



School Recycling Checklist

MEET WITH RESOURCE RECOVERY & LOCAL RECYCLING OFFICIALS

	<p>Leadership: At a minimum, start by pulling together a meeting with your school’s principal, head of custodial staff, local recycling coordinator, and Resource Recovery staff. Use this checklist as the basis for the meeting. Find out who your waste hauler is, and ask for a copy of the contract. If it is possible to conduct this meeting at the district level, with all principals and the school facilitates director, go for it! Your recycling program will be more successful if all schools in the district are involved, and if students experience the same program as they progress through school.</p>
	<p>School Green Team: Form an expanded group that also includes interested teachers, staff, students, and parents; ask Resource Recovery staff to attend your first meeting. If your city/town has a recycling committee, ask a member to “adopt” a school and join the team. Resource Recovery will train Green Team members to be experts on what can and cannot be recycled</p>

COLLECT BASELINE DATA AND CONDUCT A WASTE ASSESSMENT

	<p>Collect baseline data: Collect data on how much trash and recycling is put out each week for 2-4 weeks. This consists of counting containers, noting their size, and recording how full they are. Collaborate with custodial staff, and get students involved in collecting data.</p>
	<p>Conduct a waste assessment: Have Resource Recovery conduct a waste assessment at the school(s). This will set you up for the remainder of this checklist. Sign up on our website.</p>

IMPROVE RECYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

	<p>Labels and Guidelines: Resource Recovery can provide free “Mixed Recycling” labels for all containers in your school. These labels are a part of a larger statewide (and national) initiative to simplify and standardized recycling bin labels. Matching recycling guidelines are available on our website, and these can be printed and distributed school-wide to reinforce the labels.</p>
	<p>Classrooms: Ideally, you’ll want a mixed recycling bin in every classroom.</p>
	<p>Cafeteria, front-of-the-house: Larger carts may be necessary in the cafeteria. You might consider a different approach here, such as the construction of a recycling station(s). At a minimum, the station should have a container for emptying out liquids, one for recycling, and one for trash.</p>
	<p>Cafeteria, back-of-the-house: Staff may need access to larger carts and designated areas to temporarily segregate items such as large cardboard boxes and plastic buckets.</p>
	<p>Other common spaces: Multiple bins may be necessary in larger common spaces such as media centers, gyms, and auditoriums.</p>
	<p>Find Funding: In addition to the school’s budget, schools have received funding for improvements from their PTO/PTA, their city or town’s share in annual recycling profit, and private sources.</p>

EDUCATE THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Sometimes a few minutes at key meetings is all it takes to creating significant change! Announce that the infrastructure improvements are underway (or complete). Review the basic guidelines for recycling in RI, and make sure it is clear that you will be educating EVERYONE in the school. You are in this together. These meetings can be run by Green Team members or by Resource Recovery staff.

	School Leadership: Ten minutes at a principals meeting (district level) or with an individual principal will do! They've already bought-in to the idea of improving recycling in your school—now it is time to share your progress and make sure they have the knowledge to recycle right.
	Custodial Staff: Your custodial staff is the most essential piece of making your program work. Request that a meeting is called specifically to address recycling in the school, and use this checklist as a basis for the meeting. Leave ample time for a translator, where necessary. Oftentimes custodians can feel frustrated by the amount of trash that is winding up in the recycling, and they must know that this is being addressed, school-wide. In addition, touring Resource Recovery's facility for a PD day is encouraged. You can sign up on our website.
	Faculty and Staff Meetings: Ten minutes at a faculty and/or staff meeting will do! Oftentimes faculty and/or staff believe that recycling at school is a waste of time because custodians "just mix recycling with trash," but more often than not, there is much more to the story. Faculty and staff need to know that the custodians are on board with improvements.
	Students (Teacher-led): Following the above meeting, teachers should spend five minutes briefly going over the rules in their classroom – repeated exposure is key, and students will have the opportunity to demonstrate what they already know. Make recycling the norm in your school.
	Students (Expert-led): Resource Recovery offers free fieldtrips and whole school assemblies, as well as individual classroom visits. For elementary grades, MaxMan, RI's recycling superhero, can get children excited about participating in their school's recycling program. For middle grades, a non-costumed educator is available. For high schools students, presentations can be tailored to suit a teacher's need in the classroom, covering topics such as energy, climate change, and green jobs as these relate to waste and recycling. These presentations are designed to engage students, and inspire full participation in the school's program. Resource Recovery can also mentor student on related projects. You can sign up for free educational programs and support on our website.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

	Post-program data: Once your program is in full swing, you can collect data again to measure your success. Collect it as you did before; collaborate with custodial staff and get students involved... and find a way to SHARE it! For example, students might create a school mural that depicts the data, and equates savings to things like trees and barrels of oil saved.
	Become a Model School(s): Is your program a success? If so, tell us about it! Let us feature your school or your school district as a model in RI, and share your stories with others looking to start or improve a recycling program.

INNOVATE

	Once your program is up and running and you've experienced some success, consider what you might do the following year to implement new things that could boost your school's overall diversion of materials from the landfill: things like a plastic bag and film collection program, or food scrap composting. Resource Recovery is here to help!
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