



# **MANAGING WASTE IN CT SCHOOLS**

## **PART II ORGANICS RECYCLING WEBINAR: SHARING TABLES, DONATING SURPLUS, AND COLLECTING FOOD SCRAPS**

# TODAY'S WEBINAR AGENDA

## Organics Recycling: Sharing Tables, Donating Surplus and Collecting Food Scraps

### Overview

- Sherill Baldwin, CT DEEP

### The Need for Better Data

- Luciana Granstrand, CT DEEP

### Sharing Tables & Donating Excess Food

- Lauren Chicoski – Metro Business Academy, New Haven
- Doreen Stohler – Bearth Path Elementary Schools, Hamden
- Meghann McKale, Fairfield Schools – Food Donation

### Discussion/Questions

### Diverting Food Scraps

- John Barlow and Judit DeStefano – Newtown Elementary Schools
- Rose Richi – New Haven Public Schools
- Allison Hines and Lyme Consolidated Students – Lyme Consolidated

### Discussion/Questions





# HOUSEKEEPING

**Please keep your video and audio off during presentations, because we have a lot of people joining us today.**

**Please put questions in the chat.**

**This program is being recorded.**

**Recording will be emailed to all those who are registered and later posted on DEEP's Grade School Recycling webpage.**

**Disclaimer: This document does not constitute DEEP policy. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation of use. Links to non-DEEP websites do not imply any official DEEP endorsement of or responsibility for the opinions, ideas, data, or products presented at those locations or guarantee the validity of the information provided. Links to non-DEEP servers are provided. Links to non-DEEP servers are provided solely as a pointer to information that might be useful to DEEP staff and the public.**



# OVERVIEW

## Public Act 24 - 45

This law adds K-12 public and private schools to Connecticut's Commercial Organics Recycling Law (CORL) starting **July 1, 2026**.

Based on CT DEEP's estimates, only **12 public schools and 10 boarding schools** trigger the law - generating 26 tons or more of food scraps AND are within 20 miles of an authorized composting facility.

## Schools That Trigger the Law

- Are being offered free technical assistance from the Center for EcoTechnology (CET), which is under contract with CT DEEP.
- Town recycling coordinators and/or waste authorities are being notified that principals have been contacted and offered free technical assistance.
- CT DEEP will re-notify principals in Fall 2025 to remind them of the law and available technical assistance if they did not pursue assistance in Spring.



# SCHOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN OFFERED CET SERVICES (TO DATE)

## **Bridgeport Schools**

- Cesar Batalla School
- Geraldine Johnson School
- Read School
- Blackham School

## **Brookfield – Candlewood Lake ES**

## **Danbury – Danbury HS**

## **Waterbury Schools**

- North End MS
- Wilby HS
- Michael Wallace MS
- Crosby HS

## **Kent – Kent Academy**

There will be 2 more public schools notified in addition to 9 boarding schools that trigger PA 24-45 and offered CET services before the end of the school year.

# NOW WHAT?

## Non-triggered Schools

You may still set up sharing tables, donate excess and surplus food and collect food scraps for composting – onsite, collected for animal feed, or composting.

## Will the Law Change?

This law was not initiated by CT DEEP. However, as people learn how few schools are triggered, it's possible they will lower the tonnage requirement or remove the mileage requirement.







## WHICH AGE GROUP ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST FOOD WASTERS?

- A) 18-24 year olds
- B) 25-34 year olds
- C) 35-44 year olds
- D) 45-54 year olds

\*According to WRAP's US segmentation analysis



## **ANSWER: 18-24 YEAR OLDS!**

### Why?

One factor to consider: Many students grow up in schools without cafeteria share tables or food donation programs, where perfectly good, uneaten food is routinely thrown away. This reinforces the idea that leftover food is trash, rather than a resource to be shared or saved.

\*According to WRAP's US segmentation analysis



# NEW: GRADE SCHOOL RECYCLING WEBPAGE

## School Recycling and Composting Resources Managing Materials Sustainably in Connecticut

Managing waste and materials from your school is much broader than collecting paper, bottles and cans for recycling. To have a strong sustainable program that is fiscally responsible and environmentally sound administrators, facility staff, teachers, students and their parents should be involved in creating programs that are engaging and easy to maintain.

**Recycling, It's the Law:** Recycling has been mandatory in Connecticut for many items and has been in effect since January 1, 1991, with additional materials added in 2012. Schools are not exempt. Review [CT Mandatory Recycling](#) to learn more about items required to be collecting for recycling in Connecticut.

**Food Scraps Law:** In 2024, Connecticut passed a law which states if a school building (public, private, religious, charter or boarding school) generates more than 26 tons per year of food scraps (incl. cafeteria, culinary program, school kitchen) and is within 20 miles of an authorized composting facility you must collect food scraps for composting starting July 1, 2026.


### NEW!

Learn more about Public Act 24-45 and if your school triggers the law.

### UPCOMING SCHOOL RECYCLING WEBINAR:

**Sharing Tables, Donating Surplus and Collecting Food Scraps**

May 5, 2025 - 3:30pm - 5:00pm

Please find [agenda here](#) 

[Register Here](#)

**Complying with School Recycling and Composting Laws in Connecticut Webinar**

Held on March 17, 2025

Please find [slide deck here](#) 

Please find [recording here](#).

# SCHOOL RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING TOOL KIT

- Your School is Legally Required to ... Recycle, Compost, and more
- How to Set Up a Recycling Program at Your School (incl. information about contracts, bins, forming a green team)
- Managing School Cafeteria Waste (incl. food sharing tables, donating surplus food, collecting food scraps, how to conduct a waste sort and alternatives to single use)
- Program Kick-off ideas (incl. presentation templates, trivia game, and more) - **coming soon**
- Non-mandatory Recycling Project Ideas (incl. fundraising ideas)
- Classroom Activities & Resources - **coming soon**
- Environmental Speakers and Performers
- Inspirational Quotes
- Fun Factoids



# NEW: GRADE SCHOOL RECYCLING WEBPAGE

## Waste and Materials Often Generated in Schools

In Connecticut, recycling is state law! This means everyone must recycle including all public, private, religious, charter and boarding schools. If your school buildings generate these items, they must be collected for recycling or properly disposed.

Item/Material	Mandatory	Where generated?	How best to manage – link to additional information
Aluminum cans	Yes	Kitchen, cafeteria, teachers room, classrooms	If part of the <a href="#">CT bottle bill</a> /redemption program with a 10 cent deposit, return for your dime; can also acceptable in CT's mixed (single stream) recycling program. Learn more about <a href="#">What's IN</a> , <a href="#">What's OUT</a> at RecycleCT.
Baby Simulator, aka Infant simulator, electronic doll	No	Classroom equipment	Some manufacturers provide <a href="#">rebate</a> or take-back programs to support recycling of these electronic devices. <a href="#">Take2</a> in Connecticut will accept these devices for recycling. If the manufacturer does not provide support, there may be reuse options as well, such as film schools, local theaters and other groups seeking the electric dolls for props.
Batteries - Automotive	Yes	Facility's garage, automotive class	<a href="#">What Do I Do With</a> – Batteries, Automotive
Batteries – Household Batteries	No	Classrooms, teacher's lounge, administrative offices	<a href="#">Managing Household Batteries</a>
Batteries – Rechargeable, Ni-Cd, Lithium Ion, Small sealed lead-acid Batteries	Yes	Facility's office, classrooms, teacher's lounge, administrative offices	<a href="#">Recycling Rechargeable Batteries</a>
Recycling Bins and Dumpsters			<a href="#">How to Set Up a Recycling Program at Your School</a> (incl. information about contracts, bins, forming a green team) 
Books	No	Library, end of school year	<a href="#">What Do I Do With</a> – Books and Textbooks
Bottle Caps	No		Loose bottle caps not accepted in CT's Mixed Recycling (single stream) program. Learn more about <a href="#">What's IN</a> , <a href="#">What's OUT</a> at RecycleCT.

# **1 POLL QUESTION**

## **ABOUT DEEP'S NEW SCHOOL WEBPAGE**

# THE NEED FOR BETTER DATA

We need to gain a better understanding of food scraps generation at schools across the state

## How can Schools Help?

Consider conducting a waste audit in your school to understand food scraps generation and if your school triggers PA 24-45. Make sure to follow good practices to gather accurate data.

## Food Waste Audit Guide:

- **Educate Students:** make sure students understand the purpose of the waste audit
- **Data Collection:** multiple waste audit days
- **Plan the Waste Audit:** gather a team of students, teachers, and volunteers to help with the task
  - Ideally, 4 volunteers for every 100 students and 1 separate audit station for every 200 students



Photo: Students at the Audit Station. Source: WasteNot-WantNot.



# THE NEED FOR BETTER DATA

## Food Waste Audit Guide (cont.):

- **Prepare a Waste Audit Station:**
  - Usually 2 tables: for trays drop-off/ interviews & food separation from trays into buckets
  - Label buckets according to the menu planned for the day of the audit.
  - Collect bins throughout the school building to capture school food waste beyond the cafeteria
- **Weight the Categorized Buckets.** Weight and log the data per food category on a log sheet.
- **Evaluate Your Data** for food weight & interview responses. Raise awareness. Implement food waste reduction, donation, and diversion programs.
- **Share your data (weight per student and school averages) with the CT DEEP!**

## Sample cafeteria setup for audit

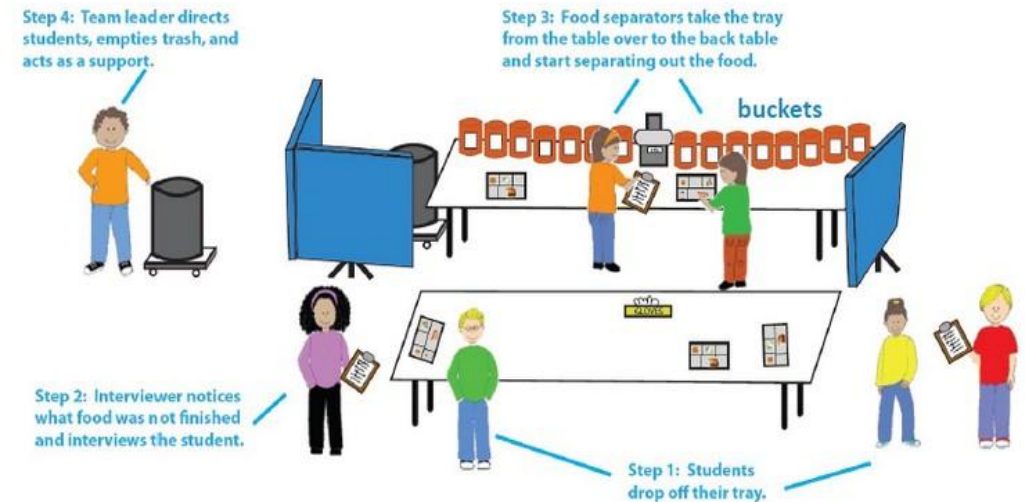


Diagram by Stephen Sturdivant, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# **2 POLL QUESTIONS ABOUT DATA**

# SHARING TABLES & DONATING EXCESS FOOD

## Presenters

- **Lauren Chicoski** – Metro Business Academy, New Haven
- **Doreen Stohler** - Bear Path Elementary School, Hamden
- **Meghann McKale** - Fairfield Schools – Food Donation
  - Discussion/Questions



**Photo:** EPA's Washington School Food Share Program Toolkit.



# SHARING TABLES & DONATING EXCESS FOOD



Food share tables and food donation programs need to ensure they are operating within the limits of the state Public Health Code and federal school nutrition program regulations.

For example, share tables are areas designated in a cafeteria where students can leave food they have purchased from the school meals program but are not going to eat. This allows students who want a second serving to help themselves to additional food. To ensure that the food is safe to eat, the Public Health Code restricts the types of food items that may be shared.

For example, whole fruit with a peel that the student removes before eating (e.g., oranges and bananas) is permitted while whole fruit without a peel is not permitted (e.g., apples and peaches).

Similarly, state and federal law protects from liability those who donate food to a nonprofit unless the donor “knew or had reasonable grounds to believe” that the food was either adulterated or not fit for human consumption.

In Tool Kit: [Managing Cafeteria Waste](#)



### FOOD DONATION BY CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS Guidelines & Resources

The US EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy ranks feeding hungry people as a top strategy for reducing wasted food. Schools should consider how each strategy on the EPA Hierarchy can contribute to a comprehensive food waste reduction plan. The Center for EcoTechnology (CET) has worked with stakeholders including the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, food rescue organizations, food banks, and local health officials to develop this guidance document.

This document, produced in 2019, is intended to provide guidance for Connecticut schools on opportunities to donate food internally and externally. The document consolidates federal and state regulations, including information on liability protection, health codes, and more.

**Food Donation Laws and Liability Protection**

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (42 U.S.C. § 1791) encourages food donations by providing liability protections for businesses that donate 'apparently wholesome' food in 'good faith' to nonprofit organizations. [42 U.S.C. § 1758\(i\)](#) explicitly states that schools participating in the national lunch program that donate excess food receive liability protection under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. [Extensive legal research](#) does not turn up a single legal case related to food donation liability. There are several laws pertaining to food donation at the federal and state level.


Connecticut has also passed [state legislation](#) to provide additional liability protection for donors. These laws protect donors that donate food to nonprofits for distribution by that nonprofit or to nonprofits that distribute it to other nonprofits, unless the donor "knew or had reasonable grounds to believe" that the food was not fit for human consumption.

**SHARE TABLES IN CONNECTICUT – INTERNAL DONATION**

"Share tables" are tables or stations, some of which include small refrigerators with glass doors, where children may return whole food or beverage items they choose not to eat. These items are then available for other children who may want additional servings.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Connecticut State Department of Education support the use of share tables when the school food authority (SFA) implements measures to prevent foods and beverages from being leftover, and complies with all local and state health and food safety codes. It is important to remember that the intent of the school nutrition programs is to serve healthy meals to students, and SFAs must take steps to minimize excess food. If a SFA continually has excessive quantities of leftover foods, the food service program must review and adjust food service items, menus, production practices and customer acceptance to ensure the maximum consumption of meals and snacks by students during the school day.

888.813.8552 | [cetonline.org/wasted-food-assistance-in-connecticut/](https://cetonline.org/wasted-food-assistance-in-connecticut/)



[CT-School-Donation-Resource.pdf](#)

# SHARING TABLES & DONATING EXCESS FOOD

## **Presenter**

- Lauren Chicoski – Metro Business Academy, New Haven

METROPOLITAN ACADEMY Lauren  
Chicoski Ed.D.

# Food Diversion at Metro

## (Share Table, Donations, and Composting)



# Why are we doing this?

- Increase need for sustainable practices
- opportunity to be a part of the City of New Haven's Compost Pilot
- Address the significant amount of waste generated by our school community, estimated at **2.45 tons of food waste** each school year
- Foster environmental awareness and responsibility among students, staff and faculty.
- Understand law and policy





# How far Metro has already come

## *Metro's Strong Practices:*

- NHPS has already transitioned to compostable trays, which will help reduce students' sorting requirements for the upcoming composting pilot.
- Lunch waves are staggered to help ensure students have enough time to get food and eat. This reduces long lines and provides time for students to eat.
- Established cardboard program.
- Established Environmental Club.
- Offer vs. Serve practices in place with dining staff.
- Science teacher, Chris Willems, composts in his classroom and was one of our first Composting and Recycling Champions.
- Food sharing baskets are located in two areas of the Student Center.

# How far we've already come

*What we've accomplished so far this school year:*

- Built awareness of current waste generation
- Reviewed opportunities to collect and donate food from the kitchen and share table.
- Established a program to source separate food scraps for composting.
- Expanded existing recycling program to collect other recyclables / begin collecting redeemable bottles and cans.
- Incorporated new programs into student and staff training and clearly labeled all waste/recycling receptacles.
- Placed signage near shared food baskets showing what can go in

# Program Goals

## GOAL #1

**Establish new  
practices &  
partnerships**

Establish new  
practices and  
partnerships  
around food  
diversion and  
recycling

## GOAL #2

**Divert  
1.23 tons**

Divert 1.23 tons of  
food scraps by the  
end of the 24-25  
SY

## GOAL #3

**Divert 2.5  
tons**

Divert 2.45 tons of  
food scraps in the  
25-26 SY

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# 6 Areas of Focus

Partnerships

Composting Infrastructure

Recycling Stations

Trash Receptacles

Education & Training

Monitoring & Evaluation



# Partnerships

- Continue collaboration with Compost Pilot grant partners
- Looking for Compost Supporters and Champions. Compost Champions are faculty and students who lead by example, motivate peers, and help maintain the program momentum.
- Student volunteers and interns



# COMPOST

**Meats, Grains Veggies, Fruits, Liquids**  
**YES!** (\*including dairy)



**Food-Soiled Cardboard & Paper**  
**YES!**



**NO!** Plastic, Metal, Hygiene



Compost at Metro



# Here is how you can **Recycle** at Metro

## RECYCLE

Clean Containers, Damaged  
**YES!** Bottle/Cans



Paper, Flat Cardboard  
**YES!**



**NO!** Bags, Utensils, Soiled Food



## BOTTLES & CANS

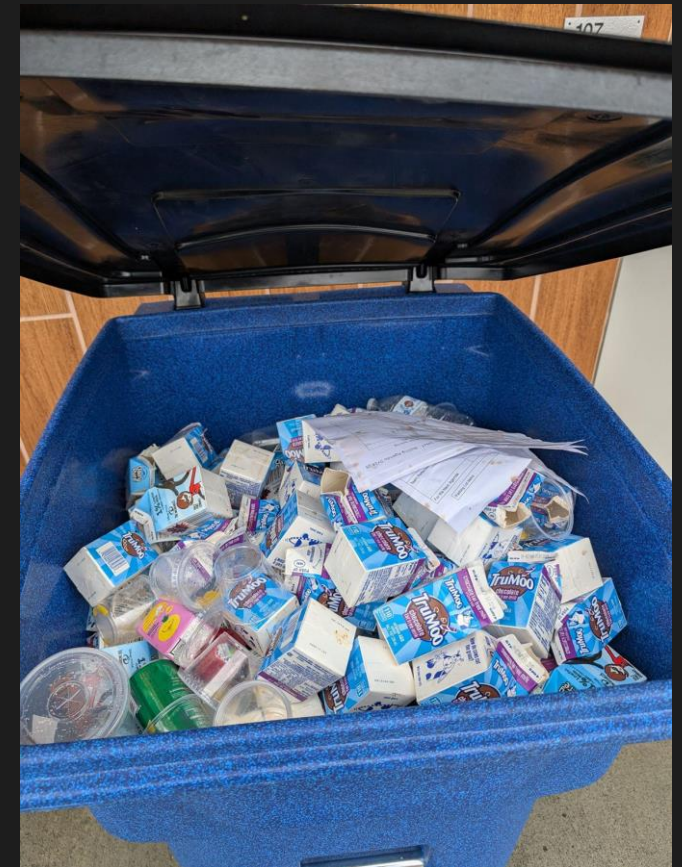
**YES!** Empty Plastic Bottles



**YES!** Empty Glass & Aluminum



**NO!** Liquids / Food-Soiled Paper



# TRASH

Plastic Bags, Utensils, Gloves

**YES!**



Chip Bags, Tissues, Non-Recyclables

**YES!**

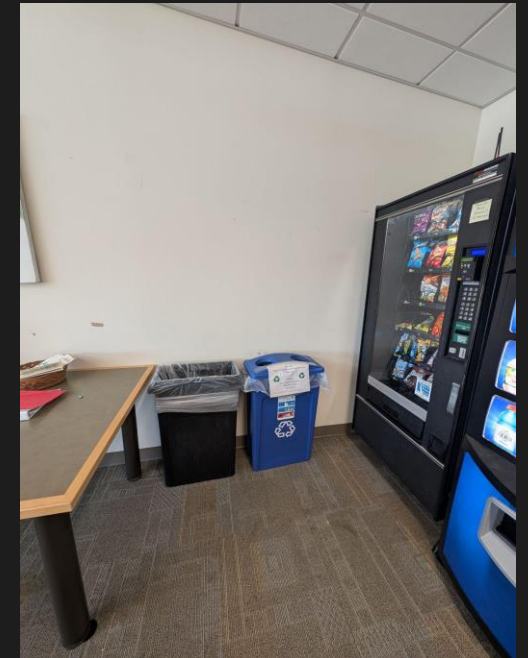


**NO!**

Empty Cans /  
Bottles, Paper



This is what goes  
in the Trash.







## Metro's Share Table

Unopened, pre-packaged food, whole fruits with a peel



## Cardboard



### CARDBOARD ONLY

Flattened cardboard



### NO

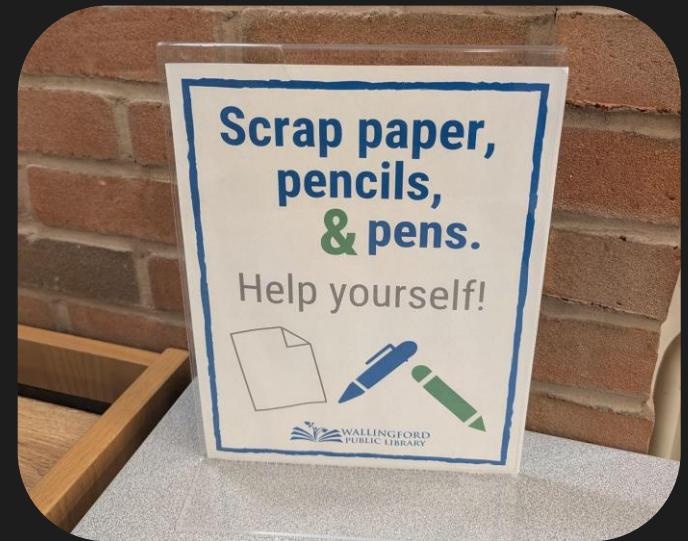
Food-Soiled Materials  
Waxed Cardboard  
Coffee Cups  
Bubble envelopes















This is how the Metro community is celebrating Earth Day. Join us in...

- Wearing green
- Meeting one of the Environmental Club members wearing an "Eco Team" shirt.
- Go to the Clothing Swap in the gym during lunch.
- Composting and recycling in our Student Center all day from breakfast and snacks to lunch.
- Stop yourself from throwing one thing in the trash. Ask yourself, can I recycle, compost, or reuse this?
- Stay after school for a community cleanup. Earn community service hours. Meet at the picnic tables outside at 2:10. Ends at 3:30.



From the first 13 days of composting in March 2025



COMPOST

## METRO'S COMPOST

## DATA FROM MARCH



- Diverted 650 pounds of food waste
- Avoided 136 pounds of CO2
- Created 85 kwh of energy which is the equivalent of all the electricity your household used in 3 days

IF YOU WANT TO GET COMMUNITY SERVICE DONE WITH ECO TEAM, TALK TO MICHAEL, ADJA, DESTENY OR DR C.

celebrate earth day with mutual aid @ mba

# CLOTHING SWAP!

APRIL 22 2025  
both lunch waves

get a free outfit OR 3 items of clothing!  
shop sustainably!





**Lauren Chicoski, Ed.D.**  
**Environmental Club Advisor**  
**Magnet School Coordinator**  
**Business Manager**  
**(475)220-7707**  
**[lauren.chicoski@new-haven.k12.ct.us](mailto:lauren.chicoski@new-haven.k12.ct.us)**  
**[@officialmbahappenings](#)**



# Meet the Team



Desteny Lugo  
Composting Intern



Adja Hudgens  
Recycling Intern



Sam Rivera  
Eco Club Member



Jason Ortega  
Eco Club Member



Josiah Diaz  
Eco Club Intern



Bayan Albakkour  
After-School  
Student Worker



Razia Assadi  
Eco Club Member



Dr. Chicowski  
Eco Club Advisor



Coni Cornelius  
Social Media Intern



Julieta Diaz  
Eco Club Member

# SHARING TABLES & DONATING EXCESS FOOD

## **Presenter**

- **Doreen Stohler** - Bear Path Elementary School, Hamden



# Bear Path School Food Waste Diversion Program

4/26/22





The federal government (USDA and the EPA) have a joint goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030.



**Because 40% of food produced in the U.S. is wasted, costing approximately \$218 billion in growing, manufacturing, distributing and disposing of this wasted food.**

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT - DEEP) created a plan to help our state meet a goal of diverting 60% of materials from disposal by 2024.

To achieve this goal, CT must divert 300,000 tons of organic waste every year.

# Food Audit at Bear Path School

(Grade 5 Lunch)

by

The Center for  
EcoTechnology

(A non-profit organization  
to help schools and  
businesses make a cleaner  
world)



The following document provides Bear Path Elementary School with guidance for rolling out a food waste diversion program that will ideally serve as a model for implementation across all seven elementary schools, one middle school and one high school in the Hamden School District. CET staff visited Bear Path Elementary School and developed these recommendations based on observations from the site visit, as well as technical experience working with West Hartford School District and schools in Massachusetts.

**Food Waste Diversion Guide for Bear Path Elementary School and  
the Hamden School District**

**Prepared by Center for EcoTechnology**



**Including materials from our work with**

**Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)**

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep>



*Bear Path Elementary food share table – its existence is great but could get significantly more use with descriptive signage and promotion by Whitsons staff and lunch room monitors.*



During the site visit, CET staff observed the absence of any recycling in the cafeteria. Implementation of food waste diversion is a great opportunity to introduce materials recycling.



*.....Bear Path Elementary - and the Hamden School District at large, has the opportunity to divert their cafeteria waste by*

- Establishing cafeteria share tables for unopened/untouched foods*
- Donating excess meals, unopened milk and whole fruit to a local food pantry*
- Diverting food scraps and other organic material like food trays to compost*
- Recycling appropriate materials*

## Food Waste



This is the food 'rescued' from the food audit; uneaten, and unwrapped.

Just one grade!

Imagine the food waste in all the lunches.

Imagine every day.

In every school.

Isn't there a better way?



# Meet the 5th Grade Bear Path Green Team



To the rescue!





## A Food Share Table (short video)

How it works



# FOOD SHARE

Uneaten, Unopened items only





Leftover food and drinks from the food share table are donated to a local food pantry. It is packed in this bag and someone picks it up every Wednesday.





## Food Scraps



Food scraps end up in the garbage.

Food scraps are one of the largest components of trash sent to landfills and incinerators. Decomposing in landfills, food waste is a major source of methane - a powerful greenhouse gas that affects climate change.

**But food waste is not trash;** it is a resource that can be turned into compost that enriches our soil.



# Cafeteria Sorting Station

## 1 Food Share\*

### Why Here?

Drop off heaviest items first to prevent spills

### Best Practices:

- Clean bins maintain food safety & appeal
- Only items from the school meal program
- Keep like items together

## 2 Liquids

### Why Here?

Pour liquids as they are not allowed in the recycle bin

### Best Practices:

- Don't empty juice containers as they take longer to empty
- Raise the bucket with a crate to prevent spills

## 3 Recycle Bin

### Why Here?

Milk cartons are captured immediately after liquids

### Best Practices:

- Materials should be as empty and dry as possible

## 4 Landfill Bin

### Why Here?

Capture contaminants before the compost bin

### Best Practices:

- Capture landfill items at student tables throughout lunch
- Squishy, flimsy plastic goes in the landfill bin

## 5 Compost Bin

### Why Here?

Capture compostables before stacking trays

### Best Practices:

- Tap trays against the inside of the bin to release stuck on food
- No plastic wrapped food allowed

## 6 Stack Trays

### Why Here?

Neatly stack trays to save space in the compost bin

### Best Practices:

- Stage a small stack of trays to model nesting
- Stack trays like a puzzle and push down on the stack of trays





Someday...











# 2021-2022 Bear Path School Grades 2-5 Green Team Campfire Celebration



# SHARING TABLES & DONATING EXCESS FOOD

## Presenter

- **Meghann McKale** - Fairfield Schools – Food Donation



# **Share Tables & Food Rescue in Fairfield Public Schools**





# At a glance

- all schools have share bins
- all 11 elementary schools and all 3 middle schools have share fridges
- 5 elementary schools and 1 middle school participate in Food Rescue



# Set-up at Dwight Elementary





# How it works



- participating schools partner with Food Rescue - Fairfield County
- FR identifies community organizations with a need for the type of food we have (mainly fruit, veggies, milk, cheese sticks and yogurt)
- weekly or twice-weekly pick ups are scheduled
- students pack up the leftover food and leave it at a designated location
- a volunteer rescuer picks up the food and brings it to the organization FR identified



## A decorative horizontal line with a repeating wavy pattern, rendered in a light green color.

- 
- A decorative horizontal line with a repeating wavy pattern, rendered in a light green color.





# Lisa Alberts & Emma Kaye

Fairfield PTA Council VPs of Sustainability  
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# Meghann McKale

Former Fairfield PTA Council VP of Sustainability  
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# SHARING TABLES & DONATING EXCESS FOOD

## Discussion & Questions



# **1 POLL QUESTION**

## **ABOUT DIVERTING FOOD SCRAPS**

# DIVERTING FOOD SCRAPS

## Presenters

- John Barlow and Judit DeStefano – Newtown Elementary Schools
- Rose Richi – New Haven Public Schools
- Allison Hines and Lyme Consolidated Students – Lyme Consolidated
  - **Discussion/Questions**



**Photo:** West Hartford, CT School.



# DIVERTING FOOD SCRAPS

## Presenter

- John Barlow and Judit DeStefano – Newtown Elementary Schools





Newtown Public Schools

*Comprehensive Composting and Recycling  
Program*





# Pilot at Sandy Hook School

- **Engage community partners:**
  - **Public Works Department (Newtown Public Works)**
  - **Regional Authority (HRRA)**
  - **Non-profit Organizations, Community Activists (FirstLight)**
- **Work together to develop a program and execution time frame; remain flexible.**
- **Start small and build capacity.**
- **Start with elementary schools and our youngest learners.**
  - **As program expands, students moving to upper grades already have knowledge.**
  - **Allows infrastructure to keep pace with the program.**
- **Set up recycling stations for trash, compost, liquids and recyclables.**
- **Staff training is critical; first 2 weeks is a learning curve. Adults need to be engaged and enthusiastic.**
- **Student Engagement is critical**
  - **Build Green Teams at schools**
  - **Student participations can include creating videos and other media, hosting events.**



## Recycling Stations



# The Impact of Food Scrap Recycling

- Newtown's program pilot started at Sandy Hook School September 1, 2024.
- Before the programs implementation the average trash dumpster pick up weighted 323 lbs.
- The month of Sept./Oct. the average weight was 211.5 lbs per container.
  - Which equals a 112 lb difference or 28 lbs per cubic yard reduction.
  - This is 1344 lbs less per month for only 1 elementary school.
  - **Or 13,440 lbs of food/recycle removed from the trash stream over 180 days of school.**
- Reduced dumpster pick ups from 5 times a week to 3 times a week.
- Compost pickup occurs twice a week.



# The Impact of Food Scrap Recycling; Continued

- **Currently we are running the program in 4 elementary schools.**
- **We have seen a 50% reduction in trash going to our dumpsters at all elementary buildings.**
- **As of May 1, 2025 at the 4 elementary schools:**
  - **Waste was reduced by 21,096 lbs in food scraps/recycling.**
  - **Reduced dumpster dumps by 320 yards.**
- **This will result in savings as trash is priced by weight and cubic yards.**

# Next Steps

- Plan to bring the program to Reed Intermediate School starting Sept. 1, 2025.
- Plan to bring the program to Newtown Middle School starting Jan. 1, 2026.
- Plan to bring the program to Newtown High School starting Sept. 1, 2026.
- Plan to use program-produced compost at school gardens, including vegetable gardens used for student programs and curriculum at Newtown High School and Newtown Middle School.
- Plan to take advantage of all interdisciplinary, interprogram, and cross-departmental collaborative opportunities.



# Resources

- We created for staff: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15lg03-wGdKpAQkc1n9PUzrghb32iGJfuh14VaNdKJN8/edit?tab=t.0>
- Students created for students:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajh88hcDIZI&authuser=0>
- We used in developing our program:  
<https://hrra.org/>

And our thanks to...

FirstLight Sustains

Newtown Public Works Dept.

HRRA

# DIVERTING FOOD SCRAPS

## Presenter

- Rose Richi – New Haven Public Schools



# New Haven Public Schools

Our processes, successes, & challenges





# 8 Schools Collecting food scraps

(K-8) John Martinez

(K-8) Barnard

(9-12) New Haven Academy

(9-12) Highschool in the Community

(9-12) Sound School

(9-12) Metro Business Academy

(3-8) Worthington Hooker – Whitney Ave

(K-8) Truman



# Of those...

- 4 High schools and 4 K-8 schools
- All 8 collect food scraps & compostable trays
- All 8 have both student and teacher involvement
- At least 6 have some type of food share table/basket/collection
- At least 5 coordinate with Haven's Harvest to rescue still-good-to-eat food



# Process



- Identify partners & define roles – School, CET, Blue Earth, Haven's Harvest, Office of Climate & Sustainability, Facilities
- Outreach!! x3
- Identify interested champions, both teachers AND students
- Open communication & availability
- Physical presence





# Truman School



# Truman School





# Truman School

Dedicated teacher & principal support



In-person strategy meetings with principal, teachers, custodians, & food service



30+ dedicated students



Support from food service

Physical presence of support team during first two weeks of rollout



Training the trainers method



Team work



Timeframe

**Why**  
**it**  
**Works**



# Challenges

- Finding interested schools
- Maintaining momentum
- Involvement from custodial staff
- Funding Concerns
- Person-power





## Contact:

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# DIVERTING FOOD SCRAPS

## Presenter

- Allison Hines and Lyme Consolidated Students – Lyme Consolidated
- [Video](#)



# DIVERTING FOOD SCRAPS

## Discussion & Questions

