

ILLINOIS

Section 1: School Demographics

School Name

West Chicago Community High School

Principal's name

Dr. Moses Cheng

School Address

326 Joliet Street

West Chicago, Illinois 60185

United States

[Map It](#)

Number of students (total enrollment)

2000

Lowest grade

9

Highest grade

12

This school is:

- A public school

Please explain:

Number of students by grade level

Elementary or lower	Middle grades	High or upper school
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100

150

500

Number (or percent) of students eligible for free or reduced lunch

Free lunch	Reduced lunch	Neither free nor reduced lunch
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46.5%

0%

53.5%

Section 2: Background about school lunch

How many students buy lunch in the school's cafeteria?

31 to 50 percent

How many minutes do students have to eat lunch?

25

Are students allowed to eat lunch in rooms/buildings other than the cafeteria?

Yes

Are students allowed to leave campus for lunch?

No

Which students are allowed to leave campus for lunch?

Are there any times during the school year when breakfast or lunch is free to all students?

No

Please explain:

Who controls the portions and servings students receive?

Students (buffet style or open access allows students to choose their own portion)

Please explain:

Does the school serve set meals (e.g. chicken nuggets with potatoes and carrots) or can students choose what they want from the menu?

The students receive sides with the entree, whether they want them or not

Please explain:

Are fruits/vegetables required with every meal?

Yes, fruits/vegetables are included in the price

In your teams' opinion, are students content with the meal options at school?

Yes, very content

Please explain:

After the food audit, we asked participants how they felt about the food used in the food audit and the general consensus was that it was good (both in taste as well as options)

What type of utensils do students use to eat?

Disposable utensils, such as traditional plastic

Please explain:

What type of plates/trays are used to serve the food?

Reusable plates or trays, such as plastic

Please explain:

Section 3: Food waste activities at the school

Does the school use any of the following waste reduction activities?

- Procedures put in place to reduce food over-purchasing
- Procedures put in place to reduce food loss to expiration
- Students learn ways to reduce food waste
- Trays are no longer used

Please explain:

Has the school performed a food waste audit previously?

Yes, the school has performed a waste audit (including cafeteria waste)

Please explain:

Which of the following generates the majority of food waste at your school?

Student food waste

Please explain:

On average, do you think food waste is an issue at your school?

Yes, very important

Section 4: School Waste Data Form

School name

West Chicago Community High School

Date of audit

03/15/2017

Students in attendance on day of audit

263 (people who attended the Spaghetti Dinner-- the event with which we held our audit)

Numbers of lunches served on day of audit

251

Menu served on day of audit

-Spaghetti

-Tomato Sauce

-Bread

-Water

-Lemonade

-Cookies

-Salad

Waste type: Unopened food

A: Type of food	B: Number of items	C: Weight of empty bin	D: Total weight	E: Net weight (Total - Empty)
N/A	N/A	0	0	0

Total net weight of unopened food

0

Notes regarding unopened food

All food used as part of the audit was used in some capacity

Waste type: Food waste

A: Bin/Bag Number	B: Weight of empty bin	C: Total weight	D: Net weight (Total - Empty)	E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)	F: Percent full
1	2.4 pounds	32.3 pounds	29.9 pounds	Y	90%

Total net weight of food waste

29.9

Waste type: Liquid waste

A: Bin/Bag Number	B: Weight of empty bin	C: Total weight	D: Net weight (Total - Empty)	E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)	F: Percent full
2	2.4 pounds	4.7 pounds	2.3 pounds		5%

Total net weight of liquid waste

2.3

Waste type: Recycling

A: Bin/Bag Number	B: Weight of empty bin	C: Total weight	D: Net weight (Total - Empty)	E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)	F: Percent full
3	1.9 pounds	12.3 pounds	10.4 pounds		85%

Total net weight of recycling

10.4

Waste type: Other (Landfill)

A: Bin/Bag Number	B: Weight of empty bin	C: Total weight	D: Net weight (Total - Empty)	E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)	F: Percent full
4	2 poiunds	20.2 pounds	18.2 pounds		80%

Total net weight of other wastes (landfill)

18.2

Notes regarding food, recycling, and other (landfill) wastes

Wastes were specifically placed into their respective categories after careful sortment by members of the LifeSmarts team.

Describe the process you used to establish clear guidelines for students to follow to sort their food waste.

During the food audit, which operated during our 3rd Annual Spaghetti Dinner night, our team ensured we recorded the above weights of the respective categories properly through three strategies. We first took all garbage bins out of the cafeteria, where the audit was being held, to prevent any participants/students from disposing of waste that we would not have been able to record, so this ensured that all waste was brought to the area we established for measuring. The area of measuring was set up so that all teammates could properly allocate the waste types into their specific bins once the waste was brought up for disposal by audit participants. Lastly, as means of informing those in the audit of our intent/where we set up the waste disposal area, we posted signage, as well as occasionally used the microphone-speaker system in the cafeteria to direct the participants.

Upload photos

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- [unnamed-11.jpg](#)
- [unnamed-14.jpg](#)
- [unnamed-15.jpg](#)
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Would your team be interested in being part of the food waste panel at Nationals?

No

Section 5: Critical Thinking

Based on your observations during the food waste audit, make three recommendations to your School Board to reduce food waste.

- Recommend that the school provide more or prominent, waste-specific receptacles in order to limit waste and allow that the recyclables end up being recycled.
- Ask that the school provide enhanced or further clarified signage in order to direct patrons to appropriate receptacles.
- Ask that they work with the cafeteria food provider to possibly reduce unnecessary or frivolous packaging.

Justify a school's role in teaching children about food waste and the impact food waste has on school budgets, the environment, and hunger in the community.

A school is a place where students come together to learn, it is a place of community and as such needs to teach students about how to be a responsible member of that community. It is important that the school shows the students the larger impact of their decisions and also how they can be a more environmentally conscious consumer. Outside of school students may have a disconnect with the waste process as they all see the waste taken away by a garbage truck and never see it again. A school offers the unique opportunity to engage students and inspire them to be a better consumer. Whether it be through seeing the accumulation of waste at the school, learning about the problem in class or even taking a field trip to a waste center a school is an important place to teach children about how to be a good steward of the environment

The US Environmental Protection Agency has set a goal to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. Based upon your experience conducting this food waste audit, will the US meet this goal? Explain why or why not.

Unless the US can manage to promote activities such as the food audit across the entire US, this goal will likely not be met. Establishing a food audit and having to organize the entire process, walking people through the disposal, recording results, etc are relatively simple, yet are very time consuming. While it may be more likely to find success in this goal by targeting elementary school students and building conscientious students/consumers early-on, this goal would have to more long-term if the EPA wants to achieve their target.

Detail two or three findings or observations that surprised you. Describe how conducting this food waste audit has impacted you and your team, and the way you think about food in America.

- Many participants did not eat a lot of the food they were served
- The disposable plates and cutlery added up when everyone was using them

The biggest impact this food audit has had on our team is reducing the size of our portions. We realized that even a little bit of waste can add up. The food can pile up in a landfill but it can also directly harm us. We could see through the food audit how much food we waste as a society and we took that to show the economic costs of the food audit. The cost of buying more food because we wasted some of it was a huge problem that directly financially impacts us. Another financial impact was the cost of the utensils and plates. If we used reusable plates and utensils we could have spent less on plates and kept the Styrofoam and plastic out of recycling and trash centers.

What is one obstacle your team faced during the audit and how did you work to resolve it? If the issue went unresolved, what steps would you take to reevaluate your approach?

At first, we struggled with how to get all of the waste and ensure that none of it was disposed of in conventional, unrecorded garbage bins. With this, we had to brainstorm ways to streamline the disposal process at our table (where all the categorized bins were positioned with us) and guarantee that all waste would be accounted for in our audit. We quickly moved to collect all the garbage bins scattered across the cafeteria and placed them in the custodian's area for storage until after the project was completed.

Bonus Question

Should all schools be required to do food waste audits on a regular basis? Why or why not?

Support your answer.

Yes all schools should. The food audit showed our team how much food we waste. If our whole school could have seen the amount of waste that we collected then the students would be more likely to watch what they eat and how they eat it. It is important that each student see the food audit for themselves. If a required food audit was part of a required health class then every student could see for themselves just how much food we waste and how much garbage we create every day. A food audit is one of the best ways to inspire students to make a change in their own habits and hopefully in the world