

SERT Spotlight



Lights.
Camera.
Conservation!

Start Filming Your School's Entry for the SERT Video Contest

IN OUR OCTOBER ISSUE, we introduced the SERT VIDEO CONTEST, our newest campaign to raise awareness about the importance of energy conservation and responsible recycling, and to emphasize the sustainability-related actions of the school-based SERT teams that function within Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). This contest was designed to encourage our students and staff to be responsible environmental stewards and to share their commitment to sustainability with others beyond their school through creative video messages.

Who's eligible to enter the contest?

All MCPS elementary, middle, and high school students and staff are eligible to enter the SERT Video Contest. Each school may submit three (3) entries per category (PSAs and Conservation Clips). Schools are encouraged to conduct their own judging and submit only their best entries.

What should the video be about? Think about 3-2-1

When planning your video, think 3-2-1. There are **three topics**: energy conservation, recycling, and your school's SERT team activities. Your video can focus on any or all topics. There are two categories: public service announcements (PSAs), which should be 30-60 seconds long; and Conservation Clips, which should be 1-5 minutes in length. All participants in the video must attend **one school**.

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THE SCHOOL ENERGY AND RECYCLING TEAM (SERT) PROGRAM is pleased to announce that our schools made significant efforts to save energy during the fourth quarter (June–August) of the 2018–2019 academic year. During these challenging budgetary times, any avoidable operating costs will have a positive impact on our educational initiatives. Because more than half of our schools demonstrated great energy management behavior and showed energy savings compared to their baseline, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) was able to achieve \$137,349 in energy cost avoidance during the quarter.



Schools achieving top energy cost avoidance as compared to their baseline usage are eligible to receive quarterly monetary awards. The baseline for each school is an average use of their prior five school years for the same quarter. Schools without an established baseline are eligible to receive a monetary Great Energy Management (GEM) award which is based on demonstrated active participation in the SERT program and energy-efficient behavior. If your school isn't listed below, contact your [SERT facilitator](#) to learn how your school might save energy.

We applaud all of our students and staff for their commitment to conservation and sustainability and congratulate the following 51 MCPS schools for earning SERT energy awards:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Ashburton Elementary School
- Bannockburn Elementary School
- Brown Station Elementary School
- Rachel Carson Elementary School
- Cashell Elementary School
- Clarksburg Elementary School
- Clopper Mill Elementary School
- Cloverly Elementary School
- Capt. James Daly Elementary School
- Dr. Charles Drew Elementary School
- Gaithersburg Elementary School
- Highland Elementary School
- Jackson Road Elementary School
- Jones Lane Elementary School
- Lakewood Elementary School
- Maryvale Elementary School
- Monocacy Elementary School
- Oakland Terrace Elementary School
- Piney Branch Elementary School
- Rock Creek Valley Elementary School
- Seven Locks Elementary School

- Sherwood Elementary School
- Sligo Creek Elementary School
- South Lake Elementary School
- Stone Mill Elementary School
- Travilah Elementary School
- Waters Landing Elementary School
- Wayside Elementary School
- Westbrook Elementary School
- Wilson Wims Elementary School
- Woodlin Elementary School
- Wygate Elementary School

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- Argyle Middle School
- Cabin John Middle School
- Eastern Middle School
- Forest Oak Middle School
- Robert Frost Middle School
- Newport Mill Middle School
- John Poole Middle School
- Rocky Hill Middle School
- Silver Spring Int'l Middle School
- Hallie Wells Middle School
- Earle B. Wood Middle School

HIGH SCHOOLS

- Montgomery Blair High School
- Damascus High School
- John F. Kennedy High School
- Quince Orchard High School
- Rockville High School
- Walt Whitman High School
- Thomas S. Wootton High School

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

- Rock Terrace School

Click here to review your school's quarterly energy usage.

Make Improvements During Winter Break

NOW THAT SCHOOL HAS BEEN IN SESSION for a few months, you've had time to determine which recycling processes are going well and which ones need to be tweaked a bit. Our recycling staff has visited 70 schools so far, reviewing infrastructure and making suggestions, and we've seen a positive impact on our overall recycling behavior. As with everything, however, there is always room for more improvement. So what can you do to make sure that your school is recycling effectively and efficiently?

First, familiarize yourself with [what is and isn't recyclable](#) in MCPS. At lunchtime, make sure that you have a paper recycling bin in the lunch room and that you're properly recycling the paper trays, milk and juice containers, and the paper containers. Remember that Ziploc bags and the bags that chips and cookies come in are not recyclable in Montgomery County.

Next, think about the types of recycling material that's being produced frequently in your school. Do you have paper and commingled recycling bins in your hallways, offices, classrooms, multi-purpose rooms and outdoors? Do you have sufficient recycling bins near the stadium or other common areas that the public use? Take time during the winter break to use the [MCPS Recycling Infrastructure Checklist](#) to help determine your needs.

Lastly, as you walk around your facility, look at the bins. Do they have the proper labels? Recycling is far too important an act for it to be confusing. When bins aren't properly labeled, it can be difficult for students and staff to know what should go into them.



Adding our color-coded labels to your bins is a great way to promote your program and educate students and ensures material is sorted properly. Our labels match the tops of the recycling and trash bin lids for quick recognition.



When recyclables aren't placed in the proper bin, or when trash is put into a recycling bin, the entire content of the bin has to be discarded as trash. One simple way to avoid this issue is to make sure that your commingle and paper recycling bins have the proper lids on them to identify what should be placed in that bin. The color-coded lids make it easy for students and staff to remember that blue is for paper; green is for commingled material, and red is for trash! If you need labels, lids, or recycling bins, order them [via Maximo](#).

As we prepare for the holidays and winter break, remember that MCPS recycles every day, even when school isn't in session!



WINTER BREAK IS THE
PERFECT TIME TO REVIEW
YOUR RECYCLING
INFRASTRUCTURE.
CLICK HERE FOR THE
CHECKLIST.

SERT's Video Contest CONTINUED

What are the guidelines for the videos?

All submissions for the SERT Video Contest must—

- ◆ encourage others to conserve energy, recycle responsibly, or to actively participate in the school-based SERT team's activities;
- ◆ be presented in English;
- ◆ fit within the time limits of the category;
- ◆ have a title;
- ◆ be uploaded to Google Drive, Dropbox, YouTube, or a similar platform;
- ◆ have an active hyperlink that's visible to the general public;
- ◆ be accompanied by a fully-completed SERT Video Contest entry form along with signed permission slips; and
- ◆ be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on February 28, 2020.

How does a school enter the contest?

Visit our website, www.GreenSchoolsFocus.org, and download an official SERT Video Contest entry form. Also download the permission slip form—one must be completed for each student participating in the video and signed by their parent/guardian. Entry forms must be signed by the school's administrator.

Who will judge the entries?

Videos will be judged by MCPS staff. Scoring will be based on the entries' content, creativity, and quality. Awards will be presented to a total of six winners. One entry per category will win for each school level (elementary, middle, and high). Winning schools will earn a \$300 monetary award and bragging rights. The winning entries will be featured on our website, in this newsletter, and on [Twitter](https://twitter.com).

How can I get more information?

Visit our website for more details about the contest. You'll find a list of frequently asked questions and all of the necessary forms.

Hooray for Winter Break!

Please keep in mind that we have an opportunity to save a substantial amount of energy in our schools during the upcoming winter break.

Before you leave to recharge your inner batteries and spend a wonderful break with your family and friends, please take a moment to use [this checklist](#) as a guide for powering down your school. Remember that you'll need to use your @mcps.net Google login to access the form. Email or call if you have any questions.

We wish you happiness and joy this holiday season and throughout the new year!



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SERT SPOTLIGHT is produced by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) program and distributed to school-based SERT leaders and team members, building service personnel, and many others who are interested in conservation and environmental sustainability.

As part of the Montgomery County Public Schools Department of Facilities Management, the SERT program provides opportunities for all schools to participate and receive incentives and recognition for their energy conservation and recycling efforts. The SERT program supports a balanced environment for the integration of all students to work together in a culturally diverse environment. Our goal is to provide the resources, support, and vision of the future for a successful conservation program at each school. SERT's motto, "It's your world. Choose to conserve!" promotes the connection between human behavior and its impact on the environment. It reinforces our culture of conservation and encourages participation in our mission to conserve resources and recycle actively.

