

Materials and Equipment Storage Best Practices Guide



As we receive requests for additional storage space in schools, or even building additions for storage, we must first evaluate how we're using the space we already have.

Additional storage containers outside your school are not always the answer, and constructing a building addition can cost millions of dollars.

These tips need to be followed prior to any project or procurement for more storage facilities:

1. **Inventory** your materials and equipment. Board policy and district procedures, currently being updated, already require this. Be familiar with where your storage rooms or areas are, and what is in them (also important for safety and security!)
2. **Reduce or Recycle** any unused items. If it hasn't been used in the last two years, dispose of it (remember to recycle!)
3. **Re-use.** If you don't need it, but think another school might, or it could be worth selling, set it aside and contact Facilities Services at x1151 for a pickup. NOTE: schools do not have authority to sell goods or equipment, per financial and purchasing policy.
4. **Go offsite.** For items that are used for a few days, and only once/year or less frequently, consider offsite storage at our centralized warehouse. This also included student, employee and other records which are required for retention but don't need to be accessed at the school often. These items can be picked up when needed from our secure warehouse (or in certain cases, delivered). What records do you need to retain? See our webpage at <https://www.rock-hill.k12.sc.us/Page/6231>
5. **Make a plan.** For items left after the steps above, plan for storing and accessing items along the lines of:
 - a. **Shared items vs. individual assigned:** The more sharing, the less space needed, and the less cost to buy and maintain. Don't sacrifice learning quality to do this, however.
 - b. **Decentralized vs. centralized:** Most individual assigned or frequently accessed items should be in the classroom or office, in proper cabinets, closets, etc.



Shared items and those less frequently used may be better stored in storage rooms or designated areas. HINT: Many classroom cabinets are not fully used (after removing items from tips 1-4 above). Efficiently stock these spaces first. Together they are 70% of the total storage capacity in your building!)

- c. **Specialized, but flexible:** Certain storage must be allocated by policy or code, including custodial storage, food service, technology, health/nurse, and financial/employee/student records. Where practical and permitted, certain items from these and other areas can be stored together for flexibility. **NOTE: mechanical and electrical rooms are NOT storage rooms, per building and fire codes. Blocking machinery and panels is illegal and dangerous.)**

- 6. **Shelve it.** Often storage rooms with shelving have few items actually on the shelves! Items are stored on the floor or left on carts, and “fill up” the room quickly. Fill shelves completely, and add shelves if there is wasted “vertical” space between items. Facilities Services stocks standard shelving. Please contact them or place a work order as needed.
- 7. **Be Safe and Secure.** Best practices required by code or policy include:
 - a. Ensure “pilferable” items such as mobile devices are properly secured in locking cabinets.
 - b. Store items like food or cleaning chemicals according to health and safety regulations.
 - c. Use commercial grade stepladders to access higher shelves, NOT chairs!
 - d. Keep areas clean, dry and ventilated to prevent mold and mildew.
 - e. Do not store items within 18 inches of drop ceilings that serve as a fire barrier (most do).



For more guidance on proper storage and management of materials and equipment, please visit:

[Policy ED/DID, Materials and Equipment Inventories and Management](#)

[RHS Facilities Services Warehouse Information](#)

[RHS Facilities Services Department](#)