



Zero Waste Guide

*Rethink • Reduce
Reuse • Repurpose
Recycle*



This guide outlines zero waste best practices, offers suggestions to increase recycling in your school, and builds zero waste and sustainability knowledge. It includes:

- » Getting Started
- » Recycling Materials
- » Recycling – Have to know
- » Recycling - How-To's
- » Recycling & Trash Equipment Flow Chart
- » Logistics
- » Above & Beyond
- » BPS Zero Waste Contacts

WHY RECYCLING IS IMPORTANT TO BPS

1. **Recycling is educational.** From ecology to economics to equity, recycling is a hands-on activity that connects students to their schools, their neighborhoods, and their global ecosystem.
2. **Recycling saves money.** Trash hauling is expensive, while recycling is **FREE for BPS**. By saving money on BPS operations, more money is available for BPS classrooms.
3. **Recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions.** BPS is working with the City of Boston to reduce 40% of waste-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, as mandated in Boston's *Climate Action Plan*.

+ Getting Started



SUCCESSFUL RECYCLING PROGRAMS:

1. Teach building occupants about the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling;
2. Create efficient use of the best available trash and recycling equipment; and
3. Bring together everyone involved to discuss operational processes and education. Establish a recycling team and [order the equipment](#) that makes sense for your school. Teach everyone in your building about why and how to recycle!

SCHOOL ZERO WASTE TEAM

» **PRINCIPAL OR ADMINISTRATOR** → establishes reducing, reusing, and recycling as part of school culture, empowers staff to promote recycling best practices, leads by example, actively administers recycling improvement strategies in building.

» **ZERO WASTE COORDINATOR** → serves as point of contact between BPS Facilities Management and the school, reports recycling numbers monthly, reaches out for help when needed and leads improvement strategies with help from Facilities, coordinates education and zero waste outreach in school.

» **CUSTODIAN** → utilizes available recycling equipment, maintains best practice set-ups, collaborates and provides feedback about trash and recycling content to education team.

» **CAFETERIA STAFF** → educates cafeteria team about back of the house recycling, educates monitors and volunteers about front-of-the house waste materials.

» **STUDENTS** → actively recycle in classrooms and cafeteria, encourage peers and staff to increase recycling, encourage families and friends to recycle at home.

TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL RECYCLING PROGRAM

- Identify a staff Zero Waste Coordinator to be a liaison to Facilities Management and a recycling advocate in the school.
- Identify a student Zero Waste Team to help with classroom collection and peer education.
- Include and collaborate with school custodial staff on school recycling.
- Incorporate zero waste into the school's Wellness Council plan.
- Use the BPS Zero Waste resources at <https://bostongreenschools.org/zero-waste>.
- Contact the Zero Waste and Sustainability Project Manager for assistance with recycling equipment and education.

+ Recycling – What to Know

Single Stream Recycling

Recycling Carts must be placed outside on the curb by 6am on your school pick-up day.

No curbside pick-up? **Call 311 and report the address.**

Unsure of the pick-up day? Check [the Trash App website](#) or download the **Boston Trash Schedule App** to your phone.

Questions about what you can or cannot recycle? Visit recyclesmartma.org OR the [Boston Public Works Website](#).



Electronics, Yard Waste, and Hazardous Waste



Electronics, yard waste, and hazardous waste cannot go into the blue recycling bins. Instead, BPS offers proper compost, recycle, and/or disposal processes for:

- Yard Waste (Grounds)
- Electronics (OIIT)
- Hazardous waste (Environmental)

Review “BPS Zero Waste Contacts” to recycle these items.

Clothing and Textiles

Clothing and Textiles are now **banned** from the trash in Massachusetts. City of Boston and BPS partner with [Helpsy](#) and [Bay State Textiles](#) to provide clothing donation boxes at schools for recycling and reuse. These boxes also help raise funds for the host schools!

[Visit the map](#) to locate clothing donation boxes at BPS buildings.

Want a bin at your school? [Complete the form!](#)



+ Recycling How-To's



Classrooms, Offices, and Hallways

1. Place a recycling bin next to any trash bin for a 1:1 ratio.
2. Post signs in classrooms and hallways displaying photos of common trash and recycling materials.
3. Place small recycle bin next to bottled water cooler to collect used dry cups.
4. Attach trash and recycling signs to respective barrels (or post on the wall above the bin).



Cafeterias and Eating Spaces

1. Confirm cafeteria staff is stacking cardboard in collection hampers, and is rinsing & recycling metal cans.
2. Create waste stations that make it easy for both monitors and students to efficiently discard trash and recycling.
3. Encourage students to disassemble and separate waste into trash and recycling before getting up from their seats.
4. **Stack lunch trays** together like puzzle pieces to significantly decrease waste volume.



PLEASE NOTE:

Milk cartons are no longer recyclable in the City of Boston (or BPS).

+ Recycling Materials

Equipment:

- Recycling Carts
- Recycling Barrels
- Classroom Bins
- Hampers (cardboard collection)

Signage:

- BPS has [new recycling and trash signage](#) available to print and post in classrooms, offices, and eating spaces. Multiple languages available!

Need equipment and signage? [Complete the order form.](#)



RECYCLE • RECICLAGEM • RESIKLAJ • 回收
DIB-U-WARSASHADAYNTA • TÁI CHẾ • RECICLAJE



YES

BLUE CONTAINERS
Kontentor azul
Resipyan ble
藍色容器
Weelasha buluug ah
THÙNG ĐỰNG RÁC TÁI CHẾ
Contenedores Azules

NO



Soft plastics / Plástico mole
Plastik mou / 軟塑料
Caag jilicsan / Nhựa Mềm
Plásticos Blandos



Food leftovers / Resto di komida
Res manje / 剩飯剩菜
Haraaga cuntada / Đồ Ăn Thừa
Restos de Comida



Liquids / Líquidos
Likid / 液體 / Dareereyaal
Chất lỏng / Líquidos



Disposable gloves
Luvus discartaveis/di plastico
Gan jetab (ke w kapab voye jete)
一次性手套 / Galooliyada la tuuri karo
Găng Tay Dùng Một Lần
Guantes Desechables



Black plastic / Plástico preto
Plastik nwa / 黑色塑料
Caag madow / Nhựa Đen
Plástico Negro



Disposable masks / Máscara discartaveis
Mask jetab (ke w kapab voye jete)
一次性口罩 / Maaskaro la tuuri karo
Khẩu Trang Dùng Một Lần
Máscaras Desechables

Empty out food and drink containers • Dispíja resipienti di komida i di bibida
Vide resipyan ki gen manje yo ak resipyan ki gen brevaj yo • 清空後的食物和飲料容器
Faaruji weelasha cuntada iyo cabitaanka • Đổ hết hộp đựng thức ăn và đồ uống
Vacie los contenedores de comida y/o líquidos



TRASH • LIXO • FATRA • 垃圾桶 • QASHINKA
RÁC • BASURA



YES

GRAY CONTAINERS
Kontentor sinzentu
Resipyan gri
灰色容器
Weelasha cawlka
THÙNG ĐỰNG CHẤT THẢI RẪN
Contenedores Grises

NO



Recyclable plastic / Plástico reciclável
Plastik resiklab / 可回收塑料
Caag dib loo warshadayn karo
Nhựa Tái Chế / Plástico Reciclable



Aluminum / Aluminu / Aliminyòm
Aluminiyaamka
Nhôm / Alumínio



Paper / Papel
Papye / 紙製品 / Warqad
Giấy / Papel



Glass / Vidro
Vê (tankou boutye, elatriye) / 玻璃製品
Dhalo / Thủy tinh / Vidrio

Close milk cartons before placing into trash • Ftxa kaxas di leti antis di po-s na lixo
Fèmen katon lét yo avan w lage yo nan • 請把牛奶罐扔到垃圾桶之前先把瓶蓋蓋好
Xidh baakadaha caanaha ka hor inta aanad qashinka gelin
Đóng hộp sữa trước khi bỏ vào thùng rác
Cierre los envases de leche antes de depositarlos en la basura.





Stacking food containers saves space • 將食物盒層疊放置能節省空間
Poi resipientis di komida un dentu otu ta ekonomiza spasu
Mete boutèy ak bwat youn sou lòt pou w kab kreye plis espas
Isku-buufinta weelasha cuntada waxay badbaadinaysaa meel bannaan
Xếp chồng hộp đựng đồ ăn giúp tiết kiệm không gian
Apilar los recipientes de comida ahorra espacio

Need assistance with strategic waste station set-ups?

Contact Katherine Walsh, kwash4@bostonpublicschools.org or (617) 794-6974

+ Recycling & Trash Equipment Flow Chart



	RECYCLING	TRASH
Classrooms and Offices	 <p>Classroom and office recycling bins should be emptied into blue recycling barrels or carts. Food waste and liquids should never be dumped into classroom/office recycling and trash bins, but should be dumped into hallway, common area, or cafeteria trash barrels.</p>	 <p>Classroom and office trash bins should be emptied into trash barrels.</p>
Hallways and Common, Food Service, and Athletic areas	 <p>OR</p>  <p>Blue recycling barrels should be emptied into the blue recycling carts. Food waste should never be dumped into recycling barrels or carts. Recycling barrels and carts should not have trash liners.</p>	 <p>Trash barrels must have trash liners.</p>
Outside the School Building	 <p>Blue recycling carts should be rolled outside to the curb by 6am on the day of your school recycling pick-up. You can find your pick-up day at https://www.boston.gov/trash-day-schedule. Carts are serviced for FREE by City of Boston Public Works Department. Call 311 if a pick-up is missed.</p>	 <p>Full trash bags should be put into the trash dumpster outside the school building. The dumpster is serviced for a COST by a contracted waste hauler.</p>



Visit bostongreenschools.org/zero-waste to:

- » Find out your recycling collection day.
- » Order recycling equipment.
- » Access zero waste education materials, including training and curriculum ideas.

» **Is the internet not your thing?** «

Call Katherine Walsh (617-794-6974) for the above information via mail or fax.

“WHAT IF MY RECYCLING DIDN’T GET PICKED UP?”

Call 311 or visit boston.gov/trash-day-schedule



PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!

Complete the worksheet on the next page and post it in the main office so it’s clear who does what! If there are blanks, work with your recycling team to fill in the gaps for a comprehensive recycling process.

RECYCLING @

Our Recycling Team

Zero Waste Coordinator(s): _____

Administrator: _____

Custodian: _____

Cafeteria Staff: _____

Student Leader: _____

How We Recycle

Our Recycling Day is _____.

_____ takes classroom recycling to recycling carts.

_____ takes recycling carts to the curb and back.

_____ fills out our recycling reporting sheet.

When there is a Monday holiday, our recycling day is _____.

✓ Recycling Checklist ✓

- Signs on every trash can and recycling bin
- Posters of trash and recycling items hung above containers
- Trash cans and recycling bins **always** next to each other
- Trash cans and recycling bins always found in the same spot
- Recycling barrels **never** used as trash cans



“Help! *What if...*”

- ...the recycling didn't get picked-up?
Call 311 and report the missed pick-up and building's address.
- ...there is too much recycling and more carts and posters are needed?
- ...there is always trash in the recycling and/or there is always recycling in the trash?
Contact Katherine Walsh, kwash4@bostonpublicschools.org or (617) 794-6974.



+ Above and Beyond



Recycling Education

Education is critical to running a successful recycling program. It can include:

- » leading by example.
- » regularly reviewing which waste materials should go where.
- » hosting assemblies or presentations about why we recycle and how to take responsibility for our environment and school.

Visit the BPS Healthy & Sustainable Schools website at <https://bostongreenschools.org/curriculum/> for lesson plans, videos, projects, and education partners that can help with assemblies and presentations.

Other Program Ideas:

Do you want to take recycling to the next level at your school? Consider some of the activities below, or contact the Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Program Director for more ideas.

- » Start a recycling club and appoint students to help with your program.
- » Conduct a waste audit for a math project; communicate the results to the rest of the school.
- » Host an educational assembly or presentation about recycling and sustainability.
- » Organize a recycling competition between classrooms or other schools.
- » Host a year-end “Green Out” to recycle and donate end-of-the-year excess.
- » Celebrate America Recycles Day on November 15th by starting new recycling projects, <https://americarecyclesday.org/>, or register a Green Apple Day of Service, <http://www.mygreenapple.org/>.

+ Above and Beyond



Food Waste Collection Program:

Food waste is estimated to account for more than 35% of the total waste exiting the 119 Boston Public Schools.

Since January 2023, BPS has launched food waste collection programs at six district schools.

The goals of the BPS Food Waste Collection Program are to:

- Separate and divert food waste for composting, reducing trash.
- Comply with existing state regulations and policies.
- Structure the program as an experiential teaching and learning tool, and a leadership and volunteer opportunity for students.
- Quantify food diversion and trash reduction at each school.
- Identify best practices for students, kitchen staff, and custodians for food waste separation and coordination for collection, which can be used when introducing food waste collection at additional schools.

Following industry best practices and lessons learned to date, in order to achieve a successful food waste collection program, a school must first commit to the following requirements and events prior to launch:

- A presentation to all staff
- A presentation to all students
- Dedicated school staff who will support the program
- Commitment to re-education amongst students (throughout the school year and annually)
- Commitment to engagement opportunities
- Learning opportunities in various subject matters: Art, Math, Science, ELA, etc.



If your school is interested, please complete this [form](#).

+ BPS Zero Waste Contacts

Zero Waste Program and Education

- **Contact** Katherine Walsh, kwalsh4@bostonpublicschools.org or (617) 794-6974, if you have questions about the BPS Zero Waste Program or need educational materials and support.

Recycling Equipment

If your school needs recycling equipment (boxes, carts, barrels, lids, wheels, or signage), please [complete the Recycling Equipment Request form](#). BPS Warehouse staff will deliver the equipment.

Single-stream Recycling

Most plastic, paper, and aluminum products can be recycled and picked up curbside by the Public Works Department. Carts must be curbside by 6am on your trash/recycling day. Details are available at boston.gov/trash-day-schedule.

- **Call City of Boston 311 or report through the 311 App** to report a missed recycling cart pick-up.
- **Contact Rob Geary**, rgeary@bostonpublicschools.org or **617-763-1030**, if you have questions related to the trash and recycling dumpsters.

Cardboard Recycling

All corrugated cardboard must be separated from the single-stream recycling, flattened, and stacked separately for BPS pickup because BPS receives income for cardboard that is put back into the recycling program.

- **Contact Conroy Oates**, **617-828-0712**, for cardboard pick-up.

Reuse: Books, School/Art Materials, Sports Equipment, Clothing

- **Contact the Office of Academics and Professional Learning** for anything related to unwanted books or curriculum.
- **Contact** Katherine Walsh, kwalsh4@bostonpublicschools.org or (617) 794-6974, for other reuse questions.
- Clothing and textiles can be placed in the **Bay State Textiles or Helpsy Boxes**, which can be found at multiple school locations. Learn more at <http://bostongreenschools.org/zero-waste>.
- Locations with boxes can be found on [the map](#). If you'd like to request a Helpsy box at your school, please fill out [the request form](#).

+ BPS Zero Waste Contacts

Furniture

All furniture waste must be reviewed by BPS Facilities Management for reuse, redistribution, or proper disposal.

- **Contact Richelle Singh-Williams, rsingh@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-635-9648, to schedule a furniture review.**

Electronics (has a plug/cord) and Toner/Ink Cartridge Recycling

BPS OIIT manages the collection of old and recyclable IT equipment such as printers, monitors, computers, and TV's, and ink and toner cartridges.

- **Complete Form 57 & submit to OIIT.** OIIT will schedule a vendor to pick-up the items. **Access the form at <https://bostongreenschools.org/zero-waste>.**

Universal Waste/Hazardous Waste

All hazardous waste and universal waste (lamps, batteries, mercury-containing devices, and pesticides) must be properly labeled and stored in the school's accumulation location.

- **Contact Maria F. Carvalho, mcarvalho2@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-635-8300, to schedule a pick-up.**

Metal Recycling

- **Contact Rob Geary, rgeary@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-763-1030, to recycle metal furniture/scrap.**

Yard Waste

All schoolyard waste must be bagged in compostable brown bags or in plastic barrels. All branches need to be cut into small pieces and bundled.

- Prior to accumulating yard waste, **Contact Sean Byrne, sbyrne@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-293-3889 to schedule a pick-up.**