MAKING THE SCHOOL A BETTER AND CLEANER PLACE
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“Heal the world,
Make it a better place,
For you and for me
And the entire human race.”
-Michael Jackson

To heal the world and make it a better place, as the late singer Michael Jackson has suggested, it all begins in us. As teachers, we instil to our pupils’ mind the value of a cleaner and more environmental-friendly place. Aside from home, it also begins in school. Thus, school waste management is important to be developed in our young learners.

The problem in waste management actually starts with discipline among children. If at an early age, they learn how to dispose their garbage properly, then it would be easier to minimize trash. During our time, when we were younger, we would be instructed by our teachers “Kung wala kayong makitang basurahan, ilagay sa bulsa. Pag may nahanap na tapunan, saka nyo itapon.”

To achieve proper waste management, teachers, parents and community are all encouraged to participate and take part.

Here are some ways to develop waste management.

1. **Emphasize the importance of 3R’s – Reuse, Reduce Recycle.**
   As early as Grade 1, pupils are encouraged to do the 3R’s- Reuse, Reduce and Recycle. Some lessons in Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (ESP) in Grade provide stories and information about this. Other subjects are also inculcating the significance of this.

   The idea of 3R’s also makes pupils more responsible in disposing their garbage, rather than throwing their trash anywhere.
2. Practice utilizing reusable utensils like cups, fork, spoon, plates rather than disposable ones.

Instead of selling drinks in straws and plastic, or plastic cups, and foods in styro and plastic containers, why not encourage pupils to bring their own utensils? It will be more hygienic (since they are sure they are the only ones who use this) and it also eliminates wastes. If they succeed in bringing their own reusable utensils, they can receive rewards. School can employ Student Pupil Government (SPG) and Science club officers to monitor and supervise.

3. Use recycling programs for fund-raising for school.

In some schools, SPG officers collect white papers and sell them. This is an income-generating project for the school. This is also a way to reduce the waste the school.

4. Cultivate the culture of Waste Segregation

Local government also promotes Waste Segregation. Identifying and sorting out biodegradable, degradable and recyclable materials is also being implemented in schools. This minimizes waste and helps children be responsible in disposing their waste, at an early age. By practicing this culture, children may learn at an early age the value of waste management.

5. Conduct an information drive on waste management.

This information drive should include teachers, pupils, parents, community officers and other stakeholders. More information means more awareness. Through this, everyone is given the opportunity to take part in waste management.

6. Start up a composting program.

Science tells us that biodegradable materials help us as they become natural source of fertilizers. Setting up a compost pit is actually being taught in Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (EPP) and Technology and Livelihood Economics. By
starting composting program, children put their knowledge into practice and also help the school and environment reduce waste.

7. Partner up with environment advocates and organizations that help convert trash into funds.

Recently, some environmental advocates are setting with programs that aim to eliminate waste and also generate funds from these materials. Some of these organizations are partnering up with schools to collect reusable waste and convert them into useful items. One example of this is Banco Kalikasan, an organization that is reaching up to school to gather recyclable materials. In exchange of this, pupils and other stakeholders are given points and incentives. Through this, children are motivated to collect and dispose their trash responsibly.

Environment is important. We must take care of this. We must do our part to make our school a better and cleaner place.

References:
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www.businesswaste.co.uk