



DATE: October 10, 2024
TO: Recycling Board
FROM: Arielle Conway, Program Manager
SUBJECT: StopWaste School Challenges – Transforming School Cafeterias

SUMMARY

The StopWaste Schools Project uses a multitude of strategies to engage K-12 youth and school partners in climate action and the 4Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot. The project aims to uplift and empower youth, teachers, and school champions to take action at school, at home, and in their communities. At the October 10 Recycling Board meeting, staff will provide an update on school programs with a focus on StopWaste Schools Challenges, a program that aims to transform school cafeterias to reduce waste to landfill, prevent wasted food, and empower students to be environmental stewards.

DISCUSSION

Waste audit studies conducted by StopWaste have found that on average, 50-90 percent of what is tossed in the landfill bin in the school cafeteria across Alameda County is edible food that could have been eaten or shared on a food share table. Students, teachers, and staff can make a big impact by taking action to reduce wasted food and to properly sort recyclables and compostables.

The Stop Waste Schools Challenge is an educational, technical assistance, and partnership program designed to support the rollout of three-stream sorting and food share in the cafeteria. StopWaste works with district leaders, school site staff, teachers, and students to design a whole-school engagement program for rolling out these systems. School Challenges also support districts to comply with state laws like SB 1383 which requires school sorting systems and school food recovery and donation.

This presentation will provide an overview of this program while highlighting an example from New Haven Unified School District.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.