

Arlington Public Schools – 2018-19 Waste/Recycling Site Assessment Results

Arlington Public Schools (APS) has supported the Sustainability Liaison Program since 2016. Sustainability Liaisons are selected annually through a competitive process. They receive a modest stipend in exchange for their year-long effort to build a culture of sustainability through school-based curriculum, operational, transportation, and communication projects. The program began in the fall of 2016 and in 2019, APS supported 18

sustainability practices in their school, conduct a waste assessment, and implement at least one waste-related project. In addition, most Sustainability Liaisons completed several additional sustainability-related projects.

In recent years, Arlington County has implemented an enhanced county/school waste contract. In alignment with the new contract, the Sustainability Liaison program required the liaisons to complete a waste/recycling site assessment and implement one project based on the site assessment results during the 2018-2019 school year. The goal of these efforts was to help APS improve its waste and recycling practices, reduce waste generation, improve procurement practices and creatively engage students, faculty, and staff.

In 2018-19, 17 Sustainability Liaisons conducted school waste/recycling site assessments. The results show many positive efforts working to reduce waste at the 17 schools with Sustainability Liaisons as well as several areas for improvement. The full results can be found on the following pages, but here are some highlights.

- **97%** of classrooms have recycling bins
- **91%** of school corridors have recycling bins
- **35%** of the schools have a compost program with additional programs in process during the school year
- **70%** of the schools have programs to reduce food waste with student share tables and/or AFAC donations
- **47%** of the schools say that there is a system in place for reuse /

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The assessment itself raised the awareness of the participants and served as a learning tool on how to reduce waste in our schools. As an initial coordinated effort, the waste assessment was a tremendous step.

Data from the school waste/recycling site assessments suggest

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Composting

35% of the schools have a composting program.

0% of the schools collect compost and take it offsite.

35% of the schools use compost in their school gardens.

12% of the schools have composting bins in the kitchen.

18% of the schools have composting bins in their cafeterias.

0% of the schools have composting bins in the staff lounges.

24% had composting bins in other places.

Waste Audit Recycling Bins

44% reported that liquids were contaminating their classroom recycling bins.

31% reported that there were compostable food scraps in their classroom recycling bins.

86% reported that there was landfill trash in the classroom recycling bin.

69% reported that liquids were contaminating their cafeteria recycling bins.

54% reported that there were compostable food scraps in their cafeteria recycling bins.

62% reported that there was landfill trash in the cafeteria recycling bin.

21% reported that liquids were contaminating their teachers' lounge recycling bins.

14% reported that there were compostable food scraps in their teachers' lounge recycling bins.

29% reported that there was landfill trash in the teachers' lounge recycling bin.

Waste Audit Trash Bins

93% reported that there were recyclable paper products in the trash bins of classrooms.

67% reported that there were recyclable plastic bottles in the trash bins of classrooms.

12% of the trash bin was estimated to contain compostable food scraps in classrooms.

87% reported that there were recyclable paper products in the trash bins of cafeterias.

80% reported that there were recyclable plastic bottles in the trash bins of cafeterias.

34% of the trash bin was estimated to contain compostable food scraps in the cafeterias.

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50%