HOW TO DO A WASTE AUDIT

Materials:

- One day of garbage
- Nitrile gloves (S,M,L,XL)
- 10’ x 10’ tarp & dustpan
- Bathroom or Fish Scale
- Transparent bags & bucket
- Clipboard & Paper
• Collect garbage from the previous day.
• Don’t do audits outside unless it’s a dry & calm day.
• Separate by area (classrooms, cafeteria, bathrooms, hallways, kitchen, and after school events).
• Explain why we do audits
• Spread signs around the edge & explain what goes in each category.
• Take garbage from one of the sorted categories (i.e. classroom garbage) and put in center of tarp.
• Only measure volume of bathroom waste & pull out non-food items from cafeteria waste.
• Once you have sorted everything from one particular area, go around & make any corrections.
• Ask the students to make observations.
• Another way to do it is to use buckets to collect the material.
• Repeat the previous steps for each area until you have finished sorting all of the garbage (except bathrooms).
• Next have the students weigh each bag of garbage. Fish scales work well, but another (less accurate) method is a bathroom scale.

• Ask students to estimate the volume. Have them think of a milk jug or use a 5 gallon bucket.

• Record the weights & volumes separately for each area that you collect garbage.
• Be sure to recycle whatever is recyclable (i.e. not contaminated with food) at the end of the activity!
- Enter in the weights and volumes of the various categories of materials.
- Use a separate form for each area that you audit.
- The form is customizable.
- It is not a requirement that you use this format.
Weight of Waste

- Mixed Paper (mail, magazines, newspaper, greyboard): 5%
- Metals: 1%
- Rigid Plastic (containers): 18%
- Cardboard: 4%
- Paper Napkins: 7%
- Glass: 0%
- Film Plastic (bags, wrap): 6%
- Compostable food scraps: 32%
- Garbage: Includes paper towels from bathroom, milk and juice cartons, candy wrappers, straws, etc.: 27%
- Books: 0%
Volume of Waste

- Garbage: Includes paper towels from bathroom, milk and juice cartons, candy wrappers, straws, etc. 29%
- Mixed Paper (mail, magazines, newspaper, greyboard) 11%
- Metals 1%
- Rigid Plastic (containers) 18%
- Cardboard 4%
- Paper Napkins 11%
- Glass 0%
- Books 0%
- Film Plastic (bags, wrap) 17%
- Compostable food scraps 9%
Analyze your results

Create a plan of action

Share your results & plan

Take action
Questions???
Please email me if you would like me to send you...

• The “How to do a Waste Audit” document
• The “Waste Audit” spreadsheet
• This presentation
• Any other tools or calculators from the flash drive demo