



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**ADAM J. BELLO**  
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**For Immediate Release**  
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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO ANNOUNCES FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
TO RECEIVE FOOD WASTE DIVERSION GRANTS**

*Each school district will be awarded \$5,000 for student-led programs  
aimed at diverting food waste*

**ROCHESTER, NY** — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced that five school districts in Monroe County have been chosen to receive new Food Waste Diversion Pilot Program grants. The program aims to reduce food waste in landfills and improve environmental outcomes. These districts applied for funding to support new or continued student-led programs aimed at diverting food waste and nurturing the next generation's understanding of food conservation. The successful school districts are: **Brighton, Fairport, Penfield, Pittsford, and West Irondequoit.**

"I want to thank these districts for taking an active role in educating our young people on environmental stewardship and reducing waste in landfills," **said County Executive Bello.** "Engaging students in developing solutions to school food waste will not only give them a broader understanding of the challenge of reducing greenhouse gases, but will allow them to see the impact of their efforts first-hand."

This program is a result of planning for Phase II of Monroe County's Climate Action Plan, which addresses greenhouse gas emissions from Monroe County residents, businesses, and organizations.

"Food waste has long been cited as one of the largest waste streams generated by educational institutions," **said Department of Environmental Services Director Mike Garland.** "The Department of Environmental Services' is honored to award this funding to enhance environmental stewardship and the existing recycling programs in these five school districts. The efforts the students and staff will undertake with the methods they employ will divert organic waste from landfills and sewers, teach the next generation to care for the environment and assist in the development of local, environmentally-based green businesses."

"By involving students in creating solutions to school food waste, we're helping them gain a deeper understanding of the role everyday actions play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions," **said Monroe County Legislator Susan Hughes-Smith.** "As Chair of the County Legislature's Environment and Public Works Committee, I could not be more

thrilled to see these programs come to fruition. Through these combined efforts and innovative practices, organic waste will be redirected away from landfills and wastewater systems, resulting in a cleaner and healthier community here in Monroe County.”

“To heal our world, we must listen to the voices of our youngest citizens and follow their lead. This program does exactly that,” **said Monroe County Legislator John Baynes.**

A recent study by Penn State found plate waste in schools ranging from 27% to 53% of the food served. Successful school district grant proposals included activities around composting, event recycling, and waste tracking systems.

On behalf of the Brighton Central School District, I want to extend my sincere thanks to Monroe County for awarding us funding through its Food Waste Diversion Program,” **said Brighton Central School District Superintendent Kevin McGowan.** “This funding will support our existing composting program and strengthen our ongoing efforts to divert waste from landfills and operate more sustainably. Composting sends a powerful message to our students and the entire Brighton community about the importance of limiting waste and being mindful of our environmental impact. We are proud to be part of a community that values sustainability and invests in a greener future for the next generation.”

“We are grateful for the Food Waste Diversion grant from Monroe County. As a district we appreciate the County’s vision behind the grant and are looking forward to building upon the sustainability efforts we are currently undertaking in Fairport with these funds,” **said Fairport Central School District Superintendent Brett Provenzano.**

“We are honored to have been selected to be part of this funding partnership with Monroe County. Our Environmental Club students are thrilled for the chance to turn their vision into action by launching a composting program at Penfield High School. This support empowers them to make a real difference in our school and community,” **said Penfield Central School District Superintendent Dr. Tasha Potter.**

"The Pittsford Central School District is delighted to receive this important matching grant from the County of Monroe for a pilot food waste diversion program at one of our elementary schools," **said Pittsford Central School District Superintendent Michael Pero.** "Our students are leading the way in recycling, and these funds will further their goals by educating them about composting and diverting food scraps and waste."

“We’re grateful to Monroe County for this grant, which will help us reduce food waste while engaging students in real-world lessons about sustainability and environmental stewardship,” **said West Irondequoit Central School District Superintendent Aaron Johnson.** “This initiative will strengthen our school community’s commitment to responsible resource use and inspire lifelong habits that benefit both people and the planet.”

For more information on the program, please visit: <https://www.monroecounty.gov/des-school-food-waste>

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