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## **School Waste Reduction – NERC is an Expert**

Schools generate a lot of waste—from paper and books to computers and food. Most schools are interested in becoming more proactive in waste reduction, recycling, and composting, but are often unable to move forward because of inexperience, lack of support, and concerns over cost. By acting, schools can decrease disposal and purchasing costs and potentially generate revenues through the sale of recyclables. Schools can also benefit from the environmental education and service-learning opportunities presented through better management of school wastes.

There can be a dramatic impact by providing schools with the resources and technical assistance to create or expand reuse, recycling, and composting programs. The average student produces a ½ - 1 pound of trash during the typical school day. With the implementation of “materials management” school facilities can decrease this by up to 80%. Cafeteria waste reduction and organics diversion programs are an area where many schools struggle. A comprehensive assessment of Minnesota schools found that 50% of school waste could be managed through composting programs that accept food waste, liquids, and non-recyclable paper.

NERC offers a wide range of services that can provide support to schools; building their capacity to develop and implement waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting programs, as well as the decreased use of toxics. Our unique skills at project management allow us to undertake a project from start to finish, tailored to meet the specific needs of each school or school district.

### *NERC can help:*

- Conduct a waste assessment
- Bring together administrators, teachers, custodians, cafeteria staff, students, and parents to work collaboratively on solving school waste issues
- Initiate or expand waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and compost collection efforts through direct assistance and training
- Arrange recycling and compost collection logistics
- Work with purchasing agents to identify less or non-toxic alternatives
- Work with school administrators, teachers, and staff to determine best options for recycling and compost collection
- Provide on-site and remote trainings and educational resources for teachers, staff, and students
- Work with haulers to “right-size” trash disposal contracts

For more information about what NERC’s expertise in school materials management and composting can do for you, contact [Athena Lee Bradley \(athena@nerc.org\)](mailto:athena@nerc.org), Projects Manager.