactive learning exercise available to all classrooms
- Participated in SF Earth Day event, singing about Rachel Carson
- Influenced waste approach at schoolwide Carnival event in June
- Created game out of recyclable materials for the school's community-wide Carnival event
- Began planning for 2019-2020 to do even more!



Green Team Kids at SF Earth Day Event

### Course Changes

In our grant application, we had identified a solution using the Rubbermaid Configure product line, image shown below.



We were asked by the Altamont Board to coordinate our solution with other activities in the Alameda County school districts. Ruth Abbe, Chair of the Altamont Education Advisory Board, introduced us to Nancy Deming, the K-12 Sustainability Specialist with the Alameda County Schools and District. She identified a custodian (Rafael De La Torre) within the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) able to make us a two custom cafeteria sorting that meet our needs perfectly.

In December, we met with Rafael De La Torre and he began building two stations for our school. This solution is perfect for the school because it is sturdy, moveable, and uses signage that is consistent across BUSD. Thanks to the Altamont Board, Nancy Deming, and Raphael De La Torre for making a better solution for our school.

Otherwise, we are proceeding along as planned. Key to success is involving the school custodian (Aaron Wright) in every decision.

## **Methods to Document Progress**

The work to date has made a noticeable improvement in the waste diversion at the school. Specific improvements have been documented as part of GREEN TEAM KIDS including increased waste diversion in classrooms, lower use of disposable plastic spoons, and recycling of Crayola markers.

## **Lessons Learned**

We have confirmed that it is best to involve others across the district to find the best solutions. We ended up with a much better solution than originally proposed in our grant application through coordination with Nancy Deming. We have also seen how good recycling and composting infrastructure can enable efforts to further engage and educate our students.

## **Organizational Changes**

Thousand Oaks Elementary has not gone through any significant organizational changes over the last year, but the GREEN TEAM KIDS effort has engaged a broader group of parents and kids in environmental and waste diversion activities. John Elliott has continued to work, with help from others, on improved waste diversion at Thousand Oaks for the last four years.

## **Impact**

Aaron Wright, the school custodian repeatedly says that the new bins are improving waste diversion and leading to less landfill waste. The cafeteria sorting station is very prominent and used by all students every day. About the new cafeteria sorting stations, Aaron Wright, the school custodian said in e-mail (about the new sorting stations), "This is going to change the cafeteria in the best way."

Kids were asked why they wanted to be on GREEN TEAM KIDS. Here are some examples of what they said:

- "I like to help and it's good for the WORLD!" - Axel, 2nd Grade
- "I love the earth and don't like what's happening to it, like climate change." - Miles, 5th Grade
- "I'm very interested in the environment and have lots of questions. I'm good at spotting things bad for the environment." - Lily, 3rd Grade
- "I want to save the world bit by bit." - Talia, 4th Grade