



The Cycle

Seattle Public Schools Recycling Newsletter



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Over the last several months I received questions, comments, and ideas on how to improve recycling in the schools. Here is some of what has been shared with me.

Recycling: I've got the basics, but I still have questions.

Is your recycling program really starting to get going? When schools begin to expand their recycling to new areas like the lunchrooms and art classes it is very common that more questions will come up. What about items that aren't specified as recyclable, the student collages, aluminum foil, plastic film from lunch trays? Here are some general guidelines.



- Aluminum cans are recyclable but metal foil is not.
- Plastic film from lunch trays is recyclable only if it is free of food. (This does **not** mean that you have to wash it.)
- Capri-Sun® juices containers are recyclable, but the straws are not.
- Plastics are **usually** recyclable if they are number 5 or less. (The number that appears in the recycling triangle on the bottom of the container.)
- In general, paper art projects are recyclable as long as the majority of the material is paper. If there is more glue, paint or other material than paper it should be thrown out as garbage.
- Water-soluble paint and glue on paper are ok to recycle. Rubber cement, oil based paints, and clay cannot be recycled.

Has Evelyn got it wrong?

Many people who live in the city read the *Ask Evelyn* article in the Seattle Public Utility newsletter. There are times when posed with the same question that Evelyn and I will answer questions differently. Does that mean that one of us is wrong? Not necessarily. The newsletter addresses questions for Seattle residents and I answer questions for the school district's program. What is the difference? Seattle Public Schools garbage and recycling are serviced as commercial customers. This means that the schools are serviced by different trucks and, in some areas, by a different company than the residents of Seattle.



The major difference between residential and commercial recycling service is separating glass. At the schools glass can be recycled with the rest of the mixed recycling, at home residents have to keep glass separate. If other contradictions arise feel free to contact me.

Lawton students take initiative

As you may be aware, Lawton Elementary has been piloting a compost food waste program. Worm bins for food waste recycling is not uncommon in the district, but Lawton has taken a different approach. Unlike worm bins that have limits on the volume that can be added, off-site composting uses a commercial vendor to haul away and compost **all** compostable material.

The program, which is similar to the composting available to the residents of Seattle, has been a huge success thanks to students in Mr. Hubbard's 4th grade class. The kids take turns volunteering to be garbage monitors in the lunchroom instead of taking recess. The students, donned with latex gloves, spring into action, retrieving a piece of plastic film or straw that was mistakenly thrown into the compost barrel. It is the efforts and enthusiasm of these 4th graders that make this program work.

It has been such a success that we are looking to expand the project to additional schools. If your school is interested contact me or attend an informational meeting at Lawton on June 15th from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm.

Ideas and Kudos Corner

Denny Middle School has started a lunchroom recycling program for cans and bottles. They spread the word through a poster contest, hallway displays, and lunchroom banners that show items found in their lunchroom as examples. Now they want to share the wealth. If anyone would like to borrow the lunchroom banners to start a lunchroom recycling program contact Kirsten Rohrbach. Denny looks to recycle even more lunchroom items next year.



Theresa Grimm, custodial engineer at Washington Middle School was bothered by seeing three-ring binders continually being thrown away so she started a Reduce, Reuse, Recycle table. Outside her office door sits an ordinary looking table that diverts cubic yards of what would otherwise be garbage. She specifies that the items cannot be district property, must be in good condition, and must be things that others are likely to want. In other words it is not a dumping ground for things people don't want to dispose of themselves. Mostly people deposit and pick up three-ring binders, partial used notebooks, and hanging file folders.

***Encourage all students and staff to recycle during end of the year clean out!
Have a happy, healthy summer.***

If you have a question, good idea, or success story you would like to see in *The Cycle* let me know.