Seven Generations Ahead

ZERO WASTE SCHOOLS
SEVEN GENERATIONS AHEAD

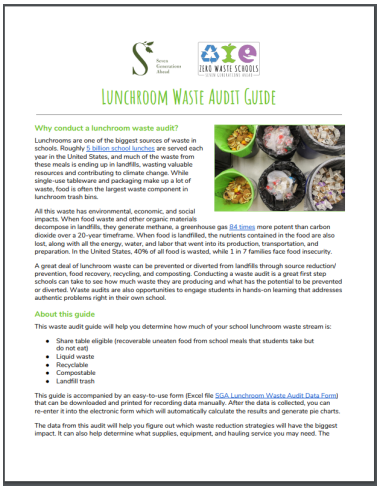
NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

The Zero Waste Schools newsletter will help you get your school on a path toward generating zero waste through waste prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery. You'll also find resources that connect zero waste to healthy eating, school gardens, and environmental education and action.

Feel free to share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students who are interested in zero waste.

Sign up for ZWS news

Check out SGA's new Lunchroom Waste Audit Guide


LUNCHROOM WASTE AUDIT GUIDE

Why conduct a lunchroom waste audit?

Lunchrooms are one of the biggest sources of waste in schools. Roughly 5 billion school lunches are served each year in the United States, and much of the waste from these meals is ending up in landfills, wasting valuable resources and contributing to climate change. While single-use tableware and packaging make up a lot of waste, food is often the largest waste component in lunchroom trash bins.

All this waste has environmental, economic, and social impacts. When food waste and other organic materials decompose in landfills, they generate methane, a greenhouse gas 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year timeframe. When food is landfilled, the nutrients contained in the food are also lost, along with all the energy, water, and labor that went into its production, transportation, and preparation. In the United States, 40% of all food is wasted, while 1 in 7 families face food insecurity.

A great deal of lunchroom waste can be prevented or diverted from landfills through source reduction/prevention, food recovery, recycling, and composting. Conducting a waste audit is a great first step schools can take to see how much waste they are producing and what has the potential to be prevented or diverted. Waste audits are also opportunities to engage students in hands-on learning that addresses authentic problems right in their own school.

About this guide

This waste audit guide will help you determine how much of your school lunchroom waste stream is:

- Share table eligible (recoverable uneaten food from school meals that students take but do not eat)
- Liquid waste
- Recyclable
- Compostable
- Landfill trash

This guide is accompanied by an easy-to-use form (Excel file SGA Lunchroom Waste Audit Data Form) that can be downloaded and printed for recording data manually. After the data is collected, you can re-enter it into the electronic form which will automatically calculate the results and generate pie charts.

The data from this audit will help you figure out which waste reduction strategies will have the biggest impact. It can also help determine what supplies, equipment, and hauling service you may need. The

It's hard to manage a problem without understanding it first. A waste audit is the best first step to understand and reduce waste and is also a great way to engage students in authentic, place-based learning.

This new guide from SGA will help you determine how much of your lunchroom/ kitchen waste stream is recoverable food, liquid waste, recyclable, compostable, and landfill trash. It includes an electronic data collection form that automatically generates pie charts of your results.

Becoming a zero waste school starts with an audit. Download the guide HERE.

It's one of many tools you can find in SGA's Zero Waste Schools Toolkit.

Youth climate strikes

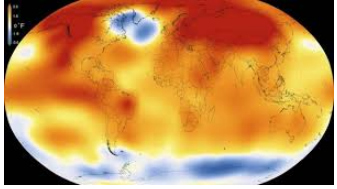
Young leaders are asking everyone, from every country and every generation, to join together for climate action.

Global Climate Strike: **Nov. 29**
National Climate Strike: **Dec. 6**

Climate education increases climate concerns in parents

When students receive climate change education in their classrooms, their parents become more educated and concerned about climate change, too. That's according to a recent study published in *Nature Climate*

Change that analyzed middle school students and their parents in North Carolina.



Read the full academic paper here: Children can foster climate change concern among their parents.

For a brief overview, check out this news article: Climate education for kids increases climate concerns for parents.

Lessons connecting composting and food waste to climate change

The Soil Story Curriculum (Kiss the Ground/Life Lab, middle school) This 5-lesson curriculum connects composting to soil regeneration and the vital role that soil can have in reversing climate change.

Food Waste Warrior Lesson Plan (World Wildlife Foundation, Grades 5-12) Students learn how food impacts the environment by conducting a waste audit and estimating the water and greenhouse gas emissions embedded in the wasted food.

Food Waste Curriculum (Purdue Agriculture, Grades K-5) Units include: Food Waste and Natural Resources, What a Waste of Food!, Food Waste Solutions, Food Waste and the Environment, School Gardens, and Transporting Food Waste.

Our Climate Our Future Resources (Alliance for Climate Education, Grades 9-12) This interactive resource brings climate change and solutions to life. Students can respond to questions via text about what they're watching.

Best of Green Schools 2020 – Call for nominations

The Best of Green Schools awards celebrate schools, districts, individuals, and communities making strides toward the common goal of green schools for all within this generation.

Nominations are being accepted for 10 different categories. Awards will be presented by the USGBC's Center for Green Schools and the Green Schools National Network at the Green Schools Conference and Expo, March 2-4, in Portland, OR. Learn more HERE. Deadline for nominations: **Nov. 18.**

Focus on sustainable food systems

Green Schools Catalyst Quarterly

Not to be missed: The September 2019 edition of the *Green Schools Catalyst Quarterly* focused on **Food for Thought: Innovation in School Food Systems**. Read it HERE.

Composting workshop for Chicago Public Schools

Interested in learning how your school can compost lunchroom fruit/vegetable scraps and garden trimmings on-site? The next workshop for the CPS Composting Cohort is **Nov. 8, 9:00-12:30**, at Waters Elementary School, 4540 N. Campbell Ave. Pete Leki, Director of Ecology Programs at Waters (and composting guru), will

lead the workshop. Contact Pete to register: petelekisan@gmail.com.

Green Apple Day of Service

The Green Apple Day of Service, a program of the Center for Green Schools, is an opportunity to develop a project that has a sustainable impact. Choose one of their project ideas or create your own. Participation is open all year round, but to become eligible for the 2020 Green Apple Awards, register and complete your project by **Dec. 31**.

One Earth Young Filmmakers Contest & Workshops

Enter the Young Filmmakers Contest by creating a well-researched 3-8 minute film about one of 6 sustainability topics: energy, food, transportation, waste, water, or open space and ecosystems. Winners will be awarded cash prizes/scholarships ranging from $100-$1,000 and have their film premiered at the One Earth Film Festival in March.

Who can participate: Students ages 8-25.
Contest deadline: Jan. 5.

The following workshops are available to help get you started. Learn more and register HERE.

- Sunday, Dec. 1: Live Action Filmmaking Workshop for Grades 6-8
- Sunday, Dec. 8: Live Action Filmmaking Workshop for Grades 3-5
- Wednesdays: Filmmaking Help for High Schoolers (FREE)

Volunteers needed at the Creative Chicago Reuse Exchange

CCRx is looking for ongoing help at their warehouse on the southwest side of Chicago. After an abundance of donations this summer, they are in need of volunteers to help sort out reading series, science kits, and more.

Who: Anyone can volunteer, but teachers' expertise is especially needed.
When: Wednesdays 12-8 pm; Fridays and Saturdays 11-3 pm. Sign up HERE.

Grant & scholarship opportunities

Youth Educator Grant Program: To encourage youth to follow sustainable practices and explore careers in sustainable agriculture. Deadline **Nov. 14**.

Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant: For teachers of grades PreK-12 seeking funding for natural resources-related field trips. Deadline **Jan. 31**.

USDA 1890 National Scholars Program: For high school students who want to study agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and related disciplines at a 1890 Land-Grant University. Full tuition, room/board included. Deadline **Jan. 31.**

Support Zero Waste Schools

Do you value the work of Seven Generations Ahead and our Zero Waste Schools Program?
Please support our work by donating today.
THANK YOU!

Events

Alliance For Climate Education Webinar

Nov. 7, 6pm

This is your no-cost solution to bring climate science into your class. Join the zoom call and learn how to use this amazing resource with your students. Register HERE.

Food Waste Workshop

Nov. 7, 7:00-8:30 pm, Oak Park Public Library

Attend this FREE workshop to learn how to reduce food waste. Register HERE.

MWRD Road Show

Nov. 16, 9:00-12:00 Von Steuben HS, Chicago

Learn how the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District manages wastewater and recovers resources. Includes STEM activities and a chance to win a rain barrel.

Call for Presenters at EEIA Annual Conference

Now through Dec. 6

Submit an application to present at the 2020 Environmental Education Association of Illinois Annual Conference, which will take place in Makanda, IL, April 2-4.

Green Schools Conference and Expo 2020

Mar. 2-4, Portland, Oregon

Register by **Dec. 20** for early bird rates.

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