

## **Waste Reduction Ideas and Goals for Schools**

(Source: <http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/toolkit/tools-f.pdf>)

Opportunities to reduce waste exist throughout schools and school districts. Below is some waste reduction ideas for various areas of schools:

### **CLASSROOMS**

#### Reduce Waste

- Minimize handouts distributed
- Give assignments that do not need to be written
- Copy and print on both sides of the paper
- Spell check and proof documents on screen
- Use the Internet for research assignments instead of magazines and newspapers
- Post assignments and documents online
- Copy materials onto a CD or flash drive
- Use supplies purchased in bulk

#### Reuse or Donation

- Keep a scrap paper box
- Reuse school supplies, such as folders and binders
- Create a school supply exchange
- Collect unclaimed items from lockers at the end of the year to donate or reuse
- Reuse or donate used textbooks

#### Recycling

- Provide separate containers for recyclable materials and trash
- Recycle white paper
- Recycle mixed paper
- Return toner cartridges to the manufacturer or vendor for remanufacturing
- Recycle out-of-date textbooks

#### Buy Recycled

- Buy and use school supplies with recycled content

### **SCHOOL OFFICES**

#### Reduce Waste

- Copy and print on both sides of the paper
- Spell check and proof documents on screen
- Copy materials onto a CD or flash drive
- Update mailing lists to avoid unnecessary mailings
- Print addresses directly on envelopes instead of using labels
- Use smaller envelopes
- Replace fax cover sheets with “stick-on” information
- Route memos electronically
- Maintain a centralized filing system
- Buy and use supplies purchased in bulk
- Buy and use copiers and printers with the ability to copy on both sides of the paper
- Repair broken equipment

### Reuse or Donation

- Reuse incoming packaging for outgoing shipments
- Reuse office supplies, such as folders and binders
- Establish “clean out the office” days and reuse the collected materials

### Recycling

- Provide separate containers for recyclable materials and trash
- Recycle white paper
- Recycle mixed paper
- Return toner cartridges to the manufacturer or vendor for remanufacturing
- Establish “clean out the office” days and recycle the collected materials

### Buy Recycled

- Buy and use office supplies with recycled content

## **LIBRARY**

### Reduce Waste

- Adjust the number of magazine and newspaper subscriptions to meet school needs
- Consider online subscriptions to reference materials, magazines, and newspapers

### Reuse or Donation

- Start a book and magazine exchange
- Donate old magazines for art projects

## **CAFETERIA/KITCHEN**

### Reduce Waste

- Buy food in bulk
- Use bulk dispensers for condiments
- Implement an “offer versus serve” program [Note: In an “offer versus serve” program, students select only the foods they intend to eat, reducing the amount of food thrown away.]
- Promote waste-free lunches [Note: On a waste-free lunch day, students and staff bring or buy a lunch where everything can be eaten, reused, recycled, or composted.]

### Reuse or Donation

- Encourage students and staff to bring lunch from home in a reusable lunch bag
- Use washable, durable trays, utensils, and dishware
- Offer mugs to employees
- Donate edible food to shelters
- Use inedible food as animal feed
- Compost food scraps to use on school grounds [Note: check local regulations before starting a composting program.]

### Recycling

- Recycle:
  - plastic bottles
  - glass bottles
  - aluminum, steel, and tin cans
  - food for composting

- cardboard
- boxboard
- grease and oil
- juice boxes and milk containers

## **OTHER**

### Reduce Waste

- Involve school clubs in waste reduction programs
- Use cloth-towel machines or air dryers in restrooms rather than paper towels

### Reuse or Donation

- Donate used furnishings and equipment
- Find a new use for older computers and cell phones

### Recycling

- Place recycling bins in convenient locations
- Recycle computers or cell phones that are no longer functional

## **For More Information You Can Contact:**

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