

#EARTHGUARDIANS & #JUSTINSCHOOLS



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At Earth Guardians, we take amplifying the voice and leadership of youth seriously. While we work intergenerationally, we honor the power of peer-to-peer connection and support. For that very reason, we have created this unique line of one-of-a-kind 'How to' Guides written by young Earth Guardian solutionaries, plus an amazing Earth Guardian teacher. The guides are all passion-driven and cover a variety of topics, ranging from ridding your school campus of plastic water bottles to becoming a sustainable fashion designer and more. They have thoughtfully been crafted with the intention of supporting you as you step forward into taking actions in ways you love. From our hearts and minds to yours, we hope they enrich your journey.

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ABOUT JACKSON, JUST YOUTH PROGRAM LEAD

Jackson Hinkle is the founder of the Team Zissou Environmental Organization and the co-founder of Orange County Students For City Council, a coalition designed to mobilize and support young, progressive, and corporate-free students to run for city council seats throughout Orange County. As President of the Team Zissou Environmental Organization, Jackson has briefed the U.S. Congress on the safe storage of nuclear waste, helped organize a student-led initiative that converted six high schools campuses to solar power, and spearheaded a student-led movement, with Jaden Smith, that ended the sale of plastic water bottles on over 60 campuses in Capistrano Unified School District.



Due to his success as an environmental activist, Jackson was named one of Teen Vogue's Top 8 Young Environmentalists of 2017 and one of Reader's Digest's Most Inspirational Kids of 2017. He is a former candidate for San Clemente City Council and now a member of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's National Youth Council.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE



As a surfer and a resident of a coastal city, I have witnessed the negative impacts of plastic pollution over the course of my life. On Coastal Cleanup Day in 2016, plastic water bottles were the number one pollutant found on the beaches in my community. Last year alone, Americans used about 50 billion plastic water bottles and, at our current rate, there will be more plastic in our oceans than fish by the year 2050. My classmates and I decided to reduce the plastic in our school by replacing single-use PET plastic water bottles with *JUST Water*, a more sustainable option. We did this because we recognized the importance of standing up for our environment.

I hope what I learned through leading this initiative empowers you to create sustainable changes in your community.

HOW TO: RID YOUR CAMPUS FROM SINGLE USE PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES

1. LEARN ABOUT PLASTIC POLLUTION AND THE BOTTLED WATER INDUSTRY

The first step in any environmental campaign is to make sure you are informed on the topic at hand. It's best to be prepared when friends, family, and potential supporters ask you about your motive for ridding your school of plastic water bottles. If you don't have an answer to a question, don't make one up, just be honest and say that you don't know. To get more informed on the financial and ecological impact of the bottled water industry, I would highly suggest watching the documentary called *Tapped* by Stephanie Soechtig. Another great short film to watch about the impacts of plastic consumption is called *Smog of the Sea*, starring singer-songwriter Jack Johnson. And check out the [JUST Water video](#) of how Capistrano Unified School District eliminated 9,000 pounds of plastic per year.

2. START WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU TO GAIN SOME MOMENTUM

Ask for your friends, classmates, teachers, and school administration to support your campaign to transition your school away from selling single-use PET plastic water bottles to a more sustainable option like *JUST Water*. Get the people around you excited about what you are doing and, hopefully, they will share what you are doing. A great tool for this is going to be through utilizing your social media platform. Start by keeping your campaign's messaging simple and sharing the most important information. For a school, or school district, campaign, there is no need to put a ton of time and money into this before you get started; start small and be direct. As your team grows, you will have the opportunity to delegate tasks and positions, as well as have a larger community to help refine your campaign's messaging and goals on social media, as well as for the press.

3. REACH OUT TO JUST WATER BOTTLE COMPANY

Before you move forward with your campaign, you must first identify a sustainable water bottle company you would prefer your school, or school district, replace plastic water bottles with. Work with your team to do the research. More likely than not, your school won't be willing to stop selling single-use water bottles entirely, as they are typically a large source of revenue. At my school, we chose to transition our school to sell *JUST Water*, due to their environmentally-friendly design, ethical sourcing, and willingness to provide structural support to our campaign.



HOW TO: RID YOUR CAMPUS FROM SINGLE USE PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES

4. CREATE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM FOR THE CAMPAIGN

You do want to have a place where your information is laid out so that when you have a captive audience you don't miss out. Having a social media platform is utterly important as it will help engage your peers, educate your audience, and keep your followers up to date about events and developments. Social media is likely going to be your main resource to send people to, so look around and identify what platforms are used most widely at your school. Where I live In Southern California, Instagram and Facebook were the most useful tools to help spread our campaign's message. Create content on social media that is truly worth viewing and sharing. Once the people around you start sharing it, there's no knowing who might see it.

5. REACH OUT TO JUST IN SCHOOLS

Creating a strong proposal is essential when you go to pitch your idea to friends, family, teachers, and school administration. The campaign I helped lead aimed to transition our entire school district of 64 campuses (Capistrano Unified School District) away from selling plastic water bottles to eco-friendly *JUST Water*, a more sustainable water bottle option. Though *JUST Water* was going to be \$0.25 more expensive than the plastic water bottles currently sold in our school district, we figured students would appreciate the bottle's positive environmental impact, as well as the unique aesthetic design and quality of the product itself. *JUST Water* is made out of 82% renewable resources, each bottle is a 74% reduction in carbon emissions compared to a standard plastic water bottle, and the water in each *JUST* bottle is ethically sourced. It is helpful to include statistics like these in your proposal, so you can help others understand your desire to create change. You can contact *JUST Water* @[JUSTinSchools](#) on Insta, and our email justinschools@justwater.com.

6. PITCH THE CAMPAIGN TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION WITH STAFF SUPPORT

Now what to do with that proposal? After setting the groundwork for your campaign, establishing a social media presence, and educating your friends, family, and teachers about the campaign, it is now time to pitch your vision, for the end of the sale of plastic water bottles, to your principal. To have your proposal taken seriously, you must pitch your idea in the most formal manner. Don't stop your principal at the lunch-tables or in the hallway and try to explain your idea to them. The best thing you can do is go to your school's front office, request a meeting with the principal, and let the office staff know who you will be bringing to the meeting. When I proposed the campaign to my principal, I brought my (supportive) environmental teacher, as well as a friend of mine who had been working on the campaign with me.

Be sure to have a one-page proposal ready for your principal that explains:

- Why students want the schools to stop selling single use PET plastic water bottles.
- Why a sustainable option like *JUST Water* is a better option

HOW TO: RID YOUR CAMPUS FROM SINGLE USE PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES

7. GAIN MEDIA COVERAGE

My greatest suggestion for gaining the media's attention is to start small and build up your resume brick-by-brick. Start by just getting your school newspaper to write about what you are doing. From there, you can share all media coverage on your social media pages. Build your campaign up from your school's newspaper, to your local newspaper, county newspaper, or even local news stations and radio. It doesn't have to go in that order, but that was my method for success. With each article written about your work, you are building up your movement and you will have an easier time getting more press.

8. RUN A TRIAL PERIOD

This is arguably the most important step in your campaign. You must coordinate with your school, *JUST Water*, and students to organize a trial period in which plastic water bottles will be sold alongside the new *JUST Water* bottles at school.

In my school district, we:

1. Led a trial period during the week in which *JUST Water*, packaged in paper-based cartons, was added to the water bottle selection at San Clemente High School, Tesoro High School, Shorecliffs Middle School, and Ladera Ranch Middle School.
2. Reliant upon student feedback to the new bottles, our school district would make a calculated decision as to whether they would phase out all plastic water bottles and permanently sell the sustainable alternative, *JUST Water*.
3. Student feedback was tracked through bottle sales and through a public survey in which students were asked whether they would prefer to have *JUST Water* replace plastic water bottles at their school cafeterias, given they were going to be \$0.25 more per unit.
4. Our Plastic Free CUSD team coupled this trial period with an educational campaign about why students should support the transition to *JUST Water* in our schools. Student volunteers handed out informational flyers in classrooms and around school, spoke about the campaign in front of their classes, showed students how to fill out the public survey, wore Plastic Free CUSD T-shirts, and above all, encouraged students to go try the new sustainable waters.



HOW TO: RID YOUR CAMPUS FROM SINGLE USE PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES


9. ANALYZE RESULTS FROM THE TRIAL WEEK

At the end of your trial week, it is important to analyze the sales of both types of water bottles, as well as assess the results of your survey. This will help inform the decision your school, or school district, makes in whether they will transition away from selling plastic water bottles. At the end of my school district's trial week, over 600 students had responded to our survey, with 95% stating that they would prefer *JUST Water* to be sold on campus, even if it was an extra \$0.25 per unit. In addition to this, *JUST Water* outsold plastic water bottles by hundreds at the four schools we tested. The campaign was a great success and our school district recognized that students, teachers, and our community, as a whole, was ready for a change. We are the de-facto stewards of this planet, and it is time we start acting like it.



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