



Weighing and Recording Food Waste

Weighing food and non-food waste can help demonstrate the effectiveness of a waste reduction program



What schools are doing

Recording and posting waste weights give students a tangible way to see the results of their efforts. It can also illustrate trends in meal preference, which can be helpful to food service staff. This is a great way for students to see how much waste is generated each day.

Garlough Environmental Magnet School - West St. Paul

Garlough Environmental Magnet School uses an iPad to track data so they can analyze and evaluate choices students make school wide. They look for correlations between the menu items that day and the amount of food wasted. They hope this will help inform the District Food Service when making purchasing decisions to avoid food waste. Members of the Livegreen student club use a digital food scale to weigh the food that students do not eat at lunch each hour. This edible food waste is recorded and is then graphed for data analysis.



Clara Barton Open School - Minneapolis

Clara Barton Open School tracked their own results by doing the dirty job of weighing a week's worth of garbage from the dumpsters before and after the organics recycling program

was implemented. Before the organics program, they weighed 254 pounds of garbage in one week. After the program, their trash weighed in at 50 pounds. The staff shared these results with students at an assembly to reinforce their hard work and encourage even more participation in the program. The district now tracks their monthly output, and they currently recycle or compost 48.55% of their waste, the highest percentage of any school in the Minneapolis Public Schools district.

Blake School - Highcroft - Wayzata

Blake School - Highcroft is doing their own audit and separating their non-food organic waste from the actual food and tracking how much actual food was wasted to help students realize how much food they have wasted. The students studied the waste, took pictures of the food and tracked down bread as the number one culprit. The 3 lunch periods were averaged and got exactly 5 pounds per lunch period that was non--food but still organic waste that helped them get a more accurate number on their food waste. Their totals now include all organic waste. They began the first few months of the program averaging 57.51 pounds per day. Early this year they were down to 49.51 average per day and in the most recent month they are at 43.3. That's a reduction of 25% in food waste in approximately a 1.5 years.

Carondelet Catholic School - Minneapolis

Carondelet Catholic School has the haulers weigh the contents of the dumpsters and provide them with a report. Students at each campus examine and weigh each category of waste to see if they are on track or need to make adjustments and/or renew educational efforts. They also request that their hauler give them organics totals in pounds each year.

Resources

Performing a School Waste Audit

http://www.recycleworks.org/schools/s_audits.html

Waste Audit (United Kingdom)

<http://www.antrim.gov.uk/docuploads/School%20waste%20audit.pdf>

Student Conducted Waste Audit (Canada)

<http://chr.hdsb.ca/Folder%20for%20linked%20Documents%20%28Eco%29/Chris%20Hadfield%20Waste%20Audit.pdf>

EPA's Tools to Reduce Waste in Schools

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/toolkit/tools.pdf>