

## CPS Single Stream Recycling Program

Chicago Public Schools has a Single Stream Recycling Program, which means no sorting is necessary! All items may mix together in the same bin during collection and disposal. Ensuring that school staff, building personnel, and students know what and where to recycle are critical to program success. Please help CPS save money on waste disposal costs and minimize its collective environmental impact.

CPS schools must recycle. Garbage thrown in to recycling bins or vice versa is wasteful of money and resources. Building occupants are responsible for separating recyclables from garbage inside each building, while custodians are responsible for keeping the two streams separate during collection and disposal in outdoor dumpsters. This is meant to be used as a guide and reference for school recycling.

### ***Why Recycle?***

- **CPS POLICY:** The district's Energy & Recycling Policy requires school participation. All CPS schools have a single-stream program in place to use!
- **Cost Savings:** On average, it costs almost \$1.50 more to landfill a single cubic yard of waste than to recycle the same volume. More recycling means less waste, which means cost savings that can be rerouted to better use in schools.
- **City of Chicago Policy:** Aligns with Mayor Emanuel's *Sustainable Chicago Plan*.
- **Stewardship:** Demonstrate responsible use of resources to younger generations.
- **Environmental Impact:** Reduces landfill space, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, carbon footprint, air and water pollution, and conserves natural resources.

PROGRAM GOALS
• To adhere to City-wide goals as stated in the Mayor's Sustainable Chicago Plan.
• To reduce landfill waste produced by schools through increased recycling.
• To reduce costs associated with waste disposal.
• To have a recycling program that can be a model for other school districts, organizations, and the community.
• To increase awareness of waste creation and the importance of recycling for CPS students, staff, administration, people doing business in and with CPS schools, and the community.

### ***Who Should Recycle?***

Everyone! All Chicago Public Schools have recycling dumpsters/services and cooperation is critical from Principals, students, teachers, custodians, kitchen staff, engineers, facility managers, and any other school occupants. All CPS schools should recycle under this program.

### ***What Can CPS Recycle?***

The following items can be recycled *together* in designated recycling containers inside buildings, followed by placement in recycling dumpsters located outside.

***NO FOOD, LIQUIDS, or BLACK GARBAGE BAGS ALLOWED in RECYCLING.***

## CPS SINGLE-STREAM RECYCLING



'Single-stream' refers to a program in which all clean paper, plastics, milk/juice cartons, metal cans, and glass can mix together instead of being separated by commodity type in to different containers. The only sorting recycling requires is from garbage.

### In a Nutshell:

- ❖ All recyclables can mix together in designated indoor and outdoor recycling receptacles.
- ❖ Recycling DOES need to be separated from trash. This should be done by students, teachers, and administrative staff. Custodial staff should put bins out and empty them in the right place.
- ❖ Mixed messaging confuses everyone: if you have blue bins full of garbage, it sends the wrong message. Use receptacles correctly and reinforce school-wide recycling.
- ❖ Start somewhere if you need to: paper and cardboard are the basics. Don't get overwhelmed when you can build up to the full list of accepted materials!
- ❖ Recycling isn't just one person's job. Having everyone involved makes it easy and that is the goal!
- ❖ You heard it here: do not put recycling in black garbage bags. It looks like trash to everyone, including the people who pick it up. If it looks like garbage, it will end up in the garbage. Do not thwart your own efforts!

## Recycling Materials: Everyday Examples

Here are examples of recyclable materials that you likely encounter daily at schools:

### PAPER

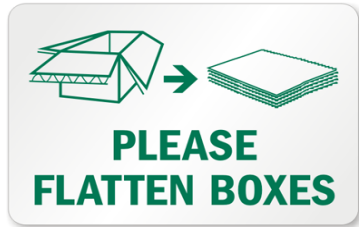
- Notebooks
- Copy paper
- Construction & poster paper
- Newspaper/magazines/catalogs
- Softcover books
- Paper bags (no food)
- Paperboard (e.g. Lunchable and cracker boxes)

**\*No** paper towels, napkins, tissues, coffee/soda cups, or laminated paper.

**\*Hardcover textbooks** require special recycling through the district hauler. Please contact your Facility Manager or Lakeshore Recycling Systems Container Service Line at 773.579.1999.

### CARDBOARD

- Boxes
- Packaging



**Flattening boxes saves space in dumpsters**

### PLASTIC

Any item listed **MUST** be labeled with a recycling logo and one of the following numbers: #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 to be recyclable in Chicago. If no logo or number, the item is GARBAGE.

- Bottles
- Jugs (kitchen)
- Tubs
- Crates
- Cups (only those labeled with a #)
- Lids
- Yogurt containers

**\*No food or liquids**

**\*No** straws, plastic baggies or grocery bags, disposable cutlery, shrink wrap, bubble wrap, candy wrappers, condiment pouches, or overhead transparencies.

### ALUMINUM/TIN/METAL

- Soda cans
- Food cans (large or small)
- Clean aluminum foil
- Food service trays (e.g. pie tins)
- Empty aerosol cans

**\*No food or liquids**

### MILK/JUICE CARTONS



**\*Tip:** Cartons should be drained of excess liquid and straws removed before recycling.

### GLASS

All colors of glass bottles and jars.

**\*No** window glass, ceramics, mirrors, or broken glass.



## ***How Can Schools Recycle?***

All CPS schools are equipped with exterior recycling dumpsters and weekly collections via the contracted hauler, Lakeshore Recycling Systems. Dumpster capacity and number of weekly collections are based on school size. Inside the building, students/staff are responsible for sorting recyclables from garbage into a separate bin. Recycling bins do not have to be a certain size or color, but rather clearly marked to keep garbage and recycling SEPARATE.

Custodians are responsible for collecting recyclables generated by schools and placing all items in the proper recycling dumpster (clearly marked in English, Spanish, and Polish). Setting up interior collection areas is also critical on a daily basis. Please see the “CPS Recycling Guide” for tips and best practices on bins.

Custodians are not responsible for enforcing recycling. They must take items separated by students and school staff to the right dumpster and ensure indoor bins are visible.

Black garbage bags are not to be used to collect recycling. If any blue bin or designated recycling receptacle is lined with a black bag, this jeopardizes the program. Blue or clear bags can still be used for recycling. Gray bags are supplied by Aramark and *may* be used for both recycling and garbage; however, custodians must be able to distinguish so that items go in to the correct dumpster. Clear liners are often viewed as the best option to collect recycling, as they are distinct from garbage for both custodians and the recycling hauler. This is a school-based decision.

### **Getting Started, Keeping It Going, or Growing the Program!**

CPS is committed to district recycling. In order for landfill waste to decrease, all schools must participate in single-stream recycling. Successful school-based efforts teach building users about the importance of recycling, create efficient use of available garbage and recycling equipment, establish the best procedures and sorting areas, and encourage consistency and support amongst the school community.

If you haven't done much recycling at your school yet, **START** with PAPER and CARDBOARD. These are the two main materials in school recycling programs, and they are the easiest place to begin. If this is done already, consider growing to the full scope of Accepted Materials as listed on the previous page.

#### **Establish Recycling Support:**

**Principals/Administrators** → establish recycling as part of everyday school culture and practice, empower staff to promote best practices, lead by example, oversee building improvement strategies, and encourage building staff cooperation. Disseminate the message that recycling is not more work, it's just slightly different work.

**Custodians** → play a critical role in school recycling! Utilize available recycling equipment correctly, make sure no black bags are used to line recycling bins, practice the same set-up every day to maintain consistency, and provide feedback about trash and recycling contents and volume to keep improving.

**Teachers** → lead by example in the classrooms! Use recycling bins for recycling only, and pair a collection bin/box by garbage cans to make the choice easy and consistent. Watch for contamination from garbage, food, and liquids. Put up signs! Empower student ownership in recycling by designating Recycling Ambassadors—they can even be responsible for taking recyclables from classrooms to a larger hallway bin and/or creating unique signage.

**Students** → recycle in classrooms, hallways, and lunchrooms. Get familiar with accepted materials, best practices, and keep adults in check! Encourage peers and staff to recycle more in order to improve your school community. Take it up a notch and bring the message home to share with your family about the importance of recycling.

**Lunchroom Staff** → engage in kitchen recycling. Steel food cans and plastic containers are abundant in kitchens and should be recycled (see Accepted Materials list). All cardboard from deliveries should also be diverted from the garbage to the recycling dumpster.

**Parents/Community** → support the mission! Help make sure your school is utilizing the CPS Recycling Program and communicate if there are issues. Help raise money or look for grant funding to provide supplies like blue bins. Fundraisers and/or connecting to local businesses for possible sponsorship opportunities could help significantly. See what the school actually has, what it needs, and ask for assistance!

**PROMOTE** the school recycling program and **SUPPORT** through announcements, newsletters, student clubs, assemblies, teacher meetings, or other means of communication that work best for your school.



**PAPER and CARDBOARD** are the main items recycled in schools.

Some still ends up in the garbage, but you can help change wasteful behavior....

**RECYCLE IT ALL!**



**Start here!**

Paper is light, easy, and generally free from food and liquids.

Cardboard is plentiful in schools. Work to ensure that lunchroom and custodial staffs are recycling.

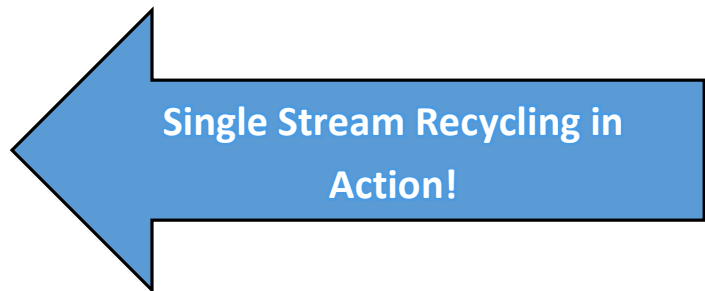


## CPS RECYCLING GUIDE



Sort no more! All recyclables can mix together during collection and disposal in indoor receptacles and exterior recycling dumpsters with the Single-Stream Program. All CPS schools have recycling dumpsters and weekly services.

*Check your school's data at [WWW.CPSRECYCLES.COM](http://WWW.CPSRECYCLES.COM)*



### ACCEPTED MATERIALS

Paper  
(includes softcover books)

Cardboard (flattened)

Plastic (#1-5 & #7)

Aluminum/Tin/Steel Cans

Milk/Juice Cartons (drained)

Glass Bottles & Jars



**Help Your School Shine--Recycle Today!**



# CPS RECYCLING BEST PRACTICES

## INDOOR COLLECTION

***INSIDE BINS: Use what you have!*** Limited recycling bins (size or color) do not need to determine your school's participation. It works to label any bins you have and identify what goes where. You can even use spare boxes! Many schools have students decorate boxes to use. ***It isn't the material you use, it's the EDUCATION and TRAINING associated with it.***

Check that all indoor recycling bins are well marked to ensure they receive the intended recyclable material. Consider attaching signs to the recycling bins/boxes or affix to walls above.



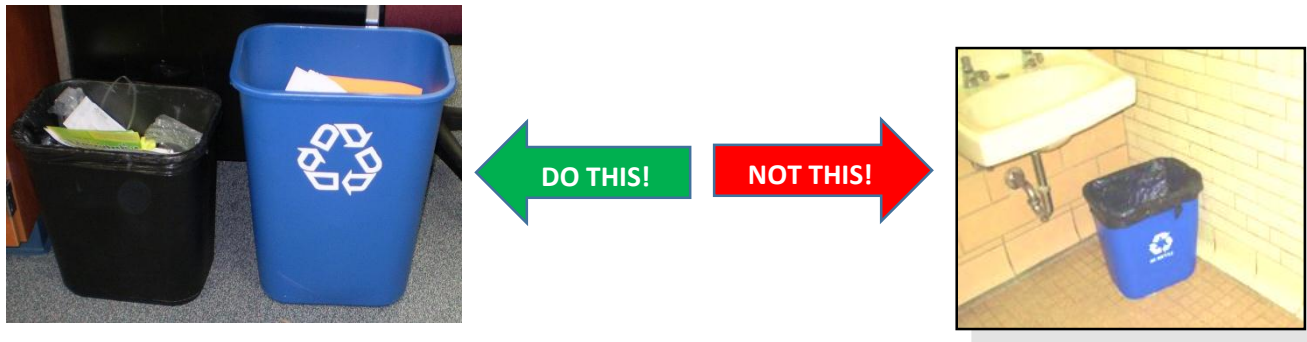
***Your recycling bins do not have to look exactly like this, but bins should be labeled to identify what goes where and to minimize contamination (i.e. no food, liquids, or other garbage).*** With any recycling bin (even the blue ones), the trick is to monitor to make sure garbage is kept out. Enlist student recycling clubs or ambassadors to help!

Budgets are tight, and Central Office is unable to buy materials for all schools. We are always looking for grant opportunities or donations that can provide resources for our recycling program; however, support could be available with parent or community groups, local businesses, or even larger companies to set up a fundraiser or sponsorship. Blue bins cost \$5-6 each from major online stores, but it is recommended to try a few things first.

**Here are some things to note before buying anything....**



Take inventory of existing bin supply. Sometimes they are hidden away in storage closets, but often are being misused as trash bins out in the open. ***Reclaim blue bins for recycling only!*** This makes the message clear and consistent as well.





Recycling bins DO NOT have to be blue plastic. They are nice, but any bin will do as long as it has an appropriate sign and a clear or gray bag (i.e. no black trash bags).



Use cardboard boxes as recycling collectors! Deliveries are made to schools all the time, and they can serve a second purpose when used as recycling bins. When they need to be replaced, boxes can be recycled themselves too!

### Setting Up Your School Waste & Recycling Stations



Place containers where trash and recycling are generated, as seen in these examples. Try to pair the trash and recycling containers as much as possible. If they are on their own or set too far apart, people will not make the extra effort and you'll end up with trash in your recyclables or recyclables in your trash.

## Main Areas to Address: Best Practices

### Classrooms

Pair recycling bins with garbage and have students check materials and contamination.

Reinforce the practice: recycle every day and lead by example.

Start somewhere: PAPER RECYCLING IS A MUST!

### Hallways

Make recycling obvious and accessible.



*Use larger, wheeled bins in hallways as central collection points for classroom recycling. This streamlines work for custodians and can enlist student helpers.*

### Lunchrooms/Kitchens: They need bins too!

Make recycling bins accessible in kitchens and place signage for staff to see.

Flatten and recycle cardboard from deliveries.

Rinse and recycle all metal cans, boxes, and plastic containers.



## OUTDOOR DISPOSAL

**DUMPSTERS:** All CPS schools are equipped with exterior recycling dumpsters (sizes vary) that receive regular collections. Recycling dumpsters are GRAY in color and marked with this sign:



### Recycling & Bags: What's the Deal?

There has been a lot of confusion surrounding proper recycling procedure as it relates to bags. The following applies to ALL CPS schools with district-provided waste/recycling services:

FAQS/ MIXED MESSAGES	THE TRUTH
"We have to use blue bags for recycling."	<b>NO!</b> You MAY use blue, clear, gray, or no bag at all. Just NO black bags!
"All recycling has to be bagged."	<b>NO</b> it does not! Typically bagging makes it easier to transport recyclables to exterior dumpsters, but you can go bag-free if you choose!
"It's fine, just put recycling in a black bag."	<b>NO.</b> Opaque black bags are used for garbage and make it difficult for the processor to distinguish good recycling from garbage. Use gray bags, clear, blue, or no bag at all instead.
"My custodian says they don't have to help our school recycle. "	<b>YES</b> they do! If your school is having issues, contact your Aramark Custodial Manger and Meredith McDermott at CPS for help: <a href="mailto:mcmcdermott2@cps.edu">mcmcdermott2@cps.edu</a> .
"You're telling me we can use the gray bags provided by Aramark for both waste & recycling? Won't that confuse custodians?"	Yes, you can use gray bags for both in effort to limit need for any additional material purchases. Staff training and labeled bins are critical to keep the streams separate.



**BEST PRACTICE:**



Monitor recycling bins for black bags. Keep them out! Black bags look like garbage and it can confuse people.

Ensure that recycling is actually able to be recycled- use white, clear, gray, or no bag!

**Contamination**

“Contaminated” recycling refers to materials collected that are either not recyclable (i.e. putting garbage in to recycling bins) or have foods or liquids present to a significant enough extent that would necessitate it being treated as garbage.

*CPS schools must recycle. Garbage thrown in to recycling bins or vice versa is wasteful of money and resources. Building occupants are responsible for separating recyclables from garbage inside each building, while custodians are responsible for keeping the two streams separate during collection and disposal in outdoor dumpsters.*



**BEST PRACTICE: Stop Contamination Before It Starts**

Signs, announcements, and student leadership are all ways to recycle well. If bins get contaminated with food or liquids, consider refreshing the message and monitoring. If bins are more than 5% contaminated with garbage, it's GARBAGE!



The City of Chicago also has a Single Stream Recycling Program for residences. Both programs have the same Accepted Materials list.

## MILK/JUICE CARTON RECYCLING

Have a few buckets collecting dust in a closet somewhere in your school? Get them out, place by lunchroom recycling bins, and get students to drain and recycle ALL of those cartons you see every day!



A compelling reason to incorporate beverage cartons in to your school recycling program is the sheer volume of these products consumed daily. Additionally, when liquids are fully separated and disposed of via a drain, we lower the weight of materials sent to landfill. This makes our dumpsters less stinky and can help chip away at disposal costs!

Example: 600 milk cartons per day (60lbs) = **108,800 milk cartons** to be recycled in one school year  
Liquid waste from 600 cartons can weigh ~125lbs/day!

Milk and juice cartons may be bagged/disposed of with all other recyclables, i.e. no separation is necessary. Since liquids can quickly and easily contaminate recycling, cartons must be **DRAINED** prior to disposal. There are several strategies used by schools to do this effectively:

- Get custodians and lunchroom staff on board. Custodians typically take liquid waste buckets to a large drain for disposal, so please consider bucket weight.
- Identify a usable drain indoors.
- Place buckets by designated recycling bins in dining areas labeled *LIQUID ONLY*.
- Educate students and staff on the significance of carton recycling.
- Label the buckets and monitor!



Check out how McAuliffe Elementary organizes their sorting line in the lunchroom. They raise the bucket to be kid-friendly: less spillage means less mess to clean up.



Consider a wheeled cart to transport liquid waste buckets to drains to help make the process easier for custodial staff.

## **PROGRAM COMMUNICATION: School-Wide**

### **1) Use clear, simple labels and posters:**

Signs let people know what materials are expected in each collection container.

Use the same signs/labels throughout the school and color code for easy recognition.

Use pictures of common items, not just words so all ages can understand.

Use large fonts and keep text to a minimum.

### **2) Be consistent:**

Identify the best locations for waste and recycling stations and stick to them every day to reinforce behavior.

### **3) Communicate and Motivate:**

**Students:** spread the word to peers and help each other out. Once people know what to recycle and where to put it, it will start to happen as easily as throwing out garbage. Make signs and encourage your teachers to help support recycling throughout the school!

**School Staff:** School-wide announcements and signage can help boost awareness amongst teachers, lunchroom and custodial staff, students, and administrators. Let everyone know what to recycle, what to trash (food, Styrofoam, plastic baggies, disposable cutlery, etc.), and where to find recycling bins.

***\*Students and staff are expected to separate recyclables from waste inside school buildings.***

**Custodians:** School custodians are expected to set up trash and recycling bins as directed and/or as needed in schools, change out bags as needed, and to KEEP WASTE and RECYCLABLES separate. They are then charged with the critical task of disposing waste in garbage dumpsters or compactor and recyclables in designated school recycling dumpsters. Use ALL compartments of dumpsters to ensure sufficient space. Boxes must be broken down. Please refer to the "Recycling & Bags: What's the Deal?" section above for contact information if you observe or encounter any resistance or if custodians need guidance.

***\*Throwing away recyclables in garbage dumpsters is NOT ALLOWED.***

**Lunchroom Managers & Staff:** Make sure bins for recyclables are available in kitchen prep areas in addition to the lunchrooms. Please remember that food and liquids contaminate recycling. Cardboard boxes are also to be flattened and disposed of in outdoor recycling dumpster(s). Capture cans, plastic containers, and lots of cardboard with help from the kitchen!

**Engineers/Facility Managers:** Keep an eye on indoor recycling presence-is it happening? Do you see labeled or obvious bins dedicated for recycling in addition to waste? Are black bags being used for recycling or blue bins being used for garbage (if so, please rectify)? Outdoor dumpsters should have closed lids, and no materials should be strewn in waste/recycling areas. Monitor use of recycling dumpsters-if consistently empty and the garbage is full, this is a misuse of services provided.

## Special Recyclables:

Some items are outside the scope of the Single Stream Program's list of accepted materials but can be recycled through other means.

Please contact your building engineer, Facility Manager, and/or CPS Sustainability\* for assistance.

ITEM	DISPOSAL/RECYCLING STRATEGY	NOTE
<b>Hardcover Textbooks</b>	Contact Lakeshore Recycling Systems' Roll-Off Service Line: (773) 579 1999. Mention CPS BOOK RECYCLING.	NOT ALLOWED in garbage or standard recycling dumpsters or compactors. REQUIRE separate container.
<b>Toner/Ink Cartridges</b>	Free recycling through Office Depot. Sign up to organize shipment and get rewards: <a href="http://www.mybusinessrecycles.com">www.mybusinessrecycles.com</a>	
<b>Electronics</b>	Contact CPS Asset Disposal Program: Call 3-EXCL or go to <a href="https://secure2cps.edu/DisposalServices/">https://secure2cps.edu/DisposalServices/</a>	It is against the law to throw electronics in regular dumpsters.
<b>Batteries</b>	Rechargeable batteries can be collected in a box and taken to Home Depot, Best Buy, or Lowes. Facility Managers can also assist with periodic collections of these boxes.	Standard alkaline batteries (AA, AA, D) may be disposed of in garbage.
<b>Bulbs</b>	There are several Board-approved vendors to contact for proper bulb recycling. Some include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Everlights</li><li>• Universal Lighting</li><li>• MercPak</li><li>• Air Cycle</li><li>• EverCycle</li><li>• EcoLights</li></ul>	It is against State and Federal law to throw spent bulbs/tubes in standard garbage or recycling dumpsters.

\*Meredith McDermott, CPS Sustainability Manager: [mcmcdermott2@cps.edu](mailto:mcmcdermott2@cps.edu) or (773) 553-2933

## SCHOOL CUSTODIANS + CPS RECYCLING SUPPORT

**“Not MORE work. DIFFERENT work.”**

Chicago Public Schools aims to have 100% of schools participating in the single-stream recycling program, which will increase district recycling rates and decrease costs associated with waste disposal.

Custodian participation is critical for compliance with the CPS Recycling Program. Recycling dumpsters are GRAY in color and labeled with this sign in English, Spanish, and Polish:



**REMEMBER:** School custodians are not responsible for sorting recyclables from garbage or enforcing recycling. They must take items separated by students and school staff to the correct dumpster and ensure that indoor bins are available and visible. They are **RECYCLING SUPPORT**, but it is up to the school to get the items in the right bins!

### Custodian Participation in CPS Recycling includes:

1. Set up separate bins/boxes inside buildings daily for both recycling *and* garbage.
2. Make recycling visible: pair recycling bins with garbage but remove separately.
3. Determine a collection schedule/process that works for you and your school!  
**Tip: Streamline with larger bins in hallways as central collection points for classroom recycling.**
4. Line recycling receptacles with gray, clear, or blue bag and NOT black garbage bags.
5. Ensure that no blue bin or other recycling receptacle is misused for garbage at any time.
6. Do NOT combine trash and recycling AT ANY TIME. Items placed in recycling receptacles (by students, teachers, lunchroom staff, and any other school staff) should never be combined with garbage inside the building OR outside in dumpsters. *This is against CPS Policy.*
7. ALL recyclables are taken to the gray recycling dumpster(s) labelled with the sign pictured above.
8. *Making the best possible use of school recycling dumpsters! Thank you for your support.*

### RECYCLABLE MATERIALS: The following items should be separated by the schools for recycling.

- PAPER
- CARDBOARD (flattened)
- PLASTIC BOTTLES & CONTAINERS
- METAL CANS (steel, tin, aluminum)
- GLASS BOTTLES & JARS
- MILK & JUICE CARTONS

### Confusing Items: Trash 'Em! NO recycling.

- Styrofoam
- Plastic sandwich baggies
- Plastic cutlery (sporks, knives, etc.)
- Napkins & paper towels
- Straws
- Plastic grocery bags
- Plastic shrink & bubble wrap

