Back to School Recycling

The key to a successful and sustainable cafeteria recycling program is to continuously educate your community and maintain communication with your custodial staff. Back to school is the perfect time to remind staff and students of the importance of recycling, while informing incoming students that this is something your school values. Below are tips to help you start the school year off right with cafeteria recycling:

1. **Meet with Senior Custodian** *before students return to school* to ensure that everything (bins, bags, labels, schedule, etc) is in place for the custodial team to manage recycling (and organics recycling, if your school participates) this school year. Maintain this line of communication so that if any issues arise you can work together to find a solution.
2. **Newsletter and/or website announcement.** Include information about back to school recycling, how to properly sort cafeteria waste, and why recycling is important in your school newsletter and/or on your website.
3. **Guest speaker for class or assembly presentations.** Contact Kira Berglund from Hennepin County (Kira.Berglund@hennepin.co) or Kellie Kish from the City of Minneapolis (Kelliekish@minneapolismn.gov) to schedule a visit to your school for a presentation on the importance and logistics of recycling and organics recycling,

- **Morning or lunchtime announcement.** If your school announces the lunch menu for the day, you can also target particular items each day, reminding students to put them in the proper bin. For example- “Remember the clear and orange plastic container for the Bagel yogurt pack goes in the blue recycling bin”, “Don’t forget to use the liquid bucket to fully empty all the milk out of your milk carton before you put it in the blue recycling bin”. You can also have staff or student volunteers talk briefly at lunch about proper waste sorting of common packaging from the cafeteria. Find our full packaging disposal guide on the CWS website under True Food, No Waste.

4. **Waste sorting video.** Show one of Hennepin County’s waste sorting videos during morning or lunchtime announcements.
    - How to sort waste in the cafeteria



5. **Work with your Green Team**. Make use of your Green Team to create signs, make announcements or do lunchtime waste sorting. Back to school is also the perfect time to recruit new students to join the team. If your school does not already have a Green Team, contact Andrew Gramm (andrew.gramm@mpls.k12.mn.us) from Community Education for advice on how start your own.
6. **Plan a staff training.** Staff training on cafeteria recycling is very important to sustaining your recycling program. It is especially important to train staff who work in the cafeteria or who supervise at meal times. Contact Julie Danzl, CWS Student Wellness Manager (Julie.Danzl@mpls.k12.mn.us) for help setting up a staff training.
7. **Back to school event for recycling champions.** Plan an event to bring together your recycling champions from the previous school year, and to identify more adults from your community who are interested in helping to sustain your school recycling program. Use this event to let recycling champions know how they can be involved in helping out this school year.
8. **Visit the True Food, No Waste website.**
   To review packaging disposal guides and find signage for recycling, organics, and trash containers. Order additional posters and labels from Hennepin County at environmentalresources.hennepin.us/schools.