



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

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLO ANNOUNCES FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO RECEIVE FOOD WASTE DIVERSION GRANTS

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced that five school districts in Monroe County have been chosen to receive Food Waste Diversion Program grants. This is the second year of the Food Waste Diversion Program that aims to reduce food waste in landfills and advance student understanding of food conservation. Awardees for the 2026-2027 academic year are **Brighton, Fairport, Penfield, Pittsford, and West Irondequoit**.

“Engaging students in developing solutions to reduce school food waste not only enhances understanding but encourages problem solving, building lifelong skills,” **said County Executive Bello**. “After the success of year one of the program, we are excited to see what comes next for these districts!”

The Food Waste Diversion Program seeks to address greenhouse gas emissions from Monroe County residents, businesses and organizations. In just the first four months of the program (September 2025 to December 2025), schools participating in the program diverted 85,000 pounds of food waste to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation authorized organics recycling facilities, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills and helping lower greenhouse gas emissions. Food waste diversion plays a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing food, as well as reducing the energy and resources used to produce uneaten food.

“As Chair of the County Legislature’s Environment and Public Works Committee, I could not be more thrilled to see collaborative programs implemented in our community,” **said Legislator Susan Hughes-Smith**. “The food waste diversion programs that will both make a positive environmental impact and support students in their efforts to push for a healthy and sustainable future.”

“Education and environmental activism go hand in hand, especially when our young people are educating their elders,” **said Legislator John Baynes**.

Successful school district grant proposals included initiatives such as staff training, student education, and composting programs in food preparation areas, cafeterias, and at school events. These initiatives will see students, teachers, and staff take on an active role in reducing food waste.

“The Brighton Central School District is pleased to announce that we have once again been selected by the Monroe County Food Waste Diversion Program to receive a grant of up to \$5,000 for the 2026/2027 school year,” **said Brighton Central School District Superintendent Kevin McGowan.** “These funds will continue to help us reach our goal of becoming a zero-waste community. We want to thank the County for their continued support of all our schools in the area.”

“The Fairport Central School District is proud to be part of Monroe County Food Waste Diversion Program. When students connect sustainability education to action in their own schools, they are empowered to make responsible choices in the world outside of their classrooms and cafeterias,” **said Fairport Central School District Superintendent Brett Provenzano.**

“The Penfield Central School District is proud to enter year two of the Monroe County Food Waste Diversion Program,” **said Penfield Central School District Superintendent Dr. Tasha Potter.** “We find this program incredibly important because learning about sustainability at school helps students develop responsible habits and critical thinking skills. This, in turn, empowers them to make environmentally conscious decisions in their daily lives and future careers.”

"We are thrilled to again receive the Monroe County grant for Food Waste Diversion. Last school year, we piloted eight school kitchens with great success and look forward to scaling this process to become a routine part of the work we do in our school kitchens," **said Pittsford Central School District Superintendent Shana Cutaia.**

“West Irondequoit is proud to receive this grant for a second consecutive year, reinforcing our commitment to reducing food waste and promoting sustainable practices across our schools,” **said West Irondequoit Central School District Superintendent Aaron Johnson.** “This support allows us to continue expanding our food diversion efforts and empowering our students to be responsible stewards of the environment.”

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

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Media inquiries:

Steve Barz, Director of Communications
steveBbarz@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 753-1064

Kara Osipovitch, Deputy Director of Communications
KaraOsipovitch@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 753-1081