

## Green Team Guidance for School Events

The Green Team seeks to reduce the environmental impact of school-wide events by offering the following guidance to minimize single-use products; opt for used and reused goods when possible; shop locally when used or reused isn't an option; increase recycling and composting; and offer lower-impact food options. We know this is an aspirational document, but hope it can be helpful for your next event!

### Food

- Finger foods: Choose foods that don't require utensils (e.g., pizza instead of pasta; cupcakes instead of cake; etc).
- Paper over plastic: Buy large chip or other snack bags and serve portions in brown paper bags or on paper plates (versus buying individual-size packages). For baked goods, serve on a napkin, paper plate, or in paper baggies (versus plastic).
- Meat-free: Offer plant-based items, which may also be cheaper!

### Beverages

- Skip juice boxes: Kids won't miss them if they aren't there ;)
- Water: Skip the single-use plastic bottles! Advertise bring-your-own (BYO) on flyers and incentivize by offering small school swag (PS 56 sticker, etc) to participants who bring their own water bottles from home (refilling at drinking fountains when needed).
- Other drinks: If other beverages must be offered, try for aluminum cans (seltzer, V8, etc) over plastic bottles, and for paper cups for coffee & tea (versus styrofoam or plastic).

### Plates, Cups, & Cutlery

- Reuse: Families and classrooms often have leftover single-use plastic cutlery. Encourage individuals to save & bring those in instead of buying new. These items can also be washed and reused multiple times.
- BYO cutlery: Just like water bottles—encourage participants to come & go with their own metal cutlery set ([like this](#) or [this](#))!
- "Greener" cutlery, plates, & cups: If needed, use paper, wooden, bamboo, or compostable options—and direct participants to throw them away with food scraps in compost bins (not in the garbage).
- Yogurt & cereal cups: These items come in school breakfast and can be washed and reused to serve snacks, baked goods, etc.
- Signage: Clearly label trash, recycling, & food scrap bins to help compostable cups, plates, and utensils end up in compost, not garbage.
- Shop locally: When skipping or reusing items isn't possible, consider shopping locally over using Amazon or other retailers that require goods to be shipped.

### Decorations & Gifts

- Skip goodie bags: Encourage families to donate to the annual fund to support the school instead of giving goodie bags for birthday parties and other events. Goodie bags tend to be filled with single-use plastic toys that create unnecessary waste. At minimum, skip plastic trinkets and instead focus on longer-lasting or eco-friendly gifts (e.g., sidewalk chalk, reusable water balloon, compass, hacky sack, notebook, magnifying glass, ice cream gift card, etc).
- Decor: Make banners from painted cardboard, paper chains from old worksheets, etc. Ask students to help!
- Tape: Hang decorations with painter's tape rather than tapes made of plastic (clear tape, duct tape).
- Balloons: Skip them or find used ones (people often post balloon banners on local Buy Nothing Facebook groups). If you do use balloons, please keep them inside and trash them or donate them after your event. Try not to let children take them home—balloons that fly off outdoors are harmful to animals.

Please contact Sacha Zilkha (Green Team co-chair) on Konstella with any questions.