

Locker cleanout guide

Planning your reuse or cleanout day

For most students, cleaning out their desk or locker is a much-anticipated event signaling the end of the school year and the start of the summer. In their haste to leave school, students, teachers, and staff can end up throwing away materials that could be recycled or reused. With planning, a locker or desk cleanout event can become an environmentally responsible learning opportunity for all!

The following timeline is a guideline for when to start planning and implementing your school's reuse/cleanout day activities. Whether it's a day or week-long event, make sure you're prepared and have the logistics in place.

Step 1: find a champion

Winter

First, you need a recycling champion to lead the reuse/cleanout day effort. Recycling programs do best when school leadership is involved, but your day can be led by facilities management, building operations, custodial staff, the student council, teachers, or parent groups.

The champion will lead the effort in making a plan that should include:

- Principal support
 - Advise your school's administration of your plan and timeline to gain their support and input.
 - Adjust next year's back-to-school supply list depending on items saved.
- Inform teachers
 - Gain teacher support in educating students that reusing and recycling are preferable to disposing of things in the trash
 - Provide the opportunity for teachers to collect classroom supplies for next school year.
- Get custodian input and buy-in.
- Collection bins for reusable items and additional containers for recyclables. Copy paper boxes or boxes from the kitchen could be used to collect reusable items.

Step 2: figure out the logistics

Late March

After obtaining support and advice from school administration about who should be involved, start your planning efforts in late March.

- Meet with head custodians to get their advice on the logistics.
- Arrange for increased recycling services if necessary.
- Set a date (or dates) for when reuse/cleanout will take place.
- Determine what collection equipment (such as boxes, bins, or barrels) is needed for recycling and reusables and how you'll get it.
- Map out where and how many sorting stations will be placed throughout the school.
 - Plan on one station per 100 lockers, or every 50 feet.
- Determine how to recruit volunteers and helpers. Students can assist, but there needs to be at least one adult per sorting station. Consider tapping into your parent groups, rotary clubs, service groups, or ask Hennepin County Community Recycling Ambassadors to help. Learn more about Community Recycling Ambassadors at: hennepin.us/recycling-ambassadors.
- Determine what help custodial staff need to place and retrieve bins, where collected reusables will end up, and how they will get there.



Step 3: get the word out

Early April

Now that a date and time have been finalized, make sure that everyone is prepared for and informed about the upcoming reuse/cleanout day. Whenever possible, use electronic or spoken communications to reduce paper use.

- Make announcements and notify teachers, staff, and students about the upcoming reuse/cleanout day. Include details like what is happening, where sorting stations will be, and how to determine if items are reusable or recyclable.
- Encourage students to take home items they can use at home or during the next school year.
- Offer notices or flyers that can be shared with students about the upcoming day. Involve your environmental club or other student club to help hang flyers or talk to their fellow students.
- Ask for interested teachers or parents to volunteer to establish a process for how to distribute the reusable items collected. Consider developing a teacher resource area where supplies are kept for next school year. After developing this process, tell teachers the plan.
- Ask teachers, staff, adult volunteers, or Community Recycling Ambassadors to help at collection stations to ensure that items are placed in the proper containers.

Step 4: preparation

Late April

Lock the details into place before your reuse/cleanout day.

- Contact your school's waste hauler at least three weeks in advance to discuss the need for extra recycling pick-ups and the timing of them.
- Develop a to-do list for the days immediately leading up to the cleanout day.
 - Include necessary steps for distributing items for reuse.
 - Include setting up collection stations and other set-up needs specific to your building.
- Label the tops and sides of collection containers and put signs around the stations. Images on labels make it easier for participants to know what materials belong in which bins.
 - Print the signs included at the end of this guide to make things easier!
- Recruit volunteers to label collection bins and stations a few days before your cleanout day.
- Send out reminders to teachers and students that the cleanout day is coming up. Remember to emphasize that materials must be lightly used. Include:
 - A list of recyclable items. Consider linking to the school recycling guide: hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/recycling-hazardous-waste/schools/school-recycling-guide.pdf
 - A list of reusable items which could include:
 - Unused paper, notebooks, or folders
 - School supplies like pencils, crayons, pens, scissors, etc.
 - Lightly used clothing

Step 5: host your cleanout day

May

Look back on your prior planning as your cleanout day draws close to make sure you don't forget anything.

After the cleanout day:

- Distribute reusable goods to teachers to use in their classrooms or use them elsewhere within the school
- Contact other schools or districts to give items away
- Find donation options at hennepin.us/choose-to-reuse

Contact

Hennepin County School Recycling Program Coordinator

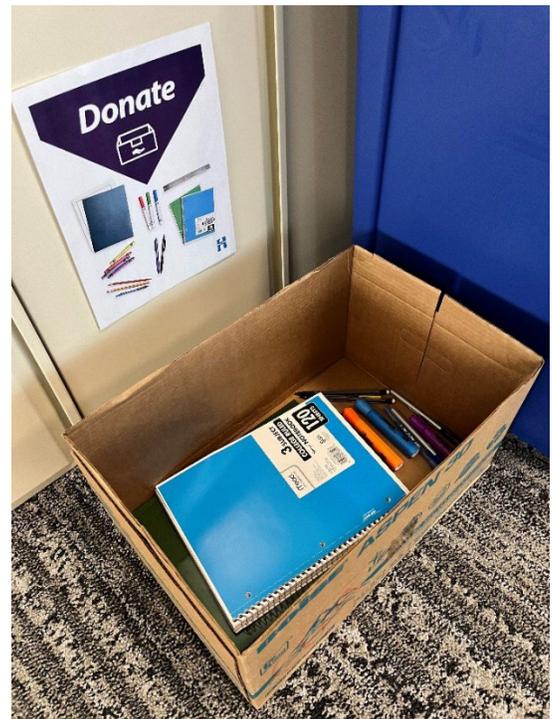
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Website

hennepin.us/schoolrecycling



Donate

34-706-78-23



Recycle

34-706-14-19

Plastic,
glass,
metal, cartons,
paper



Trash

34-706-13-18

**Styrofoam™,
plastic wrap,
foil**

