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**Reducing Food Waste at Origins High School**

Brooklyn, NY

Origins High School

11-12th Grade

Art & Sustainability

**ISSUE**

Origins High School currently produces far more food waste than is necessary. Additionally, food waste, trash, and recycling are not disposed of properly. This has environmental consequences for the school, community, and city at large. Food waste is bad for the environment & wastes a lot of money, which is sad considering that there are so many people in the world that are food insecure.

**QUESTION**

How can we reduce food waste at Origins High School?

* Why is food waste a problem?
* Who or what contributes to food waste?
* How can we get our key stakeholders to help us achieve our goal?

**COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

* Instructor: Amanda Branagan
* Students: 11th-12th Grade Art & Sustainability
* Client(s): Prinicipal John Banks, AP Jolon Shields
* Community Partner(s): Kathy Corradi, DOE Office of Sustainability

**YOUTH DRIVEN DATA AND INSIGHTS**

Interviews

* Interviewed 5 key stakeholders and leaders in the building: the Dean of Origins, AP Shields, Principal Banks, the head custodian, and the head chef.
* All stakeholders agree that food waste is a problem but everyone has a different take on why it exists and what should be done.
* **“I rather make too much food than not have enough.”- Head Chef for building**

Surveys

* Surveyed 232 students at Origins High School
* 25.4% answered “3-5 times per week” to the question “How frequently do you eat school lunch?”
* 8.5% of students answered “100%” to the question “What % of the food do you usually eat?”
* 64.7% of students marked that they “throw unwanted food out” rather than “share with friends” or “save it for later”

Site Mapped Cafeteria

* Top 3 Strengths
  + Clean & organized kitchen
  + Caring workers
  + Fresh food
* Top 3 Weaknesses
  + Menu not visible or accurate
  + Lots of wasted food
  + Large portions

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SHORT-TERM (1-6 Months)**

* Inform Cafeteria Manager when students are going on trips
* Offer smaller portion options
* Set up a share table for unopened food items
* Display accurate weekly menus around the cafeteria
* Educate to Inspire

**LONG-TERM (1-3 Years)**

* Continue SCrAP Program to assess waste
* Create sorting stations
* Advisory presentations
* Compost food scraps and expired/spoiled food for the garden!
* Revise food choices to reduce commonly wasted food items

**NEXT STEPS AND SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY:**

* Begin construction of school garden
* Add colorful steps in cafeteria from food tables to the bins to help students sort waste correctly
* Hold a meeting with all of our key stakeholders to share our observations, data and recommendations