

Lawrence Green Team

Green Events Guide For School Event Organizers

Updated 11/30/2012

Each time you choose to recycle, or use a reusable cup, or simply use less, you reduce Lawrence School's—and your own—environmental footprint.

Every bit counts. Thank you!

Communications/ Event items

- **Print only what is needed.** Double-side all printed meeting and event handouts. If possible, e-mail out or post materials online instead of printing.
- **Remind attendees to bring their own reusable cups/ mugs when possible.**
- **Plan decorations and signs that are reusable or recyclable.** Reuse signs / posters so they don't have to be remade or reprinted.
- **Inform attendees about proper recycling procedures.** At the beginning or end of your event, encourage participants to recycle all paper, newspaper, cardboard, cans, bottles, and other recyclable items.
- **Make an effort to limit, or exclude, the distribution of give-away items at events.** If necessary, find the most environmentally preferable and functional items (items that contain recycled content, have organic fiber, and/ or are locally produced).

Beverages

- **Skip offering water bottles, especially for outdoor events where cleanup and slippage are not an issue.** The PTO has several large coolers available for larger events. It is the long-term goal of the green team to phase out water bottles from school events altogether.
- **Serve pitchers of filtered tap water instead of bottled water for classroom-size events.** The bottom line, from an entire life-cycle analysis perspective, is that plastic cups are the least-bad disposable option, as well as the least-expensive and the lightest (meaning lower transportation costs). Surprisingly, paper cups have the highest environmental cost.
- If you must provide water bottles, keep the following in mind: **In general, the bigger the plastic water bottle it is, the more energy it consumes.** However, it might take more small water bottles to meet the need in an event. (Please note, a 500 cc bottle does not consume twice the energy than 250cc bottle, it is measured by the weight of the plastic bottle. The cap is a big portion of the water bottle, so ideally you don't want to see many caps.)

- All water bottles are not created equal! **Purchase water-bottle products that are more green than others.** For example, Poland Spring has an eco-shape bottle that utilizes 30% less plastic than their ordinary bottles. Likewise, Aquafina utilizes the eco-fina bottles which they claim use 50% less plastic than their other bottles. Both brands still offer their original, more energy-intensive bottles, so be sure to check the labels.
- **If you are serving juice, forego the individual juice boxes and pouches and serve from the largest recyclable, plastic or glass bottle available.** Provide plastic cups as noted above.

Serving Ware

- **Consider eco-friendly cutlery and serving ware.** Eco-friendly plates are typically made of sugar cane and compostable, and widely available at a premium price. However, compostable items must be collected separately and placed in a compost bin or compost facility to break down. This is not currently available at Lawrence. These items can't be composted if deposited in the trash bins. Biodegradable, non-compostable cutlery can be partially or completely made from renewable materials.
- **Switch to recycled paper napkins.** When shopping, look for napkins made from 100% recycled content. Avoid paper products that are whitened with chlorine bleach.
- **Choose sustainable dishware options.** Consider acquiring a set of reusable cups, plates, and utensils for classroom events. These can be purchased as a classroom gift along with a pitcher for water. For class breakfasts, a line can be added to the sign-up sheet for a parent to volunteer to wash any reusable items.
- **Avoid polystyrene (Styrofoam) products. The Town of Brookline is phasing out all polystyrene products by December 2013.**
- **Avoid the use of plastic bags.** These can only be recycled at specific collection points.

Food Items

- **Strive to have as little food waste as possible.** Order and purchase carefully. Encourage participants to bring recyclable containers to take home leftovers.
- **Offer vegetarian options** (meat production has a higher carbon footprint).
- **Choose local and sustainable food.** Look for organic, shade-grown, fair trade coffee and teas. Purchase organically grown and / or locally grown products. Ask about free range and natural meats and sustainable fish.
- **Serve food and condiments in bulk instead of single-serve packets.** (e.g. buy items that are not individually wrapped, provide a pint of cream instead of individual creamers, etc.)

Recycling

- **Check with Sarah Wolf, the Lawrence Recycling Coordinator, to ensure there are recycling bins paired with every trash bin.** Consider stationing a volunteer to direct trash and recycling into the proper bins.

Contact Sarah at: sarah_wolff@brookline.k12.ma.us.

- **Know which common event items are recyclable.** Contact the recycling coordinator with any questions.

1. Pizza boxes (empty of food and paper waste) can go in a large recycling toter.
2. Paper milk / juice cartons
3. Paper bags / cardboard
4. Metal jar lids and bottle caps
5. Clean, balled aluminum foil and pie pans
6. Glass bottles and jars
7. Office paper
8. Cans
9. #1-7 plastic bottles
10. #1-7 plastic tubs and screw top jars

- **Know which common event items are NOT recyclable and make event purchases accordingly:**

1. Plastic utensils
2. Foam cups/ plates
3. Napkins
4. Plastics #1-7 without a bottleneck (plastic cups and plates)
5. Paper towels, plates, and cups
6. Plastic grocery bags
7. Plastic food wrap
8. Food Waste
9. Compostable items (must be collected separately and placed in a compost bin / facility—currently not available at Lawrence. These cannot be placed in garbage cans to be composted.)
10. Bio-degradeable or compostable plastics.

- As you can see from the list above, there are many items from school events which can't be recycled. **Please purchase wisely—the choices you make can make all the difference.**

Contact the Lawrence Green Team at

kathleenmscanlon@gmail.com or 857-225-1026 with any questions!