



## A Step by Step Guide to Implementing In-School Composting with Lunch Out of Landfills!

Lunch Out of Landfills! Implementation Steps		Status and Notes
1.	Research and Planning	
	<p>Use resources in the <a href="#">Lunch Out of Landfills! (LOOL) Toolkit</a> to learn about program strategies, benefits, successes, and challenges. (Many of these resources are linked to below.) You may want to visit other schools that are implementing waste sorting and composting. (<a href="https://www.tinyurl.com/LOOL-TOOLKIT">https://www.tinyurl.com/LOOL-TOOLKIT</a>)</p> <p><b>Overview Video:</b>  <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vP20QThnwOf6PbpwhD1S4tI2g7STmW9N/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vP20QThnwOf6PbpwhD1S4tI2g7STmW9N/view</a></p>	
	<p><b>Make a plan</b> for how you want to roll out your program. Reference the links below each bullet for an overview. Do you want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with a one-time waste sort to assess school lunch waste? If so check out <a href="#">How to Conduct a One-time Waste Sort</a></li> <li>• Implement Share Tables (recovering unopened food to disperse among the community) as a first step? (see Step 6) If so, check out <a href="#">Share Tables - a Guide for DC Schools</a></li> <li>• Track data about sorted waste and waste diversion? If so, here is a <a href="#">Sample Data Entry Form</a> that is linked to <a href="#">spreadsheets that display statistics and graphs</a>. Click tabs on spreadsheet bottom to see sample data from 3 schools. These forms and spreadsheets can be customized for your school or school district.</li> <li>-</li> <li>• Utilize volunteers or student leaders to stand by compost bins to help students with waste sorting to minimize contamination of waste streams? Take a look at the <a href="#">Lunch out of Landfills Volunteer Guide</a>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider reaching out to different clubs at your school such as environmental club, Honor Societies,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<p>Student Government, Interact Club. At elementary levels, reaching out to the PTA for compost monitoring volunteers or the Safety Patrols may be more effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offering service hours in exchange for compost volunteering may be helpful at the middle and high school levels</li> </ul>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>School &amp; Program Stakeholder Engagement – Part 1</b>	
	<p>Identify <b>Internal Champion(s)</b>: At least one Champion is essential for gaining support from teachers and students! A Champion can be an administrator, a teacher, or building support staff. In addition, consider forming a leadership team among teachers and staff. Is there a student club or Green Team who can take a leadership role?</p>	
	<p>Meet with <b>Building Services and Cafeteria Staff</b>. Explain program operation and purpose; Identify concerns; Share benefits to staff (reduced and lighter trash bags). Invite them to be part of a Leadership Team. Consider using the video below as a base for your proposal to building services.</p> <p><b>Video:</b>  <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/19fH0oYekp626xPGdikQko57AHEf-0nOg/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/19fH0oYekp626xPGdikQko57AHEf-0nOg/view?usp=sharing</a></p>	
	<p>Identify and contact <b>Partners</b> to help plan and roll-out the program. Potential partners may include PTAs, local civic clubs (such as Rotary: <a href="https://www.rotary.org/en">https://www.rotary.org/en</a>) who may be able to provide funding and volunteers, professionals who can help with social media and marketing, etc.</p>	

<b>3.</b>	<b>Plan for Program Essentials</b>	
	<p><b>Identify and contact a carrier for off-site composting and pick-up service.</b> Estimate costs for school year. Here are a few in the Metropolitan DC region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Compost Crew:</b> <a href="http://compostcrew.com">http://compostcrew.com</a> (Maryland, Virginia and Washington D.C)</li> <li>- <b>Key City Compost:</b> <a href="https://keycompost.com/">https://keycompost.com/</a> (Maryland, D.C, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania)</li> <li>- <b>Veteran Compost:</b> <a href="https://www.veterancompost.com/">https://www.veterancompost.com/</a> (Baltimore/Annapolis Metro Area, DC Metro Area)</li> <li>- <b>Alpha Ridge Landfill:</b> <a href="https://www.howardcountymd.gov/public-works/composting-facility">https://www.howardcountymd.gov/public-works/composting-facility</a> (Howard County, Maryland)</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Identify sources of needed funds for compost pick-up service and supplies</b> such as bins, buckets, bin liners, and scales (if wanting to track results this way). Will school system allocate funding? Would civic clubs contribute? Would a business sponsor the initiative? Might someone host a fundraiser or GoFundMe initiative?</p>	
	<p>Determine source for compost, liquids, and composting <b>containers and scales</b> for the cafeterias.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Bins and Liners:</b> <a href="https://ecosafe.green/">https://ecosafe.green/</a></li> <li>- <b>Bins:</b> <a href="https://www.novaproducts.ca/curbside-organics-bin.php">https://www.novaproducts.ca/curbside-organics-bin.php</a></li> <li>- <b>Sieves for Liquids Bucket:</b> <a href="https://www.bayteccontainers.com/5-gallon-400-micron-ez-strainer-insert-for-pails---drums.html">https://www.bayteccontainers.com/5-gallon-400-micron-ez-strainer-insert-for-pails---drums.html</a></li> <li>- <b>Scales:</b> <a href="https://tinyurl.com/Giantex-scale">https://tinyurl.com/Giantex-scale</a></li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Determine the number of waste-sorting stations needed</b> in cafeteria.</p>	
	<p><b>Prepare for Tracking Results:</b> Determine if tracking results will be part of your program. If so, a scale, a data entry paper form, or on-line data entry form can be used to weigh sorted waste, record recovered food, etc. For example, here is a <a href="#">Sample Data Entry Form</a> that is linked to <a href="#">spreadsheets that display statistics and graphs</a>. (Click tabs on spreadsheet bottom to see sample data from 3 schools.) These forms and spreadsheets can be customized for your school or school district. Here is an example of a <a href="#">paper tracking form</a> that could be used.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>School Stakeholder Engagement – Part 2</b>	
	<p>Present the <b>Lunch Out of Landfills!</b> initiative and learning opportunities to <b>teachers</b>. Share program purpose, data and results from other <b>LOOL</b> schools, and <b>learning resources</b> on</p>	

	waste, composting, trash, landfills, etc. Teacher resources, including read-aloud books, videos, and curricula are available in the LOOL Toolkit, as are sample PowerPoint presentations.	
	School Champion(s) enlist a <b>Student Green Team or Service Club</b> to assist with program promotion and implementation. Teams or club members can gather baseline data through Waste Sorts, and can help promote, launch, and implement the program. They can also be responsible for weighing sorted waste each day and recording data. Take a look at the <a href="#">Lunch out of Landfills Volunteer Guide</a> .	
	<b>Optional:</b> Conduct a one-time <b>Waste Sort</b> activity with a small student group to gather baseline weight data for liquids, recyclables, compostable foods, recoverable food and trash. Use this <a href="#">How to Conduct a One Time Waste Sort Guide</a> -	
	Inform <b>parents and PTA members</b> about your <b><i>Lunch Out of Landfills!</i></b> initiative. (1) <b>Present at PTA Meetings</b> and share program purpose and environmental connections. Explain how parents can get involved in program, how parents can reduce waste with trash-free strategies, reusable containers and age-appropriate portions. Share how parents can reduce food waste at home - <a href="#">LOOL Presentation for PTA and PTSA</a> (2) Send <b>fliers and/or email messages</b> home to parents about program, strategies to reduce lunch waste, and opportunities to get involved. For example, take a look at <a href="#">Tips for Reducing Food Waste at Home</a> . -	

5.	Program Implementation	
	Determine what <b>promotional activities and materials</b> are needed. Engage student clubs or classes with poster making. School Champions may want to discuss this with teachers, administrators, student clubs, etc.	
	<p>If school decides to <b>weigh and track separated waste</b> at the end of each day's lunch periods, determine who will be weighing and collecting data daily.</p> <p>(1) Who will record weight data on data sheets?  (2) How will it be recorded –manually or in a spreadsheet?  (3) Who will collect and enter data?  (4) How will be data be used in the classroom?</p>	
	<b>Set launch date. Allow at least 2 weeks prior to launch date</b> for program promotion in the school, presentations and student training, supply acquisition, etc.	
	Determine how you will <b>coach students with proper waste sorting for 1-2 weeks after launch</b> . Will you use volunteers, older students, or others to monitor Waste Sorting Stations? Connect with key partners about launch date including those entities that may be assisting with volunteer recruitment for student coaching. SignUp.com or SignUpGenius.com are easy tools for this, but someone has to manage the site for it to be effective.	
	<p><b>Promote program launch</b> throughout school. Utilize posters, school announcements, classroom discussions and presentations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Student-Focused Presentations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Classroom Presentation</a>: (Created by: Megan McKeever, Urbana Elementary School, MD)</li> <li>○ <a href="#">LOOL Presentation for Students</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">LOOL Presentation for Teachers</a></li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Educate students</b> about proper waste sorting and recycling, and the environmental impacts of food waste in landfills, non-recyclable waste, and related topics. Use Student Assemblies or classroom presentations to educate students about why reducing trash and keeping food out of landfills is an important environmental action everyone can take. Teach what is and is not recyclable, and what is and is not, compostable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Sample Elementary School Educational Video</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Sample High School/ Middle School Educational Video</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Trash, Compost, or Recycling Game</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Trash, Compost, or Recycle Answer Key</a></li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Waste Station Set-Up:</b> Ensure supplies and liquids, recycling, composting, and trash bins are in place and ready to use in cafeteria. If applicable, ensure scale is set up and ready to use. Reference sample signs to go above each bin below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Sample Compost Poster</a></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Sample Trash Poster</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Sample Recycling Poster</a></li> </ul>	
	<b>Remind scheduled volunteers</b> who are coaching students with proper waste sorting.	
	<p>After two weeks of student coaching <b>determine how waste will be periodically monitored</b> for possible contamination (e.g., non-compostable items in compost bins, or non-recyclable items in recycling bins.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will monitor waste sorting to reduce contamination?</li> <li>• What strategy will keep students sorting properly?</li> <li>• Can students or club members sign up to stand behind waste stations and help other students sort correctly?</li> </ul>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Other Strategies to Consider</b>	
	<p><b>Share Tables.</b> Share Tables can be an easy, low-cost way to address food waste and food recovery. A Share Table is a place where students can place unopened and/or sealed foods they choose not to eat during school breakfast or lunch providing an opportunity for other students to take additional helpings of food that would otherwise be thrown away. Examples include unpeeled fruit, milk, yogurt, juices, and sealed packets of dried fruit, cookies, bars, etc. Issues that need to be worked out include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Compliance with state and local Health Departments and regulations, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A school does not need to worry about liability for sharing items, they are protected under the <a href="#">Good Samaritan Act</a>: (<a href="https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2020/08/13/good-samaritan-act-provides-liability-protection-food-donations">https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2020/08/13/good-samaritan-act-provides-liability-protection-food-donations</a>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>(2) Refrigeration for dairy products, and</li> <li>(3) Possibilities for distributing or transporting remaining shared food at the end of the school day to school families or food distribution centers willing to accept it.</li> </ol> <p>The DC Food Project has a successful program in multiple schools and can, if needed, can be contracted to implement Share Tables in schools in the metropolitan DC region. Learn more at <a href="https://dcfoodproject.org/">https://dcfoodproject.org/</a>.</p>	

## Questions? Follow-up? Assistance?

Frequently Asked Questions: [FAQs Document](#)

LOOL Facilitator Joe Richardson is available to help your school or jurisdiction with starting up a Lunch Out of Landfills! Program. Contact:

**Joe Richardson**, *Lunch Out of Landfills!* Facilitator: [joesr@bar-t.com](mailto:joesr@bar-t.com); 301.674.7266



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