

# Washable Trays and Silverware



The use of washable trays, plates, and silverware has been a long-time practice in many elementary school lunchrooms. In the past few years, compostable products have come on the market, which are now being used by several schools. Washable trays and silverware eliminate the need for disposal.



Many Minnesota schools do not have permanent dishwashing facilities; hence they have to use disposable items. The increased availability of compostable products has helped greatly to reduce the amount of Styrofoam and other products which go into the landfill.

## Benefit of Using Silverware

Silverware can be washed and reused, thus eliminating waste that can be created by using plastic utensils.



## Benefit of Hard Trays

Hard trays help save landfills. Every year, schools throw away millions of nonbiodegradable Styrofoam trays from breakfasts and lunches at school. Trash collection costs may decrease with the use of reusable trays and the accompanying decrease in waste volume. Hard lunch trays are sturdier and can be used day after day without the need to order more every few weeks.

## What schools are doing

### H. B. Stowe Elementary School - Duluth

Stowe Elementary School uses reusable utensils, dishware, and cloth napkins. They have eliminated all disposable utensils and dishware used in the lunchroom. All dishes, silverware and trays are permanent ware and are washed and reused daily.

### Champlin Brooklyn Park Academy - Champlin

Champlin Brooklyn Park Academy made the commitment to add a dish room in their K-2 wing to ensure they could use washable trays and silverware. They have purchased compostable trays and clamshells, in addition to an extra set of silverware, so that if they have an event where they need more, they will have them. These can also be supplemented by occasional use of compostable items.

### Bayview Elementary School - Waconia

Bayview Elementary School utilizes permanent washable silverware, plates and kitchen towels, aprons and hair restraints. They purchase biodegradable products or products made from recycled material when "disposal" items are needed.

### Clara Barton Open School - Minneapolis

Clara Barton Open School uses washable plastic trays for students to carry their lunches (which are served in individual disposable packages from the district) so the district does not need to send them disposable trays. When funds allow, classrooms purchase compostable wipes for sanitizing trays, tables, etc. They use compostable plates and utensils for school events.



### Lakes International Language Academy - Forest Lake

The food service contract staff were able to gain permission from District 831 to switch to reusable "permanent ware" provided LILA could supply dishwasher racks and collection trays for these items. They have been using permanent ware since February 2012. For custodial paper products, napkins, cleaning supplies, and copier paper, they buy items with recycled content.

### O.H. Anderson School - Mahtomedi

The O.H. Anderson Food Service program is making efforts to convert usage from plastic serving containers to paper. The school does use all metal silverware so plastic forks/ spoons are not contributing to the waste.

### **Oxbow Creek School - Champlin**

Oxbow Creek now washes and reuses all serving trays and silverware, avoiding the purchase of plastic utensils. They focus on purchasing items that are reusable, if not compostable.

### **Resources**

#### ***EHow.Com Hard Trays vs. Styrofoam for schools***

[http://www.ehow.com/info\\_7980793\\_hard-trays-vs-styrofoam-schools.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_7980793_hard-trays-vs-styrofoam-schools.html)

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#### ***Green Living website***

<http://www.greenlivingtips.com/articles393/1/School-lunch-tray-dilemma.html>