

Peterson School Zero Waste Program Launch

Peterson School launched a zero waste program in the lunchroom and kitchen on September 23, 2016, as part of the CPS Commercial Composting Program. What a difference we are making! Peterson now commercially composts all food scraps, napkins, and lunch plates. With that and our recycling efforts, we are keeping more valuable resources out of landfills and getting us closer to being waste-free.



Peterson used to send 10 bags of lunchroom trash to the landfill each day. We reduced that to just 5 bags per day!

Thank you to all the student environmental leaders helping to make it happen!

Check out our impact!

In One Day

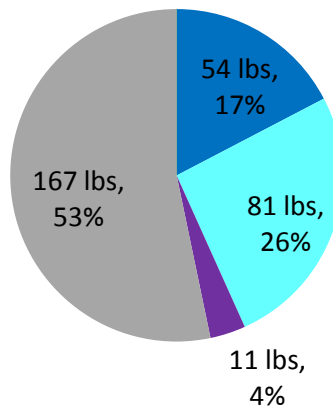
- 194 lbs composted
- 55 lbs recycled
- 67lbs liquid diverted
- 15 lbs FoodShare
- 331 lbs diverted from landfill!**

Potential for One School Year

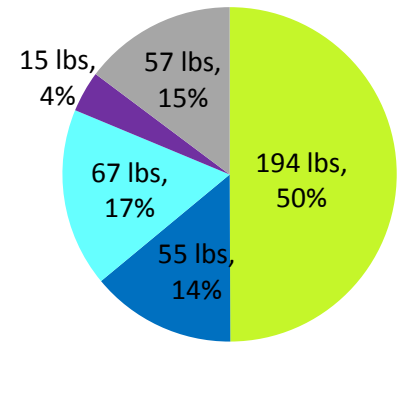
- 34,920 lbs composted
- 9,900 lbs recycled
- 12,060 lbs liquid diverted
- 2,700 lbs FoodShare
- 59,580 lbs diverted from landfill!**
(about 30 tons!)

Waste Audits of Cafeteria and Kitchen

Baseline



Launch Day



■ Compost
 ■ Recycling
 ■ Liquid
 ■ FoodShare
 ■ Landfill



What is commercial composting?

With commercial composting, a hauling service transports organic waste (food scraps and food-soiled paper) from the school property to a processing facility. There it is composted and turned back into nutrients for the soil. Unlike backyard composting, commercial composting can handle a large volume of food and paper waste and accept meat, dairy, bones, paper napkins, as well as CPS' new compostable lunch plates.



Why is this program important?

CPS generates over 40,000 tons of waste each year, approximately 37% of which is food scraps. Keeping food scraps from the landfill and turning them into compost has a big environmental impact. When food scraps decompose in a landfill, the powerful greenhouse gas methane is produced. When food scraps are instead recycled into compost, a valuable soil amendment is created. Setting up an affordable and sustainable system for food scrap composting has challenges since it is not yet widely practiced in our region. What we learn in this pilot program will help us expand it to other schools in the district in future years.

What is FoodShare?

FoodShare is a food waste reduction program managed by CPS Nutrition Support Services. Leftover whole fresh fruit from the school cafeteria is collected and donated to a local food pantry, reducing food waste and increasing access to healthy food for the surrounding community.

Our new lunchroom sorting station:



The CPS Commercial Composting Program is a partnership of Chicago Public Schools, environmental nonprofit Seven Generations Ahead, and Lakeshore Recycling Systems.