

## APPLICATION ID #8192 (Grade Band K-2)

### Step 1: Learn

#### TASK

What issue are you and your students going to address (e.g., topics to consider include transportation, material resources, green space and energy use) and why? Discuss any data collected that demonstrates this topic is an issue. The topic you choose should impact your classroom or school.

Limit your response to 250 words.

#### TEAM RESPONSE:

Going to our two local grocery stores right around the corner from our school-we noticed that even though there are so many accessible reusable bags,not very many parents, teachers, or administrators were using reusable bags when they went shopping. Students thought about when they went shopping with their parents and how they didn't use reusable bags. This started us thinking-we starting asking families from other parts of the USA and they use reusable bags because they are charged for plastic bags or given a discount when using reusable bags. Our two neighborhood grocery stores where our school families and teachers go-they do not offer any incentives to shoppers for using reusable bags. The students of From Plastic to Fantastic want change. Why won't our student's parents use reusable bags?

We went to a local landfill site and over three thousand bags are blown over to the fence that surrounds the landfill everyday. The fence has to be cleaned up over twice a day. This is only one of the many landfills we have in our Georgia area. The students couldn't believe it.

We decided that our school and community needed action and a campaign to make people more aware. We have visited both stores to tally plastic bags versus reusable bags usage. The results are sad. We have conducted interviews and the main reason people don't use plastic bags is convenience and we hear "They are in the car."

We want less plastic bag usage and we want change!

#### CITATION:

### Step 2: Plan

#### TASK

How will your class address this issue? Include an overview of your plan, a description of the data that will be collected, and a prediction about how your class plan will impact the issue.

Limit your response to 800 words.

#### TEAM RESPONSE:

The From Plastic to Fantastic students have come up with their plan to reduce the usage of plastic bags in their school. They will be creating short videos to play every morning on our school morning announcements. They will show photos of the landfill site they went to on their day off of school to show how much garbage is being produced especially plastic bags. They will visit the two local grocery stores that our students and families use the most often on the same day of the week during the same hour all month. The first visit was in September to use as a "before campaign tally" to show how many plastic bags are being used and how only 2 out of 100 shoppers used reusable bags. This information will be shared to educate the students at our school. The students could not believe only 2 out of 100 people in that hour were using reusable bags. Students saw their peers at the stores and the conversation started immediately as they asked what they were doing with the clipboards. Parents started thinking and nervously laughed as they explained the reusable bags were in the car.

We plan to go the the two grocery stores for the entire month of January with signs and asking people if they remembered their reusable bags. Remember-in our initial interviews, most people had the reusable bags but left them in the car.

Students plan to survey families and other students from other parts of the US to see how our area differs when it comes to plastic bag usage.

We plan on writing to Publix and Kroger headquarters asking them to give incentives to use reusable bags like found in our student surveys above.

We plan on looking into what plastic bags are made out of-yes they are in the landfills but maybe they are also hurting the environment when they are being manufactured.

Students will make a series of videos to show to the student/teacher body at our school of our research at the landfill and at the grocery stores.

Students will be designing a logo and selling reusable bags during three nights when all parents and students come to the school for a Talent Show. Three students will get up on stage to educate parents and "Change the World in regards to plastic bag use." We will be giving incentives if parents and students are spotting using plastic bags when we are doing our surveying for the month of January-every Saturday for one hour.

We plan on having instructions on how to use reusable bags properly-in our research students found that bacteria can grow in reusable bags so they need to be washed once per week in hot water. Students knew it was important for us to keep parents and students using the reusable bags long after the contest is over.

We predict that we will see the usage of reusable bags go up at least 50% if not more. Our initial visits of the two grocery stores show only 2 out of 100 used reusable bags. Also, we predict that Kroger and Publix will write us back letting us know that they will give an incentive of a least 10 cents off for those shoppers that bring in their reusable bags. We wrote to them sharing our research that most states charge for plastic bargained that other stores in our area at least give a discount including Target and CVS just a couple of minutes from their stores.

We also predict that at least 80% of our students will tell their parents that they need to use reusable bags when they shop. They will remind their parents to get them out of the car etc. Every time they do this-they will tell our From Plastic to Fantastic students and be entered into a contest to be yet determined. (The kids have come up with a lot so we need to discuss this more)

We predict we can impact and make reusable bags a habit not just something the students at our school are forgetting in their car when they go to the grocery store with their parents.

#### **CITATION:**

### **Step 3: Act**

#### **TASK**

What did your class do? How did you work with your class to create and implement your plan? Be sure to describe what data was collected and if the data reflected the predicted change.

Limit your response to 450 words.

#### **TEAM RESPONSE:**

The students have written to our Senator, to our mayor, to our parents, and to our local grocery stores about plastic bag use.

We saw a difference in the plastic bag use. We went to Kroger and Publix five Saturdays in a row and gave out prizes for those that use reusable bags. We went at the same time every Saturday and the same stores. Reusable bag use went from 2 out of 100 to 22 out of 100 then finally at the end it was 67 out of 100 people using reusable bags. We even had at least 20 shoppers go back to their vehicle to get their reusable bags because of the students asking and holding up signs. We would take photos of the kids being seen at the grocery stores with reusable bags and put their picture on the school's morning announcements. This was a great incentive for the next weekend. Also, the store clerks commented that they were so surprised about increase in reusable bags.

We wrote to Publix and Kroger asking to give a discount if the shopper had reusable bags or charge a fee for plastic bags. We did receive a reply but we were not happy with the outcome. Instead of doing anything that really helped us help the environment, we received ice cream vouchers. The kids will be writing again soon. The students are taking this project to heart and they want to be like other countries and ban plastic bag use. They did not want ice cream, they wanted change.

We still plan to write and start a petition to include it in our next letter to Publix. We think this is not something that should go away and needs to be done. It is not like we are asking these stores to try something brand new; it is something that needs action right away like other countries.

#### **CITATION:**

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2010/09/plastic-ban-fizzles-again-in-california-amid-heavy-industry-lobbying-what-do->

[you-think.html](#)

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/california-votes-plastic-bag-ban/story?id=11526792>

## Step 4: Reflect and Extend

### TASK

What did your class learn? Explain how challenges were addressed, how what has been put into place will be sustained, and how others could replicate your work.

Limit your response to 650 words.

### TEAM RESPONSE:

Our class of 1st and 2nd graders learned a very valuable life lesson in doing our From Plastic to Fantastic-don't give up after the first "no".

We went into this project looking at a landfill and thinking there was so many plastic bags. This student driven project evolved once the kids realized that the plastic bags are not only ending up in the landfill but it hurts the environment when they are manufactured. The students researched how there has already been petitions for other states like California to ban plastic bags. Georgia has not had anyone fight this fight for our home state.

The students realized that most parents and teachers, did not seem to care about using plastic bags until we made them aware of exactly why it is harmful to the environment.

We have started our petition and we feel like the school is really on board to help. The PTA has even purchased every staff member a reusable bag in hopes to send a message.

We have called the Forsyth County News for a story-so this is very exciting. We truly feel that more than 67% of parents that filled out our survey are now making a consistent effort to use only reusable bags. We feel like before our project, only 20% would think to use them and would use plastic bags without even thinking twice. As the teacher, I can guarantee that all the parents in our school at least think twice now about reusable bags.

### CITATION:

<http://www.planetearthbag.com/plastic-bag-ban/why-italy-banned-the-use-of-plastic-shopping-bags-in-2011/>

<http://www.bloggingstocks.com/2010/01/13/wal-mart-begins-charging-for-grocery-bags-in-california/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plastic\\_shopping\\_bag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plastic_shopping_bag)

## Step 5: Teacher Sharing

### TASK

How did it go? Were you able to effectively support your students' efforts to make a sustainable change that benefits the environment? Why or why not? Would you and your class have done anything differently if given the opportunity?

Limit your response to 400 words.

### TEAM RESPONSE:

This project made the kids take ownership and true love of their learning. They are the ones that came up with having a place in the school to drop off plastic bags to recycle and not have them in the landfills like they saw in our field trip. They are the ones that wanted to design and sell reusable bags here at school. I was able to do that for them and they made sure they put "Siemens Change the World 2011" on each of them. They specifically wanted to sell them for only the amount we paid for them because they "didn't want to make money, just help the earth." The only thing that happened that would have been better, is to not have the terrible snow storm hit us and canceled school for the week. We were going to sell our bags at the Talent show and put on a skit about plastic bags to continue our school wide initiative.

I was impressed by the continuous extra work the kids would do just for the love of the project. They would come in ready to teach something they read in the newspaper. Once student came in the door saying, "Did you know that Italy has completely banned plastic bags and we can't even get our grocery stores to give a discount to those who don't use them."

The students have mentioned to me that they wish we would have started collecting plastic bags a lot sooner in the school year. We

have collected many already that we take to the recycling center.

We wish we could have found a way to communicate it better to our local government. I was very surprised as the teacher that we haven't heard back yet. We really want our whole community and city to get involved. The State of Georgia really needs some new laws passed.

We also have the parents support on this project more now than at the beginning of the school year, so we hope to continue this project until we see the change in our school become change in Georgia. These little 1st and 2nd grade students acting so much older-I was so impressed.

Any other teachers out there that think this important-start by educating the students about plastic bags and they will take over and insist change.

#### **CITATION:**

<http://www.myreusablegrocerybags.com/content/charging-plastic-bags>

<http://www.thestar.com/article/549675>

## **Step 6: Attachments**

### **TASK**

- You may include attachments to provide more information.
  - Up to 5 images (.jpg, .gif, or .png) or pdf or ppt
    - [From Plastic To Fantastic1.pdf](#)
  - 1 video - 1 minute or less (Videos will be reviewed for content, not the aesthetic quality of the video (.wmv, .mov, .flv))
    - [Clean World.wmv](#)