



Recycling & Waste Reduction Assessment

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Conducted By:

Congratulations on completing Step 1 by forming your Green Team!

Step 2: Assess

Complete this Recycling & Waste Reduction Assessment to learn more about the current recycling and waste practices at your school, and to help your Green Team choose a Long Lasting Change. Use the *Waste Audit Worksheet* (attached) and the *Recycling & Waste Reduction Assessment Guide* to assist you in filling out the following pages.

Trash Disposal

1. What percent of your school's waste is thrown away (not recycled or composted) each day?
 _____ (Use the attached Waste Audit Worksheet to get your estimate.)

2. How many dumpsters and outdoor waste containers does your school have? _____

3. What are the capacities or sizes (i.e. 3-yard or 96-gallon) of each dumpster and container?
 (Tip: You can contact your school district or hauler to verify your findings.)

Dumpster 1	Dumpster 2	Dumpster 3	Container 1	Container 2	Container 3
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

4. How often are they emptied?

- Daily Twice a week Weekly Twice a month Monthly
- Other _____

5. On average, how full is each dumpster or outdoor container when it is emptied? (Find out what your pick up day is and go look at the container on this day before the garbage is picked-up.)

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

6. Who picks up your trash from the outdoor containers?

- Municipality Private Hauler: _____ School Staff



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7. How much does your school (or district) pay for your school's trash disposal services?

Monthly _____ School District
Annually _____ School District

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

Monthly _____ Tons Cubic yards
Annually _____ Tons Cubic yards

9. Where is the trash taken after it leaves your school, and where does it ultimately end up (specific location)?

10. Does your school burn any of its waste on site?

Yes No
If yes, what does it burn? _____

11. Has your school ever done a waste audit to calculate the weight and/or volume of trash that could be recycled and reused?

Yes No
If yes, when? _____ What were the results? _____

Recycling

12. Does your school currently recycle?

Yes No

13. What types of opportunities does your school have to recycle? Check all that apply.

Curbside service School uses drop off or buy-back locations
 Teachers or students take home or to drop off or buy-back locations

14. Which of these items does your school have access to recycle?

Aluminum cans	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Tin/Steel cans	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Office paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Mixed paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Corrugated cardboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Plastic bottles	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Plastic tubs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other: _____		

15. Who collects the recycling inside your school building?

Students Teachers Custodial staff Other _____



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16. Are there easy to read informational signs or stickers on or above your indoor recycling bins?

Yes No

If yes, do they include pictures? Yes No

17. Are the recycling bins monitored or checked to make sure they are being used correctly?

Yes No If yes, how often? Daily Weekly Monthly

18. What percent of your school's waste is recyclable? _____%

(Use the attached Waste Audit Worksheet to get your estimate.)

19. How do the recyclables collected in the building get to the outside/curbside containers?

20. What is placed in each recycling cart or dumpster and what is the capacity (size) of each?

Material Type	Cart/Dumpster Capacity	Number of Carts/Dumpsters
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

21. How often are your recycling carts/dumpsters emptied?

Daily Twice a week Weekly Twice a month Monthly

Other _____

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

Club Private Hauler School Staff Municipality Other _____

23. What does your school (or district) pay for your school's recycling services?

Monthly _____ School District

Annually _____ School District

24. Does your school receive any income from recyclables?

Yes No

If yes, how much? _____

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

26. What happens to your recyclables after they leave the recycling center (specific location)?

27. Does your school participate in recycling redemption programs, getting cash for returning items like printer and toner cartridges or cell phones?

Yes No

If yes, what items do you collect and return? _____



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28. Is your school or district recycling your computers and other electronic equipment?

- Yes No

29. Is your school aware of the new computer recycling law effective January 2009, which provides free recycling of school computers (WAC 173-900)?

- Yes No

30. Is your school aware of the new law effective July 21, 2007, requiring public event recycling, including all sports facilities (RCW 70.93.093)?

- Yes No

Composting

31. Does your school leave grass clippings on the lawn/athletic fields (grasscycling)?

- Yes No

32. Does your school rake up leaves?

- Yes No

If yes, what happens to them?

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

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

- Yes No

If yes, what is composted? _____

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

35. What percent of waste generated at your school in one day is food? _____ (Use the attached Waste Audit Worksheet to get your estimate.)

36. What percent of your food waste is actually still intact and edible (whole fruit or unopened packages, etc)? _____ (Use the attached Waste Audit Worksheet to get your estimate.)

37. Does your school compost food waste on-site?

- 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? _____

38. Does your school collect food waste to be composted off-site?

- Yes No

If yes: Who collects the food waste for composting? _____

Where does the food waste go? _____

What types of food do you compost? _____



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Purchasing, Reduction and Reuse

39. Does your school purchase any recycled content products? If so, what types?

40. Does your school or district buy recycled-content office paper?

Yes No

If yes, what is the post-consumer recycled content? _____%

41. Does your school have a purchasing policy regarding recycled-content products?

Yes No

42. Does your school or district buy other items made with recycled content (toner cartridges, envelopes, other paper products, benches, etc.)?

Yes No

If yes, list them:

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

Yes No

If yes, list them: _____

44. Does your school serve bottled water to students?

Yes No

45. Does your school save paper by:

Storing records electronically Yes No

Corresponding with staff by e-mail? Yes No

Corresponding with students by e-mail? Yes No

Managing finances electronically? Yes No

Giving tests on-line? Yes No

Printing on both sides of the paper? Yes No

Reusing scrap or paper written on one side? Yes No

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

Reusing large kitchen food storage containers? Yes No

Serving food on reusable trays? Yes No

Using silverware instead of disposable utensils? Yes No

Donating unclaimed "lost" items to a charity? Yes No

Collecting clothing, food, etc. for charities? Yes No

Sponsoring swap days? Yes No

Salvaging items for reuse when lockers/desks are cleaned out? Yes No

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

Recycle cans and bottles they take with them? Yes No

Use lunch boxes, cloth bags or reusable containers? Yes No



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Curriculum and Community

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

Yes No

If yes, in what grades are they taught? _____

49. Have any of your school staff participated in any staff development programs for waste reduction and recycling within the past year?

Yes No

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

Yes No

If yes, what are they? _____

51. Some waste management facilities can be used as educational resources (field trips). Which can be used in your community?

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Disposal Site | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Location: _____ |
| Composting Site | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Location: _____ |
| Material Recycling Facility | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Location: _____ |
| Local solid waste or recycling office | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Location: _____ |
| Recycling Buy-back Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | Location: _____ |

52. Does your school donate excess food (during vacations, power outages, etc.) to a food bank or shelter?

Yes No

53. Do you have waste and recycling educators in your community?

Yes No

If yes, list the name(s) of the agencies they work for and contact info:

_____	Phone #: _____
_____	Phone #: _____
_____	Phone #: _____

54. Do you have technical assistance in your community for waste and recycling issues at your school?

Yes No

If yes, list the name(s) of the agencies they work for and contact info:

_____	Phone #: _____
_____	Phone #: _____
_____	Phone #: _____

Waste Audit Instructions & Tips

The purpose of conducting an audit of one school's days waste and recycling is to determine how much is being recycled and how much is being thrown away that could be recycled. A second purpose is to look for opportunities to reduce or prevent waste.

Step One: Preparation

When planning a waste audit, it is important to ensure only one school day's waste and recycling is sorted. Plan to empty bins after school the day before the waste audit and then collect material again at the end of the day for the waste audit. If you are going to perform the waste audit during the school day rather than after school, coordinate with the custodian(s) to ensure one whole day of waste and recycling is collected. If necessary, plan on an hour for students to collect the waste and recycling first, then allow one or more hours for doing the actual audit.

Is it Necessary to Sort All of the School's Garbage and Recycling?

For schools with smaller populations (300 students or less), all garbage and recycling should be sorted. Schools with more than 750 students could sort 25% of the school's waste and recycling for a good representation. Lunch waste takes the longest to sort and is the messiest. Sort one lunch time and then multiply the data by the number of lunchtimes to approximate the amount generated for the whole day.

Equipment Needed

(Note: Many jurisdictions offer staff support and supplies to schools to perform a waste audit. Contact your city or county solid waste department to find out if assistance is available)

- 4 plastic tarps
- 10 to 40 five- or seven-gallon buckets
- Scale (a hanging scale is best)
- One pair of disposable gloves for each sorter *(Note: Choose vinyl to avoid latex allergies)*
- Optional: One table for each tarp. Placing bags on tables for sorting is easier than bending over or kneeling during a waste audit.
- Bucket and mop, brooms and a dust pan for cleanup

Step Two: Set-up

Performing the waste audit is easier to do indoors—the gymnasium or cafeteria is best. Spread out plastic tarps on the floor, one for each sorting station. Place 10 buckets or so on the edges of each tarp, labeling each one with a category into which the materials will be sorted (see the *Waste Audit Worksheet*). One bucket should be used for collecting any liquids from disposed and recycled drink containers.

If you only have ten buckets, you will need to decide how to proceed. If you only have one or two hours to complete the waste audit, you will need to combine all school waste and combine all school recycling into two separate piles for sorting (instead of keeping them separate based on the location they were collected from). You will not be able to gain as much information this way when analyzing the data. If you have a longer period of time to sort, you can first sort one station (see the *Waste Audit Layout Diagram*) and then another to complete the audit with fewer buckets.

Step Three: Collecting

More information can be gained from the audit if a school's waste and recycling is gathered according to areas of a school. For example, the waste and recycling from all classrooms is collected and brought to one tarp (sorting station). Waste and recycling from staff areas—such as the main office, staff workrooms, and staff lounge—is brought to a second station. A third station might be lunch time waste, and a fourth might be a miscellaneous station for the gym, library, theater, hallways, outside garbage cans—any area that doesn't fit

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into the first three categories (see the *Waste Audit Layout Diagram*). **Waste from the bathrooms or health room should not be collected or sorted.** Keeping the waste and recycling separated into different areas of a school gives you the opportunity to see where improvements can be made when you analyze the data. **Remember: do not mix the waste with the recyclables before, during, or after your sort.**

Step Four: Sorting

Each station should have two worksheets, one for recyclables to be sorted, and one for garbage. Mark the correct box of each worksheet to correspond with the school area for that station (classrooms, staff areas, etc.) and if it was collected as garbage or recycling. Some of the items listed in the Potential Recyclables category may not be recyclable in your area of the state, so adjust the lists of items as necessary.

The lunch time waste is the messiest, but for all sorting, it's best to pull materials out of the bags and put them directly into the correct buckets rather than dumping the bags onto the tarp. Roll the edges of the bags down as the students work toward the bottoms of the bags. Things may be quite soggy in some bags!

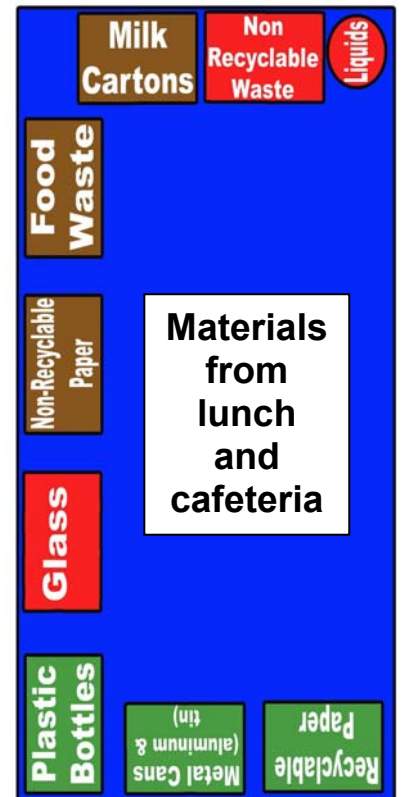
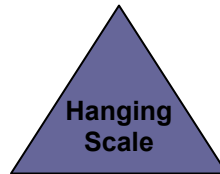
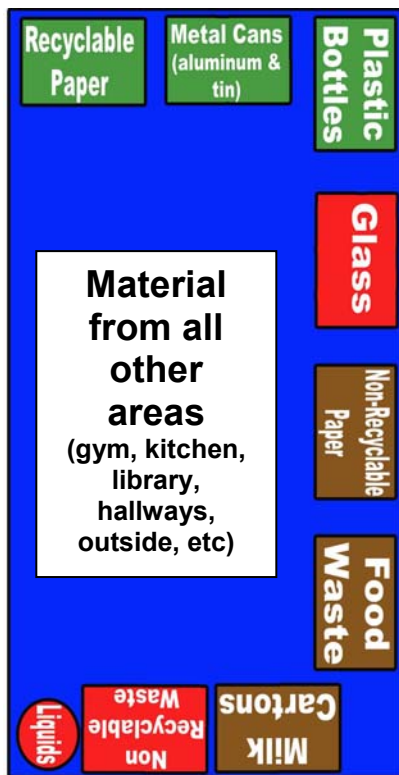
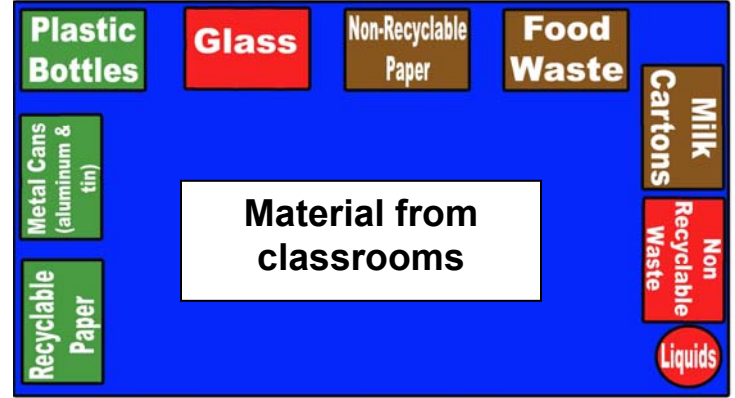
Step Five: Recording

Record the weights and volumes as needed. Use the backs of the worksheet as scratch paper to keep track of materials that fill many buckets. Reuse the cleaner plastic bags as needed to empty materials from the bucket after weighing them. Remember to record the weight of the empty buckets, or calibrate the scale to account for the bucket weight.

When all of the recycling is sorted and weighed, add up all the data for each specific material, and record the data on the worksheet. Recycle material that can be recycled, and dump all waste into the dumpster. Repeat the process for the waste in the garbage bags. Place the garbage in the dumpster and recycle any items that may have been salvaged from the waste. Have a bucket and mop on hand, as well as brooms and a dust pan, for cleanup.

Finish by calculating the percentages of weight and volumes for each material—remember to add both waste and recycling together (total weight of all materials collected) before figuring percentages. Calculate the percentages for questions #1 and #18 on the Assessment.

Waste Audit Layout Diagram



IMPORTANT:

For each station, keep the materials collected from any recycle bins separate from the materials collected from the garbage cans. You may collect the recycle bin materials and combine them in one or two bags, and do the same for the garbage, but keep the recyclables and garbage separate to do your sort.



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Waste Audit Worksheet

School:	Date:	
Conducted by:		
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Be sure to read the *Waste Audit Instructions and Tips* before you begin this Worksheet. Mark the items that can be recycled or composted in your city/town in the appropriate category when auditing your waste.

Where did the material come from? Choose one. Complete a Worksheet for each room type.

- Cafeteria
 Offices/Staff Rooms
 Classrooms
 Other _____

Collected as (choose one) : Garbage Recycling

POTENTIAL RECYCLABLES	weight (pounds)	volume (gallons)	% of total weight	% of total volume
All paper, newspapers, magazines				
Corrugated cardboard, paper board or brown paper bags				
Aluminum and steel cans				
Glass jars and bottles				
Plastics (bottles, jugs, tubs, etc.)				
Compostable food waste				
Compostable paper waste				
Uneaten, edible food (whole)				
Other (list):				
NON-RECYCLABLES	weight (pounds)	volume (gallons)	% of total weight	% of total volume
Plastic (baggies, wrappers, straws, pens, sporks, containers)				
Contaminated paper (napkins, paper towels—if composting is not available)				
Food waste (if composting is not available)				
Other (list):				
TOTALS				

