

Waste assessment (walk-through):

The school's green team, the facilities director, and a school administrator should be involved with planning and conducting an assessment and/or audit of the school's waste. The school administrator should provide approval prior to conducting this activity. The teachers, administrative staff, maintenance/facilities staff, and students all need to be aware of the program and coordinate their efforts.

A review of the of waste assessment process should be done so that all participants understand each step and are encouraged to document as much information as possible. Those conducting the assessment/audit may vary from school to school. If possible, invite the municipal recycling coordinator, and/or county recycling coordinator to participate in the project also. Please see the spreadsheet (attached) that may be useful to be gather the information relevant to the recycling program.

Classroom set-up recommended:

1. Each classroom have a recycling container next to every trash container
2. The recycling flyer/poster (showing acceptable recyclables) is posted in each classroom
3. Trash flyer/poster is posted in each classroom (shows items, typically generated in schools, that are not acceptable in the recycling containers and should be put into the trash)
4. Check all containers to make sure they are labeled properly (the team can label containers as they go) including the trash containers so labels are clearly visible and consistent throughout the school

You can ask each teacher to complete the above, and let you know if there is a recycling container prior to having your Green Team conduct the assessment. The second option is having your Green Team members complete the tasks listed above while conducting the waste assessment, which will take more time. It is good to have several teams (with at least 2 members each) assigned to a particular section of the school. Don't forget your common areas, such as the library, gym, cafeteria, etc. and be sure to conduct this activity at the end of the school day. Please coordinate with facilities (custodial staff) to leave all waste in place until you are done.

The participants/green team members should use the sheet and write down the following information (this should take place at the end of the school day):

- Room number
- How many recycling container in that room
- How many trash containers in that room
- Are the containers next to each other (a recycling container teamed together with a trash container)
- Are all container labeled with appropriate decals
- Are the flyers posted
- **What types of unacceptable items were found in the recycling container?**
- **What types of recyclables were found in the trash container?**

Once you have completed this assessment, you can see where you need to make improvement and who to provide feedback to regarding:

- Finding recyclables in trash
- Finding trash mixed in recycling containers

For additional information about waste assessments and audits please visit the Sustainable Jersey Schools website: <http://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/actions-certification/actions/#open/action/78>

