# CAFETERIA WASTE MANAGEMENT: RESET CHECKLIST

**Goal:**

- To reduce solid waste, with a priority for reducing organic waste, in cafeterias and kitchens starting in the new School Year (SY)

| Implementation Timeline | Workflow | Action Item | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Early Spring | Engagement | **Develop engagement timeline and plan.**<br>*Key questions to consider in planning:*<br>● Who needs to be engaged in planning/implementation efforts?<br>● How frequently?<br>● Who will lead the engagement?<br>● What will engagement look like? | |
| | | **Identify key stakeholder groups.**<br>*Examples include:*<br>● Facilities staff<br>● Cafeteria staff<br>● School staff<br>● Students<br>● Vendors or Consultants?<br>● Other?<br><br>NOTE: Many of these individuals could become the formal "District Green Team" or "School Green Team" as the work shifts from planning to implementation. | |
| Early - Late Spring | Context Building | **Review local school policy/law regarding what schools must do with waste:**<br>● Recycling?<br>● Composting?<br>● Other? | |
| | | **Conduct cafeteria needs assessment to understand changing context:**<br>● What is going well? What needs to change in advance of the new SY?<br>● Current school/cafeteria priorities?<br>○ Current methods to reduce overserving?<br>○ Current methods to reduce overordering? | |

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| | | ● Current Enrollment vs. Anticipated Enrollment for next year?<br>○ Changes that could impact food service?<br>○ Impact of free/reduced price lunch programs on waste?<br><br>● Observe cafeteria/meal routines:<br>○ Do students eat in classrooms? Cafeteria?<br>○ Before or after recess?<br>○ How do students enter/exit the cafeteria?<br>○ How do students get food?<br>○ How do students throw away food?<br>○ How frequently are meals/snacks happening?<br>○ What parts of the day are most waste generated?<br>○ How frequently are trash bins/cans emptied?<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>Food Service & Cafeteria Waste Reduction Suggestions<br>Exploring Cafeteria Waste Practices & Metrics | |
| | Waste Audit | **Conduct food waste tour & audit to understand baseline:**<br>● Waste bin-ventory<br>○ Create Campus Map with locations for bins/dumpsters for composting/trash/recycling (current & needed)<br>○ Additional or new inventory needed?<br>○ Available signage? Additional signage needed?<br>○ Removal / Emptying capacity needed?<br><br>● Understand scope of current waste:<br>○ Liquid waste?<br>○ Organic waste?<br>○ Food waste?<br>○ Single use disposable waste?<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>How a Facilities Team Approached their Bin-ventory (video)<br>Waste Assessments & Audits<br>Tracking Waste Data (system) | |

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| Late Spring | Vendor Engagement & Waste Management Context Building | **Review waste management concerns, potential changes, rules, acceptable material options, procedures, and costs with existing and potential new waste vendors or partners:**<br>● Waste Haulers<br>● Recyclers<br>● Composters<br>● Food Pantry<br>● Farmer<br>● Food Services<br>● Facilities Staff / Contractors for waste removal<br><br>**Review options with waste & food service vendors for common use items,** *including:*<br>● Milk cartons<br>● Disposable trays<br>● Disposable silverware<br>● Packaging of supplies / food<br>● Types of bags<br>● Compostables<br>● Recyclables<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>Strategies to Reduce Food Waste in Schools & Child Nutrition Programs<br>Tips for Negotiating with your Waste Hauler (digital page18)<br>Tips for Reducing in a School Cafeteria | |
| Late Spring | Planning | **Develop waste management plan:**<br>● Plan should address local law & minimize organic waste routed to landfills (at minimum)<br>● Plan should address gaps identified during food waste audit & tour, including design of waste stations<br>● Plan should be aligned to conversations with waste management vendors & food service vendor<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>Guide to Zero Waste (NYC Schools)<br>Cafeteria Recycling & Organics: Set-up Guide & handbook (NYC Organics Collection)<br>Healthy Sustainable Schools: Guide for Change & Assessment Tool (digital pages 33-42)<br>School Waste Reduction Programming<br>Composting School Food Scraps | |

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| Late Spring / Summer | Planning | **Select new cafeteria supplies based on waste management plan**<br>● Update ordering logs | |
| | | **Update cafeteria budgets & food ordering needs**<br>● Plan should be aligned to food services contract and changes in enrollment / volume needed (at minimum) | |
| | | **Update waste procedures, roles & responsibilities**<br>● Design processes<br>● Identify additional signage and supply needs, for example:<br>○ Create signage for what is / is not recyclable / compostable (simplify when possible)<br>○ Order mesh bags for cartons & splash guards for liquids<br>● Set up cafeteria waste stations<br><br>**Practice systems / procedures during summer school programming**<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>*Example:* Exemplar Waste Station *"Waste Train"* (Adams 12 Five Star Schools) | |
| Summer | Engagement & Implementation | **Design training for all stakeholder groups to implement new waste management procedures**<br>● Facilities staff<br>● Cafeteria staff<br>● School staff<br>● Students<br><br>**Determine/develop incentives for implementing new waste management procedures**<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>*Example Training List:* What bin does it go in? (Adams 12 Five Star Schools)<br>Reducing Food Waste Lesson plans<br>Activities for Students on Waste Reduction, including a Milk Carton Wallet | |
| | | **Implement trainings & communications around new waste management procedures**<br>● Train Facilities & Kitchen staff<br>● Train School staff | |

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| | | • Train Student leaders (if possible)<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>*Sample Teacher Training:* Waste Sorting 101 (Oakland Unified School District) | |
| First Week of School | Implementation | **Cafeteria Waste Management program Launch**<br>• Train Student leaders<br>• Launch with Students, School Staff, Families, etc<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>Samples quizzes for students or staff to know recyclables (Prince George's County Public Schools) | |
| Fall | Engagement & Implementation | **Formalize "Green Team" to monitor implementation**<br>• Formalize systems for monitoring progress, completing waste audits<br>• Apply for grants or certification programs to support waste management strategies<br><br>**Additional Resources:**<br>Forming A Green Team | |

**Additional Resources:**

- Environmental Equity: Closing the Opportunity Gap in Urban Schools
  - Green Team Creation & Strategic Planning
  - Waste Management Excerpt and "waste" resources

- Healthy Sustainable Schools: Guide for Change & Assessment Tool (digital pages 33-42= Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, including Food waste & Composting)

- Help Fight Climate Change with Composting (video)

- Zero Waste Activity Guide (Eco-Cycle)

- Practical Guide to School Waste Reduction (Oregon Green Schools)

- Food Waste Reduction Strategies (Illinois Schools)