

Waste and Recycling Section



Step 2 -- Green & Healthy Schools Assessment



Reducing waste (using less “stuff” in the first place), reusing items, recycling and composting save natural resources, energy and landfill space. Practicing waste reduction and recycling can also save your school money. This assessment will help identify current methods of handling waste at school and start you thinking about how these methods can be modified to make your school more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Sustainable practices are those which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

School Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Conducted By:

Please include administrators, teachers, school staff, students and parents involved in this assessment.

Name	Title and/or Grade Level
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

School Population:

Students: _____ Staff: _____

A. Have each classroom complete the Waste Disposition Chart on page 8. Also, complete one for the office, staff room, library, bathrooms, cafeteria, gym/locker rooms, custodial closet and the shop.

B. Trash disposal at your school

1. What percent of your school's waste is thrown away (not recycled or composted) each day? (Use the Waste Disposition Charts from each room to get your estimate.)
2. How many dumpsters for non-recyclables does your school have?

To answer the following questions, you may want to interview school personnel who manage the school's trash disposal service and/or review billing statements from the trash disposal service:

3. How often are they emptied?

- Daily
 Twice a week
 Weekly

4. On average, how full is each dumpster when it is emptied?

	Dumpster 1	Dumpster 2	Dumpster 3
Half full	_____	_____	_____
Almost full	_____	_____	_____
Full	_____	_____	_____
Overflowing	_____	_____	_____

5. Who picks up your trash?

- Municipality
 Private hauler
 School staff

6. What does your school pay for trash disposal services?

Monthly _____

Annually _____

7. If figures are available from billing statements, how much waste is thrown away by your school (tons or cubic yards)?

Monthly _____

Annually _____

8. Where is the trash taken or where does it end up (be specific)?

11. Who picks up your recyclables and takes them to a recycling center?

- Municipality Club
 Private hauler School staff
 Other _____

12. What does your school pay for recycling services?

Monthly _____

Annually _____

13. Does your school receive any income from recyclables?

- Yes No

If yes, how much? _____

14. Where do your recyclables go after they are taken from the school (be specific)?

15. What happens to recyclables after they leave the recycling center (be specific)?

D. Composting in your school

1. Does your school have a compost program?

- Yes No

2. Does your school leave grass clippings on the lawn/athletic fields?

- Yes No

3. Does your school rake up leaves?

- Yes No

If yes, what happens to them?

- Composted on site Burned on site
 Taken to a local composting facility Taken to a landfill

4. Does your school compost other yard waste (leaves, flowers, grass, garden weeds)?

- Yes No

If yes, what is composted?

5. What does your school do with dead branches and tree limbs?

6. Does your school compost food waste?

Yes No

If yes, who collects the food waste for composting?

What types of food do you compost?

Who manages the composting site?

How is the finished compost used?

E. Purchasing, Reduction and Reuse

To answer the following questions, you may want to interview the personnel who manage the school's environmental policies and oversee the purchasing of school supplies.

1. Does your school or district buy recycled office paper?

Yes No

2. Does your school or district buy other items made from recycled materials?

Yes No

If yes, list them:

3. Does your school or district buy items in quantity to reduce the amount of packaging and save money?

Yes No

If yes, list them:

4. Does your school save paper by:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Storing records electronically?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding with staff by email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding with students by email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding with parents by email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Managing finances electronically? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Giving tests online? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Printing on both sides of the paper? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reusing scrap or paper written on one side? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Does your school extend the life of items by:

- | | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reusing large kitchen food storage containers? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serving food on reusable trays? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Using metal silverware instead of disposable eating utensils? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Donating unclaimed "lost" items to a charity? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collecting clothing, food, etc. for charities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sponsoring swap days? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Salvaging items for reuse when lockers are cleaned out at the end of the school year? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. When classes go on field trips, do they:

Recycle the cans and bottles they brought with them?

- Yes No

Minimize the amount of trash they generate by using lunch boxes or cloth bags and reusable containers?

- Yes No

F. Curriculum and Community

1. Are waste reduction and recycling part of your school's curriculum?

- Yes No

If yes, in what grades are they taught?

2. Has your school staff recently participated in any training programs/workshops that include waste reduction and recycling education?

- Yes No

3. Does your school participate in any problem solving waste reduction and recycling projects that benefit the community?

- Yes No

If yes, what are they?

4. Some waste management facilities can be used as educational resources. Which are found in your community?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Landfill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Municipal Composting Site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Material Recycling Facility (MRF)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Local solid waste or recycling office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

5. Does your town sponsor community recycle days when people can bring items that are difficult to recycle, such as batteries, cell phones and pharmaceuticals?

Yes No

If yes, when are these community recycle days offered?

G. Action Plan

Based on the information you found out from this assessment, what recommendations do you have for the school to improve its waste and recycling programs? Use the chart on page 9 to brainstorm and organize your ideas for action.

Waste Disposition Chart

Each room should conduct its own waste assessment and use it to help the school complete the school-wide assessment. This can be done at the end of the day, or more effectively, for one week.

Make a copy of this chart for each room (classrooms, bathrooms, cafeteria, gym, etc.). Identify with a check (✓) which types of waste are found in each room/area and the method of disposal. Classrooms should only do the top half of the chart.

Room #/Name: _____		Date of Assessment: _____					
Average number of students and staff using the room each day: _____							
	Type of Waste	Found in Room	Reused at Least Once	Method of Disposal			Estimated percent of room's waste ²
				Mainly Recycled	Mainly Composted	Mainly Thrown Away	
Classrooms	Mixed paper						
	Newspaper*						
	Magazines*						
	Cardboard*						
	Paperboard ¹						
	Aluminum cans*						
	Steel Cans*						
	Glass bottles/jars*						
	Plastic containers (#1&2)*						
	Other plastic containers						
	Food waste						
	Computers*						
	TVs, DVD players VCRs*						
	Paper towels/ tissues						
Other Rooms	Office paper*						
	Other containers						
	Wood scraps						
	Kitchen grease						
	Yard waste*						
	Major appliances*						
	Vehicle batteries*						
	Tires*						
	Motor oil*						
	Copy machine cartridges						
	Computers*						
	TVs, VCRs, DVD players*						
	Fluorescent bulbs**						
	Clothing						
Other:							

* Indicates items that are banned from landfills under Wisconsin's Recycling Law and should be recycled according to local ordinances.

**Indicates items that should be managed as hazardous waste unless they are recycled.

¹ Paperboard includes non-corrugated paper containers like cereal and shirt boxes.

² You may want to do more than a "visual" assessment and actually sort and weigh your room's waste for a day. See **Performing a Waste Audit** at: http://www.recycleworks.org/schools/s_audits.html.

Waste and Recycling Assessment: Ideas for Action

Based on the information you gathered from the Waste and Recycling Assessment, what action ideas do you have to reduce waste and increase recycling efforts at your school? Use this sheet to record your ideas.

Section	General Ideas	Classroom Connections/ Lesson Plan Ideas	Community Involvement/ Activity Ideas	Outside Sources (organizations, community members, professionals)
A. Waste Disposition Chart (page 8)				
B. Trash disposal at your school				
C. Recycling at your school				
D. Composting at your school				
E. Purchasing, Reduction and Reuse				
F. Curriculum and Community				