



School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
Conducted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Congratulations on completing Step 1 by forming your Green Team!

Step 2: Assess

Complete this Waste and Recycling Assessment and Audit to learn more about the current waste management practices at your school, and to help your Green Team choose a Lasting Change. Use the Waste and Recycling Assessment Guide to assist you in answering the following questions. The questions marked with a star are included in the Key Findings section of your schools online report card, which is accessed via your locker on the Washington Green Schools website.

Support

- 1. Does your district have a resource conservation manager (RCM)? [X] Yes [ ] No

Name \_\_\_\_\_ See http://bit.ly/sps-conservation
If so, consider setting up an interview. RCMs work at the district level to help schools conserve resources and save money.

- 2. Do you have waste and recycling educators in your community? [X] Yes [ ] No

If yes, list their name(s), agencies and contact info:
Rina Fa-amoe-Cross, SPS Resource Conservation Specialist Phone #: 206-252-0618

- 3. Some waste management facilities can be used as educational resources (e.g. field trips). Which can be used in your community?
Disposal site [X] Yes [ ] No Location: Cedar Hills Landfill
Composting site [X] Yes [ ] No Location: Cedar Grove Composting
Material recycling facility [X] Yes [ ] No Location: Rabanco or Eastmont
Local solid waste or recycling office [ ] Yes [ ] No Location:
Recycling buy-back center [X] Yes [ ] No Location: Total Reclaim, Bedrock, Ind.

Check out our new Compost & Recycling page at http://bit.ly/sps-conservation for links to virtual tours.

General

- 4. Are waste-reduction and recycling a part of your school's curriculum?
[ ] Yes [ ] No Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Does your school have a consistent system for waste bins (containers) and signage in every room/building? [ ] Yes [ ] No

## Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

6. Are there easy-to-read informational signs or stickers on or above your garbage, recycling, and/or compost bins?  
 Yes    No   If yes, do they include pictures?    Yes    No
7. Are the garbage, recycling, and/or compost bins monitored or checked to make sure they are being used correctly?  
 Yes    No   If yes, how often?    Daily    Weekly    Monthly
8. Who picks up your garbage, recycling and/or compost from the outdoor containers? *Check all that apply. Fill in the 'Other' column if an appropriate option is not displayed.*

	Municipality	School Staff	Private	Club	Other
Waste			CleanScapes		
Recycling			CleanScapes		
Compost			Cedar Grove		

### Garbage Disposal

9. How many garbage dumpsters and containers does your school have? \_\_\_\_\_
10. ★ Please use the table below to answer the following questions relating to your garbage dumpsters/containers:
- What are the capacities (e.g. 3-yard or 96-gallon) of each dumpster/container?
  - How often are they emptied? (e.g. daily, twice-weekly, weekly)
  - Generally, how full is each dumpster/container when it is emptied? (*Find out what your pick-up day is and look at the container on this day before the garbage is picked-up: Is it half full, almost full, full, or overflowing? Tip: You can contact your school district or hauler to verify your findings.*)

	Dumpster 1	Dumpster 2	Dumpster 3	Container 1	Container 2
Size					
Emptied					
Fullness					

- Is there an opportunity to reduce the size of your dumpsters? Please explain.  
**If your dumpster isn't full on your pick-up day, please contact Rina Cross-Fa'amoe at SPS**

11. ★ Fill out the table below by answering the following questions: (*Use district information if that is all that is available.*) (Some districts use ft<sup>3</sup> for volume. Here is a common conversion: 1 gallon = 0.134 ft<sup>3</sup>)
- How much waste does your school dispose of in one month? (gal/student/month)
  - How much does it cost per student to remove this waste per month? (\$/student/month)

## Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

Month: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> District	# of students: _____
<b>Amount of Waste Thrown Away:</b> <i>garbage only!</i>	_____ gal/ student/ month
<b>Cost</b>	_____ \$/ student/ month

12. Where is the garbage taken after it leaves your school (specific location)? \_\_\_\_\_  
To a city disposal station where it is compacted, put into shipping containers, loaded onto a train, and taken to Arlington, OR, located 300 miles from Seattle.  
 View a video of this process at: [www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Garbage/AboutGarbage/index.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Garbage/AboutGarbage/index.htm)

### Recycling

13. Does your school currently recycle?

Yes     No

If so, how? 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 recycle?

- Aluminum cans                       Tin/steel cans                       Office paper  
 Mixed paper                           Corrugated cardboard               Plastic bottles  
 Plastic tubs                           Glass                                      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Go to [www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/LookItUpWhatsAccepted/index.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/LookItUpWhatsAccepted/index.htm) for a complete list of what you can recycle

15. Please use the table below to answer the following questions relating to your **recycling**:

- Some schools have their recycling separated into different types to be hauled away separately. If your school does, what is placed in each recycling dumpster/container? If not, please just write *recycling* under "Material Type".
- What is the capacity (size) of each dumpster/container?
- How often are your recycling dumpsters/containers emptied? (e.g. daily, twice-weekly, weekly)

Material Type	Dumpster Capacity	Number of Dumpsters	Emptied
<b>Recycling</b>			

16. What does your school pay for your school's **recycling** services? (Use district information if that is all that is available.)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$/ student/ month     School     District

17. Which recycling center do your recyclables go to (specific location)? \_\_\_\_\_

To a recycling plant in South Seattle, where it is sorted, bailed, sold and shipped to recycling mills, then made into new products.

# Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

## Food Waste / Compostables

18. 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? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does your school collect food waste to be composted **off-site**? It is against the law in Seattle to put food waste and recycling into the garbage.

- Yes       No

If yes: Who collects the food waste for composting? Cedar Grove Composting facility in Maple Valley/Everett \_\_\_\_\_

Where does the food waste go? \_\_\_\_\_

What types of food do you compost? \_\_\_\_\_

How much does your school pay for your school's compost services?

\_\_\_\_\_ \$/ student/ month

20. Does your school leave grass clippings on lawns/athletic fields (grass-cycling)?  Yes       No

Ask your custodial engineer

21. Does your school rake up leaves?  Yes       No Ask your custodial engineer

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

## Purchasing, Reduction, and Reuse

22. Does your school or district buy items made with recycled content (paper, toner cartridges, envelopes, other paper products, benches, etc.)? See "Step 3" section of this document for more information about recycled paper content available from the SPS District Warehouse

- Yes       No

If yes, list them and the percentage recycled content:

\_\_\_\_\_ % \_\_\_\_\_ % \_\_\_\_\_ %

\_\_\_\_\_ % \_\_\_\_\_ % \_\_\_\_\_ %

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

- Yes       No      If yes, list them: \_\_\_\_\_

24. Does your school serve bottled water to students?

- Yes       No

25. Does your school save paper by:

- Corresponding with staff by e-mail?       Reusing paper written on one side?  
 Corresponding with students and parents by e-mail?       Printing on both sides of the paper?

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

- Serving food on reusable trays?       Sponsoring swap days?



## Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

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- Using silverware instead of disposable utensils?
- Reusing large kitchen food storage containers?

- Donating unclaimed items to a charity?
- Salvaging items for reuse?

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

Recycle cans and bottles that they take with them?

Yes

No

Use lunch boxes, cloth bags, or reusable containers?

Yes

No

### Notes:

## Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

### Waste Audit Instructions

Resources are available to help you with your waste audit! Contact Rina Fa-amoe-Cross, SPS Resource Conservation Specialist, at 206.252.0618 or [rtfaamoe@seattleschools.org](mailto:rtfaamoe@seattleschools.org) before you get started.

The purpose of the waste audit is to provide a snapshot of how much and what types of waste your school produces and to help your Green Team look for opportunities to reduce or prevent waste. *Please note: Many jurisdictions offer staff support and supplies to schools to perform waste audits. Contact your school district, city or county solid waste department, or waste hauler to find out if assistance is available.*

*We suggest doing your waste audit either outside or in a large space such as the gym or cafeteria. The audit will take approximately two hours depending on how much waste you plan to sort. We also suggest that you include at least one person from your facilities or custodial staff to your audit.*

### Equipment Needed

- 1 - 4 plastic tarps, one for each area you plan to sort. (You can sort waste from only one area, like the cafeteria, or from multiple areas including classrooms, staff rooms and/or gym (\*\*Do not collect waste from the bathrooms.\*\*))
- 3 buckets (e.g. five or seven-gallon) per tarp. Label buckets: Garbage, Recycling and Compost.
- You'll need one **Waste Audit Worksheet** (page 8 of this packet) **per station**.
- Scale (At least one scale, but more is helpful. Hanging scales are best for big bags and buckets).
- One pair of gloves for each sorter (*Note: If using disposable types, choose vinyl to avoid latex allergies.*)
- Optional: One table for each station
- Bucket and mop, brooms, and a dust pan for cleanup

### Audit Vocabulary Terms

**Waste:** All of the **pre-sorted** material from the areas in your school.

**Garbage:** Items in your *garbage* containers.

**Recycling:** Items in your *recycling* containers.

**Compost:** Items in your *compost* containers.

**Recyclables:** Items that can be recycled.

**Compostables:** Items that can be composted.

**Instructions:** Please complete the following steps and fill in the data tables as you go.

#### 1. Prepare

- Create a list of recyclable and compostable items for students to review during the audit. (You can obtain this list from your school's waste management company or hauler.)
- Review the Audit Questions on page 9.
- Create/copy one set of data tables per station (page 8).

#### 2. Set-up sorting stations

- Have one station for each area of the school from where you plan to collect waste.
- Each station should have a **worksheet**; this is **page 8** of this packet. (Indicate which area the waste is coming from on the worksheet: Question #1.)
- Each station should have 3 buckets labeled **Garbage, Recycling, and Compost**.

**\*\*Remember:** Weigh one empty bucket before you begin sorting. Record the volume of this bucket (5 or 7-gallon) and weight on the worksheet (Question #2).\*\*

## Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

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### 3. Collect waste from the areas in your school and take to assigned station

- Remember to keep waste from different areas separate. This will help you to decide which Lasting Change(s) to implement.

### 4. Determine pre-sorting weights and volumes of the garbage (Question #3)

- For each area, determine the **initial weight** and **initial volume** of the garbage collected.
  - **Initial weight (lbs)** = Total weight of garbage collected
  - **Initial volume (gal)** = (Volume of bucket) \* (Number of full buckets of waste type)

### 5. Sort the contents of each bag of garbage

- Pull out items individually from the garbage bags and place into the appropriate buckets (garbage, recycling, compost).

### 6. Determine post-sorting weights (Question #4)

- Weigh the contents of each waste type bucket (garbage, recycling, compost) for each area.
  - **Final weight (lbs)** = (Weight of waste items in bucket) – (Weight of empty bucket)
  - **Final volume (gal)** = (Volume of full bucket) \* (Number of full buckets of waste type)
- Determine what percent of the total amount of each type (garbage, recycling, compost) comprises?
  - **Percent** = (post-sort weight of one waste type / total post-sort waste weight)\*100%
- **Create a list** of the **five** most common items that you found in your garbage after sorting.

### 7. Recycling and Compost Audit (Question #5)

- For the recycling collected, you do not have to do a thorough sort as you did in the audit of the garbage. You may either dump the container or simply sort through the container to determine if there are any contaminants.
- List which contaminants were most common in the space provided (Question #5). If your school already has a compost or food waste collection program in place, do this for compost also.

### 8. Post-sort Garbage Audit Summary

- If garbage was sorted from more than one area of the school, please complete the summary table on page 9. \*\*Note: You only have to complete one summary table for this audit.\*\*



# Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

## Waste Audit Worksheet

Resources are available to help you with your waste audit! Contact Rina Fa-amoe-Cross, SPS Resource Conservation Specialist, at 206.252.0618 or rtaamoe@seattleschools.org before you get started.

Be sure to follow the **Waste Audit Instructions** as you complete this worksheet. (Copy this page for each area of the school you plan to sort).

1. What area of the school did the waste at this station come from? Complete a worksheet for each area.

- Cafeteria
- Offices/Staff Rooms
- Classrooms
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Weight of empty buckets: \_\_\_\_\_ pounds  
 Volume of buckets: \_\_\_\_\_ gallons

3. **Pre-sorting:** What is the total weight and volume of your collected waste? \*\*If your school does not have a composting program in place, leave the compost column blank for this table\*\*

	GARBAGE	RECYCLING	COMPOST
Initial Weight (lbs)			
Initial Volume (gal)			

4. ★ **Post-sorting:** Based on the results of sorting the garbage, what is the weight and volume of each waste type that you found? Calculate the total garbage sorted.

	GARBAGE	RECYCLABLES	COMPOSTABLES	TOTAL WASTE
Final Weight (lbs)				
Final Volume (gal)				
Percent of total waste (%)				100%

Please list the most common items found in your garbage:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Recycling and Compost Analysis:** After doing a quick inspection of your recycling and compost, please list below the most common contaminants you found in each.

Contaminants found in recycling \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contaminants found in compost: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

### Post-sort Waste Audit Summary

Compile all of your waste audit data into the summary table below.

**Post Sort Summary Table.** Fill in the total amounts of sorted waste from each area you audited (i.e. cafeteria, classrooms, etc.). Then calculate the **total** amount of **each waste type** sorted from the garbage in each area.

Area of School (please fill in)	GARBAGE	RECYCLABLES	COMPOSTABLES
<b>TOTALS</b>			

### Key Findings

- ★ How much garbage does your school throw away in one month (gal/student/month)? (See page 2, question #11)
  
- ★ What does your school pay for waste removal in one month (\$/student/month)? (See page 2, question #11)
  
- ★ After sorting your waste, what percent of your garbage could have been recycled or composted? (See page 8, question #4).
  
- ★ Based on your observations, could your school reduce the size of its garbage dumpsters? Are they consistently full? Please explain. (See page 2, question #10)
  
- ★ What do your findings suggest about what would be an effective lasting change?

## Waste & Recycling Assessment and Audit

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### Congratulations—Your Team has completed Step 2: Assess!

### Step 3: Address: Make a Lasting Change

Based on the results of your assessment and audit, create a lasting-change program that will address the issues you identified in this audit and improve the way your school handles waste and compost. Some suggestions are listed below. *Note: This must be a new project, not something you are already doing.*

### Here are Some Ideas For You to Consider:

#### Ways to Reduce Waste in Your School:

- Set up a recycling program for at least two material types (i.e. paper and plastic containers, or paper and corrugated cardboard). Work with your local hauler to ensure the materials are accepted. Be sure to provide recycling containers and clear signs for a successful program. Check with district staff or your local solid waste agency to see if they can provide educational materials or recycling bins.
- Expand an existing recycling program by adding at least one material and promote your initiative.
- **Develop and implement a plan to increase the percentage of recovery for a material already recycled at your school.**
- **Create a school recycling monitoring team to regularly assess the recycling and make improvements on current recycling practices.**

#### Ways to Reduce Waste in the Cafeteria:

- Develop a program to decrease the *uneaten* and *unopened food* in the garbage [Contact Rina for Share Table Guidelines](#)
- Reduce waste in your cafeteria by replacing disposable trays with durable trays – or eliminate use of lunchroom trays.
- Reduce waste in your cafeteria by replacing disposable utensils with durable utensils.
- Reduce waste in your cafeteria by replacing plastic wrapped packets of utensils and straws with individual utensils and straws.
- Reduce waste in your cafeteria by using bulk dispensers instead of packaged products (ketchup, mustard, milk, etc) in the lunchroom/cafeteria.
- **Implement lunchroom composting of food waste either on-site (via a BioStack, Earth Tub, etc.) or off-site (via a hauler collection program that transports food waste to a composting facility).**
- Define your own! What area(s) of waste production did your Green Team discover that could be improved? What changes will you make to result in a *significant* long lasting environmental change at your school? Please describe the unique Lasting Change you are implementing:

-- Purchase recycled office paper through the district's B2B ordering system. Use product #450636

**Resources are available to assist you! Contact Rina Fa'amoe-Cross, SPS Resource Conservation Specialist, at 206-252-0618 or before you get started with any of these “lasting rtaamoe@seattleschools.org changes”. In addition to support and guidance, Rina can provide a limited number of posters, stickers, trainings and containers for your program.**



**For use in Seattle Public Schools only**

**Washington Green Schools + Seattle Public Schools**  
Additional Resources

**Additional Information:**

Cedar Grove Virtual Tour: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaiRKS6n3sQ>

Rabanco Recycling Virtual Tour: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7jatdHltrM>

Total Reclaim Virtual Tour: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SskqtbPd3Zc>

Videos about what happens to our “stuff”: The Story of Stuff <http://storyofstuff.org/>

This document is available on the Seattle Public Schools website at <http://bit.ly/sps-conservation>