

Team Green Gang (Aurora Yuan and Alice Feng)

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School: Princeton High School

Identify your school's lowest scoring grade from your Greener challenge and dive deeper. Take time to research and learn about what your school is actively doing on that topic, if anything. Consider interviewing students, relevant staff or faculty who may be involved or impacted by current practices.

Identify the department or leaders in charge of the topic. Engage them to advocate for progress. Send an email offering your perspective on the given topic and offer support for the process. Your email should exemplify constructive, collaborative change.

Based on my grading, our school's worst performance is on Zero Waste. In terms of food waste, the sentence "The school district cafeteria composting program is on hiatus." And at the current moment, it seems like no resolutions or set date has been posed about when this "hiatus" will be resumed. This is definitely not treated as a priority. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to talk to the point person in the school today. But in fact, after some research, I don't think such point person in charge of sustainability exist in our school district. I was able to find the PHS Green Team website, (http://princetonhspto.weebly.com/wellness--sustainability.html?fbclid=IwAR1OofAi00xVfG6o_q5Wh4lSIVr88hyypbddW6o95d45m3fXbLMoK5ETqBQ), which had me excited for a while. Yet it is very disappointing to actually read the content, which unfortunately I assume that few would do so.

Welcome to a new school year!

Please share these tips with your students and help us make PHS a more sustainable place to learn:



-  Reuse last year's backpack and school supplies.
-  If you must buy new supplies, purchase recycled notebook paper and other items made from recycled content.
-  Bring your lunch with reusable containers you can take home to wash. If you compost at home, bring home food scraps. **The school district cafeteria composting program is on hiatus.**
-  Bring your own reusable water bottle every day instead of buying single use water bottles from school or using cups.
-  Bring your own bag when you go shopping.
-  If you drink coffee/tea, bring your own travel mug instead of accepting a take-out cup that needs to be thrown away.
-  Walk/bike to school.
-  Recycle properly at school:

RECYCLING BINS (blue or yellow):

- ♻️ Empty/clean labeled #1 & 2 plastics without tops
(plastic cups go in the trash; plastics labelled #5 can be recycled at Whole Foods)
- ♻️ Empty/clean glass jars/bottles without tops
- ♻️ Empty/clean metal cans
- ♻️ Milk cartons
- ♻️ Clean paper/cardboard (copy paper, notebook paper, newspaper;
paper plates, napkins, and paper cups go in the trash).
- ♻️ When in doubt, throw the item out.
- ♻️ Reuse scrap paper for printing at home; print longer assignments double-sided.

Have a great year!



WASTE-FREE LUNCH TIPS

Did you know:

- ♻️ Each year, American school children toss out 4.6 billion pounds of lunch waste.
- ♻️ Lunchtime trash is second only to office paper as the leading source of school waste.
- ♻️ Americans discard about 2.7 million tons of aluminum yearly, the largest source being used beverage and packaging containers.
- ♻️ 3,460,000 tons of tissues and paper towels wind up in landfills each year.
- ♻️ Americans produce enough non-biodegradable styrofoam cups annually to circle the earth 436 times.
- ♻️ The combined total of nondurable disposables exceeds 11 million tons and only approximately 7 percent is recovered for recycling.
- ♻️ Making water bottles for the US generates a billion pounds of carbon dioxide each year.
- ♻️ The energy we waste using bottled water would be enough to power 190,000 homes.
- ♻️ Last year, the average American used 167 disposable water bottles but only recycled 38.3.
- ♻️ Americans used about 50 billion plastic water bottles last year. However, the U.S.'s recycling rate for plastic is only 23 percent, which means 38 billion water bottles – more than \$1 billion worth of plastic – are wasted each year.
- ♻️ Next to plastic bags, plastic bottles are the most prevalent (and unsightly) source of pollution found on our beaches and shores. Each year, over **500 billion** disposable bottles and cups end up littering our soil, rivers, lakes and oceans, killing countless fish and animals.

As seen above, several problems emerge with our school's sustainability program. First, these information are on our school's PTO website, which I found very strange. It makes absolute sense to have the information on the school's website instead of a website that few would visit. And by posting only on the PTO website, it would be very unlikely that students would actually take time to read about these information. Second, though we definitely appreciate the dedicated member to make such a beautiful page, I do think that a. These tips are not being read to students as intended to and b. The mere list of "environmental facts" would be too weak to solve the problem. Furthermore, as mentioned in our Greener Challenge, when one person mis throws the trash, the whole bin might not be able to be

recycled. Such information, as well as information listed on the website should be delivered to the students directly. And dishearteningly this website has not worked as efficiently as we all intend it to be. It is time we bring this information into the classroom. It is time we get everyone informed. It is time to change.

As mentioned before, before contacting our school administration, I surprisingly found that our school does not have a specific person in charge of sustainability across the school district. Therefore I directly emailed our school Principal. The attached is the email.



12:54 AM



Inquiries about Sustainability at PHS



me 8:00 AM
to Jessica ▾



Dear Mrs. Baxter,

Hope you're doing well! My name is Alice Feng and I'm currently a junior. Today I'm reaching out because my friend Aurora Yuan and I are doing a project called Project Green Challenge, which engages students to participate in a 30-day challenge to learn about sustainability in our community and daily life.

For today's challenge, we're trying to learn about sustainability in our school. We decided to look into the progress of Zero Waste in the Princeton Public School district. We have several questions that we hope you can help us answer:

1. Is there anyone who's in charge of the sustainability/ environmental protection sector in the Princeton Public School administration?
2. How is PHS doing in terms of Zero Waste? We have looked into the Sustainability actions around PHS and Waste? We have looked into the Sustainability actions around PHS and have found the [PHS Green Team](#) website. We think the information on the website are extremely helpful. Yet we also think that it is not the most effective way to deliver the message to students, as intended to. Would the school be willing to incorporate more sustainability education and promotions into the school?

Thank you so much for taking your time and reading this email. We'd really appreciate it if we can have a more in-depth conversation on the subject of Waste and Sustainability in PHS. But we all understand that you have a very busy schedule and a short reply will also be much appreciated. Thanks again and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

Best,
Alice Feng and Aurora Yuan
Class of 2021

Reference: Greener Grade

Zero Waste	F	<p>After doing a multivariable calculus project on our school's dumpster, I found out that our school in fact did very poorly on recycling. When students mistakenly throw the trash in the wrong bin, the whole bin would not be recycled. It is disheartening to hear and also have led Green Gang to think about possible solutions. As proposed a few days earlier, we also think our school should eliminate the plastic utensils provided in the cafeteria: the plastic free environment would encourage students to bring their own utensils, which not only reduce waste in school, but also help students to build a healthy habit from a very young age.</p> <p>Recommendation: 1. Cease the plastic utensil usage in all Princeton Public Schools. 2. The administration should strongly enforce recycle policy and, if necessary, education.</p>
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