

# Locker Leftovers

A Guide to a Responsible Year-End Locker Clean Out

Created by the East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse, with support from StopWaste.Org





# Locker Leftovers

Each spring middle and high school students clean out their lockers in preparation for summer break. In their haste to leave, tons of material that could be diverted ends up in the landfill. Many teachers and school administrators find this “**trash fest**” appalling but lack the knowledge to do anything about it. With planning you **can** implement a responsible locker clean out where items are collected for reuse and recycling. Only a small amount needs to be sent to the landfill. You need a plan supported by the school administration and custodial staff, and someone willing to lead the effort. **Locker Leftovers** provides an excellent opportunity for students and staff to participate in waste reduction. It offers a unique opportunity to involve students in service learning. As students organize the event, promote it, weigh and record diversion, and analyze the results they are applying academic skills to a tangible outcome.

## The Basics

Three things are necessary to launch a **Locker Leftover** event at your school: an existing recycling system, a supportive administration, and you — an energetic, committed advocate for reducing waste. If you meet these criteria you can do it. This guide provides information on how to implement a successful and responsible locker clean-out.

## What You Can Expect from this Guide

In 2011, with funding from StopWaste.Org in Oakland, California, The East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse (The Depot) implemented a **Locker Leftovers** program in three Alameda County public schools.<sup>1</sup> The results were impressive with over a ton of material being diverted at each school. Each event was unique and all three were successful.

The Depot, supported by StopWaste.Org, created this guide to enable any school to stage a responsible year-end locker clean out. The guide offers a step-by-step outline of how to implement **Locker Leftovers** based on the situation at your school. It provides tips for engaging the administration and custodial staff, and securing volunteers, to ensure that your locker clean-out is successful.

---

<sup>1</sup> Will C Wood Middle School, Alameda, California; Berkeley High School, Berkeley, California; Creekside Middle School, Castro Valley, California

# How to Convince Your Principal, Custodian and Teachers to stage **Locker Leftovers**

If you need encouragement, either personally or to convince your school to take on **Locker Leftovers**, success stories abound. Will C. Wood Middle School in the small city of Alameda, California, has incorporated a year-end locker clean out as part of its service learning effort for the past two years. The project is headed by a committed teacher who involves her sixth grade science classes, and the student environmental club, in every aspect of the project. Last year Wood, a school with close to 600 students, diverted 3,037 pounds of material.

Berkeley High School (BHS), a school with a student population the size of a small town, also implants a successful locker clean out each year. Last year BHS diverted over 5,000 pounds of notebooks, binders, clothing, and electronics. The environmental science teacher worked with her environmental club juniors and seniors to physically remove the contents from students' lockers the day after school ended. While the teacher and students had the blessing of the school administration, they were offered no assistance from the custodian. Students were motivated to reduce their carbon footprint (and perhaps by the pizza party afterwards!).

At Creekside Middle School, in Castro Valley, California, a successful **Locker Leftovers** was the result of a committed and active custodian. A waste-conscious teacher began the process and the custodian, who had been recycling at the school, organized and set up a collection system that allowed the school to responsibly clean out almost 800 lockers in a one-hour period on two consecutive days.

In all three of these schools, notebooks and binders were saved for use the following year, closing the loop of discarding to reusing.

If the environmental impact of the event is not enough to convince your administration, or the custodian, the following benefits can be persuasive. An organized **Locker Leftovers** event:

- **Save custodial time in cleaning up after student locker clean out**
- **Can save on garbage disposal costs because it is generally less costly to recycle than to landfill material**
- **Engages students in socially conscious activity**
- **Builds spirit in the school community**

A word of caution: make sure you have enough support to organize and implement the event. It will be extremely challenging to do this yourself, even if you have a motivated and committed group of students. Either the school administration, or the custodian (and hopefully both), need to be behind a **Locker Leftovers** event.

# Models for Locker Leftovers

Based on your school's capacity and existing waste-reduction infrastructure, you can select a **Locker Leftovers** model to meet your needs. In 2011 The Depot worked with three schools of varying size and readiness for **Locker Leftovers**. Each one completed a successful event. A description of three possible models follows, and what each requires. At the end of this guide is a chart outlining a course of action for each model. Read on to decide where your school fits!

## Model One: Crème de la Crème

You have an administration and custodian committed to waste reduction. Your school has an existing recycling system in place, and it is working well. You have a "green team," or group of leadership students who are motivated to become involved. You have several teachers behind the idea of **Locker Leftovers** and the blessing of the principal to spend time organizing the project. What more do you need? You are half-way there!

### You Need To:

- **Decide on a date, or dates, coinciding with when students are scheduled to clean out their lockers**
- **Determine collection bin needs and how to secure the bins**
- **Work with custodian to map out the collection that maximizes clusters of lockers**
- **Figure out how you will weigh and document your diversion**
- **Educate teachers and the student body about why, when, where and how**
- **Determine where the collected reusables will end up**

## Model Two: On Your Way!

Your school has a fully functioning recycling system. You have at least two of the following: support of your administration, enthusiastic support of the custodial staff, motivated and active student environmental group, a majority of your teachers supportive.

### You Need To:

Developing a **Locker Leftover** plan that garners the support of any of the above who need convincing. If your custodian is not enthusiastic, convince him that it will be less work to secure and set out **Locker Leftovers** bins than it will be to clean up the mess made by a traditional locker clean-out. If you cannot get the custodian behind you, solicit permission from the Principal to work around the custodian. **Locker Leftovers** is generally cheaper than a traditional locker clean-out because extra recycling bins are less costly than additional trash bins. Once you have the support you need, follow the steps of the Crème de la Crème model.

## Model Three: Almost There

This model is for those determined to mitigate the year-end trashfest, but aware that you might not have enough support, or infrastructure, to pull off a full-fledged **Locker Leftovers** event. If you simply cannot convince your principal and/or custodian to stage **Locker Leftovers**, you will need to limit your effort to recycling. If you have an existing school recycling system you should be able to add recycling to your locker clean-out. This is a positive step, as recycling is where the bulk of the diversion takes place in a **Locker Leftover** event. Your goal is to implement a successful recycling locker clean out. With diversion figures in tow you can work towards adding reuse the following year.

### You Need To:

- **Set a date that coincides with student locker clean-out**
- **Organize a schedule and task list**
- **Determine who will help (you will need at least one person for each recycling station)**
- **Figure out how to weigh and record the amount of recycling you collect**
- **Enlist the help of your students in educating the school on the why, when, and how they will participate**
- **Document your impressive results and making sure your school administration is aware of them**

Month	Crème de la Crème	On Your Way!	Almost There
<b>February</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Meet with administration to confirm approval and determine date/s</li> <li>* Talk with custodial staff to assess how much support you can expect</li> <li>* Inform teachers at staff meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Meet with your principal to present Locker Leftovers and secure approval</li> <li>* Talk with custodial staff to assess how much support you can expect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Meet with administration to discuss adding recycling to the annual locker clean out</li> <li>* Talk with custodial staff to assess how much support you can expect</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Organize tasks using task sheet in appendix</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Follow up with administration and custodian to ensure support</li> <li>* Set date/s</li> <li>* Inform teachers at staff meeting</li> <li>* Organize tasks using task sheet in appendix</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Follow up with administration and custodian to ensure support</li> <li>* Set date/s</li> <li>* Inform teachers at staff meeting</li> <li>* Organize tasks using task sheet in appendix</li> </ul>
<b>April</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Assess bin needs for recycling and reuse; discuss this with custodian</li> <li>* Research how/where to secure needed bins. (See appendix for resource list)</li> <li>* Identify funds if bins need to be purchased</li> <li>* Contact volunteer groups (see appendix)</li> </ul>	From this point the schedule is the same as for Crème de la Crème	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Assess bin needs for recycling</li> <li>* Research how/where to secure needed bins. (See appendix for resource list.)</li> <li>* Identify funds if bins need to be purchased</li> <li>* Contact volunteer groups (see appendix)</li> </ul>
<b>May</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Determine end location of reusables (note books, binders, clothing, etc.)</li> <li>* Secure collection bins, including extra bins</li> <li>* Organize student groups who will be helping</li> <li>* Determine who will be volunteering at collection stations and continue ongoing communication</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Determine who will be volunteering at collections stations and continue ongoing communication</li> <li>* Secure recycling bins, including extra bins</li> <li>* Organize student groups who will be helping</li> </ul>
<b>June, Week One</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Create map of collection stations (or have custodian do this) and get approval of administration and custodian</li> <li>* Check with administration on schedule of when each grade will bring locker contents to collection area</li> <li>* Finalize volunteers and let them know the schedule</li> <li>* Arrange for transport of reusables to end location</li> <li>* Discuss transfer of recycling bins to dumpster</li> <li>* Secure bathroom scale for weighing diversion</li> <li>* Write press release, if press coverage is desired</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Create map of collection stations (or have custodian do this) and get approval of administration and custodian</li> <li>* Check with administration on schedule of when each grade will bring locker contents to collection area</li> <li>* Discuss transfer of recycling totes to dumpster</li> <li>* Secure bathroom scale for weighing diversion</li> <li>* Finalize volunteers and let them know the schedule</li> </ul>
<b>June, Week Two</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Have student groups create event posters (see appendix for samples)</li> <li>* Meet with student helpers to assign tasks</li> <li>* Confirm volunteers</li> <li>* Verify with custodian that collection bins are available</li> <li>* Make final changes to set-up plan with custodian</li> <li>* Verify schedule for locker clean out</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Have student groups create promo posters (see appendix for samples)</li> <li>* Meet with student helpers to assign tasks</li> <li>* Confirm volunteers</li> <li>* Verify with custodian that empty recycling totes are available and also trash bins at collection station</li> <li>* Make final changes to set up plan with custodian</li> <li>* Verify schedule for locker clean out</li> </ul>
<b>June, Week Three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Print bin signs (see appendix for sample signs)</li> <li>* Photocopy data sheets (see appendix)</li> <li>* Assemble data sheets, clipboards and pencils</li> <li>* Post student promo signs throughout school</li> <li>* Confirm end locations for recycling and reusables with administration and vendors</li> <li>* Arrange for PA announcement on day of clean out</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Print bin signs ("recycling", "trash")</li> <li>* Photocopy data sheets (see appendix)</li> <li>* Assemble data sheets, clipboards and pencils</li> <li>* Post student promotional signs throughout school</li> <li>* Confirm delivery of recycling to end location</li> <li>* Arrange for PA announcement on day of clean out</li> </ul>
<b>Locker Clean-Out Day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Attach signs to bins</li> <li>* Set out bins according to plan</li> <li>* Greet and task volunteers</li> <li>* Implement clean out including data collection</li> <li>* Get materials to their end location and clean up area</li> <li>* Celebrate with volunteers and student helpers!</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Attach signs to bins</li> <li>* Set out bins according to plan</li> <li>* Greet and task volunteers</li> <li>* Implement clean out including data collection</li> <li>* Move recycling bins to their end location and clean up area</li> <li>* Celebrate with volunteers and student helpers!</li> </ul>
<b>Post Clean-Out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Thank all involved</li> <li>* Assemble diversion data and send to administration and other interested parties</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Thank all involved</li> <li>* Assemble diversion data and send to administration and other interested parties</li> </ul>

# Materials Needed

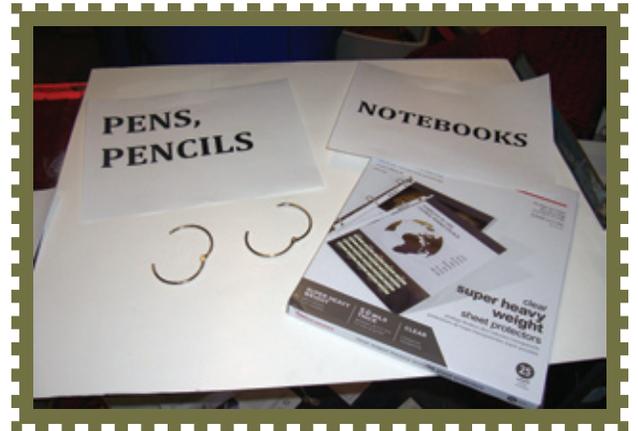
**Collection Bins** – one station for each 150 lockers, including the following:

- **Recycling:** two fifty-gallon bins
- **Binders:** one 44-gallon bin, or multiple smaller bins or boxes with tops removed
- **Notebooks:** two plastic recycling bins or large cardboard boxes with tops removed
- **Pens, pencils:** one plastic recycling bin or cardboard box
- **Books:** one plastic recycling bin or sturdy cardboard box
- **Clothing:** one 44-55 gallon bin
- **Locker shelves, mirrors, calculators, etcetera:** one plastic recycling bin or cardboard box



**Signs** – student-made, or computer-generated, one set for each station (laminated if possible):

- **Recycling**
- **Notebooks**
- **Binders**
- **Clothing**
- **Books**
- **Pens, pencils**
- **Miscellaneous**



**Other Materials:**

- **Bathroom scale** (one for each station if they are spread out)
- **Hand truck** (if you need to transport reusables and recyclables)
- **Packing tape** to attach signs to bins
- **Diversion recording sheets** (in appendix)
- **Clipboards**
- **Pencils**



# Volunteers & Helpers

Implementing a **Locker Leftover** event requires people to be at the collection stations to ensure that students place their discards in the proper bins. Even if your **Locker Leftovers** collection involves actually cleaning out lockers yourself, as was done at Berkeley High School in Berkeley, California, you will need help. Assistance is also necessary to keep the mess to a minimum and to ensure that the discarded material is weighed and your diversion recorded. One of the most satisfying aspects of **Locker Leftovers** is seeing the impressive amount of material you have kept out of the landfill.



## How Many Helpers?

You will need at least one adult at each collection station. Each station can service about 150 lockers. You want to position your stations near a cluster of lockers. This may necessitate more than one station per 150 lockers if the lockers are spread out. While students can and should assist, you will need adult helpers. (The most important role students can play is weighing and recording the diversion. This provides an excellent opportunity for learning). Refer to the resource section of this guide for suggestions on where to find volunteer helpers.

If you are doing a locker-to-locker clean-out, instead of collection stations, and have a dedicated, mature student group, you can send them out in teams with collection bins on carts or hand trucks. You will need 2-3 adults waiting at a central collection location to help sort the material into recycling, reuse and landfill.

Finding people to help monitor the stations, or go locker-to-locker, can be challenging. Start your recruitment as early as February. Begin by determining if staff and teachers are able to help. Often, the teaching staff are too involved in their own clean out to be a reliable source of assistance.

School staff are a potential source of help, but often get pulled away to take care of some other year-end tasks.

While engaging teachers and staff makes **Locker Leftovers** an educational, team-building event for the school, it is risky to rely solely on them. When the time comes teachers and staff are often needed for other tasks. For this reason it is important to identify outside people to help with **Locker Leftovers**.

## Outside Sources of Volunteers

You can approach environmental clubs at colleges and universities for help, but be aware that the students have often left for the summer by the time of your **Locker Leftovers**. Still, it makes sense to contact any local colleges to see if there are students still around who might be interested in assisting.

If your school has active parent participation, approach a parent group for assistance. Be aware, however, that parents are often either working, or busy with the end of their children's school year. It may be difficult to find enough parents to commit to helping.

In addition to school staff and parents, below is a list of potential volunteers. Begin early to secure the needed assistance.

- **Rotary clubs and service groups**
- **Firemen**
- **Waste-reduction agencies and non-profits**

Once you have your volunteers identified, keep in contact with them as you plan your event. It is crucial to remind them regularly of their commitment. You do not want to discover, on **Locker Leftovers** day, that your help has not shown up.

After the event make sure to thank your volunteers and let them know how much discarded material you diverted. The tonnage will be impressive. If your help involves students, and there is time, gather them together to celebrate with pizza, bagels or other treats.



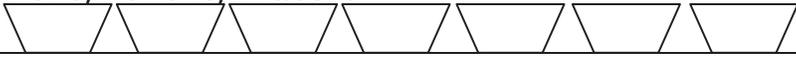
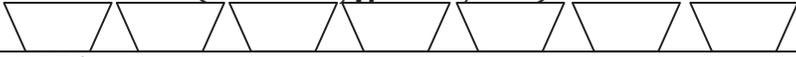
# Appendix

- Task List
- Data Collection Sheets
- Sample Promotional Posters
- Resources

Task Checklist	Complete by... (event minus number of months)	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Principal approval	(-) Four Months	If a complete Locker Leftovers appears too daunting, propose adding only recycling the first year.
<input type="checkbox"/> Custodian input and buy-in	(-) Four Months	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers informed	(-) Three Months	
<input type="checkbox"/> Date set	(-) Three Months	Date of locker leftovers is date of school locker clean-out
<input type="checkbox"/> Count number of lockers	(-) Two Months	Count them in their clusters to facilitate mapping of collection system
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine number of stations	(-) Two Months	One station for recycling, reuse and trash for every 150 lockers
<input type="checkbox"/> Calculate size and number of collection bins	(-) Two Months	Minimum 1-44 gallon recycling toter, and 6 smaller bins for reuse, per station; it is possible you will need an extra recycling toter; you will need a trash bin for food wrappers and miscellaneous items that can't be reused or recycled.
<input type="checkbox"/> Create map of stations and bins	(-) Two Months	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit Volunteers	(-) Two Months	
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine end locations for reusable items	(-) One Months	
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm Volunteers	(-) One Month	
<input type="checkbox"/> Locate bathroom scales for weighing diversion	(-) One Month	Best to have one at each station, if the stations are spread out
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm event set up with administration, custodian and teachers	(-) One Month	
<input type="checkbox"/> Secure collection bins	(-) One Month	Get help from your custodian; it is crucial to have enough bins for recycling; otherwise you risk having a paper mess on the floor, or recyclables in the trash
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit and educate student helpers	(-) One Month	Form green teams or leadership groups
<input type="checkbox"/> Make arrangements to get reusables to end locations	(-) One Month	Including transportation of material
<input type="checkbox"/> Organize student helpers into tasks	(-) One Month	
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact volunteers about details of where and when to come	(-) Two Weeks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have student helpers create event promotion posters	(-) Two Weeks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Create bin signs	(-) One Week	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gather event materials (clipboards, pens, tape, signs, scales, bins)	(-) One Week	
<input type="checkbox"/> Display posters around school	(-) One Week	
<input type="checkbox"/> Final check-in with custodian and principal	(-) One Week	
<input type="checkbox"/> Make announcement on PA system	Day of Event	
<input type="checkbox"/> Set up collection stations	Day of Event	
<input type="checkbox"/> Implement Locker Leftovers, including weighing what you diverted	Day of Event	
<input type="checkbox"/> Move recycling and reusables to end location	Day of Event	
<input type="checkbox"/> Clean up and thank volunteers	Day of Event	
<input type="checkbox"/> Calculate total diversion	Day of Event	
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide diversion information to school administration and custodian	Before leaving school for the year	

### Locker Cleanout Data Sheet

For each bin of sorted material, record the weight in the first column below (Each of the bin icons represents one full bin of weighed material). Calculate the weight of material by subtracting the weight of the empty container from the weight of the full container.

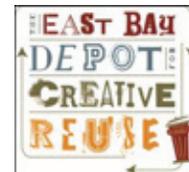
<b>REUSEABLE MATERIALS</b> Subtract the empty weight of the bin, then record the weight of the material in the appropriate row below	<b>Total Pounds</b> Add totals from each bin weighed	<b>Estimated # of Items</b>
<b>Clothing</b> 	LBS	
<b>Books</b> 	LBS	
<b>Notebooks</b> 	LBS	
<b>Binders</b> 	LBS	
<b>Pens/Pencils/Erasers</b> 	LBS	
<b>Electronics</b> 	LBS	
<b>Teaching Materials</b> 	LBS	
<b>Misc Items (Mirrors, games, etc.)</b> 	LBS	
<b>Add item</b> 	LBS	
<b>TOTAL REUSEABLES</b>	LBS	

<b>RECYCLABLE MATERIALS</b> Subtract the empty weight of each bin, then record below	<b>Recyclable Lbs</b> Add totals from each bin weighed
<b>Dry, Clean Paper</b> 	LBS
<b>Other Recyclables</b> 	LBS
<b>TOTAL RECYCLABLES</b>	LBS

<b>LANDFILL MATERIALS</b> Subtract the empty weight of each bin, then record below	<b>Landfill Lbs</b> Add totals from each bin weighed
<b>Can't be reused or recycled</b> 	LBS



Inspires Teens • Supports Teachers  
Enriches Communities



**TOTAL LBS. COLLECTED** \_\_\_\_\_ = Reusable + Recyclable Lbs + Landfill Lbs

# Resources

This guide is designed specifically for schools in Alameda County, California. However, the resources listed below are often available to teachers outside the County. Similar organizations and agencies can be found throughout California, and in other states.

## Information & Guidance:

- **East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse**  
eastbaydepot@hotmail.org; 510-655-6628
- **StopWaste.Org**  
Roberta Miller  
rmiller@stopwaste.org; 510-891-6531
- **Alameda County Office of Education**  
Nate Ivy, Service Learning Coordinator  
nivy@acoe.org; 510-670-4283

## Volunteers:

- **Civic clubs, such as Rotary**  
East Bay Conservation Corp (Civicorps)  
infor@cvcorps.org; 510-992-7800
- **Fire stations**
- **Colleges with year-round enrollment**
- **Parent groups**

## Collection Bins:

- **Uline**  
www.uline.com
- **RecyCal**  
www.recy-cal.com

## End Location for Usable Items:

- **Clothing: thrift stores or homeless shelters**
- **Books: texts to office; literature to school library or to a literacy program**
- **Notebooks, Binders, Pens, Pencils and Markers: keep at school or donate to an after school program**
- **Locker Shelves, Miscellaneous Items: thrift stores**

# Sample Promotional Posters

