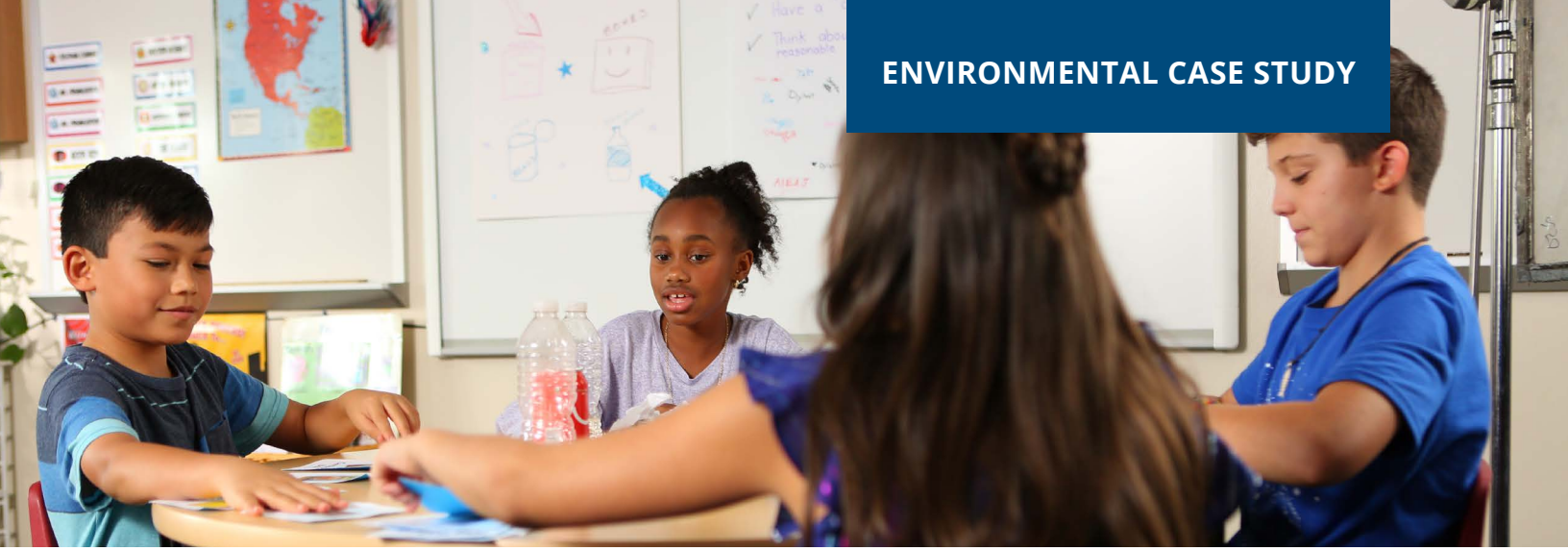

ENVIRONMENTAL CASE STUDY

Creating Student Leaders in Sustainability

Located in West San Jose, Discovery Charter School has embraced sustainability as both an operational priority and an educational opportunity. By combining effective waste management practices with student involvement, the school has created a culture where environmental responsibility is part of everyday learning.

Opportunity:

As California's Senate Bill (SB) 1383 requirements continue to expand organics diversion efforts, Discovery Charter School partnered with Republic Services to strengthen its waste reduction program. Working closely with Office Manager Noel, the school participated in staff training and reviewed its existing waste services. These services included an 8-cubic yard dry waste dumpster, a 4-cubic yard customized dumpster and a 2-cubic yard wet waste dumpster, all serviced once per week. The school was committed to improving waste sorting practices and increasing student engagement to maximize diversion efforts.

Solution:

Republic Services Sustainability Advisor Lily Woon provided staff training, a school-wide Touch-A-Truck event and waste-sorting presentations to help educate students and staff about proper disposal practices. Discovery Charter School took its commitment a step further by creating customized signage featuring waste items commonly generated in its cafeteria and throughout campus. Students also became active participants in the program by volunteering during lunch periods to assist their peers with proper sorting at collection stations. Following these outreach efforts, photos shared by the school demonstrated measurable behavior changes, with less material disposed of in the dry waste dumpster and increased participation in the customized and wet waste programs. Building on this success, another waste-sorting assembly is currently being planned for the upcoming school year.

Takeaway:

Sustainable waste programs are most effective when education and engagement work together. By empowering students to become environmental leaders and providing clear guidance for proper sorting, Discovery Charter School has built a program that supports compliance, enhances diversion, and creates lasting sustainability habits that extend beyond the classroom.

Learn more at
RepublicServices.com/municipality/san-jose-ca

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