

Solorio Academy High School

2022 Project Report

Project Focus: Waste Reduction

Staff Involved: 1

Location: Chicago, IL

Students: 15



We have improved our campus for many years to come with the planting of 15 new trees. We also hope that the reading garden improvements attract more students, staff and families to our outdoor space and involve more people in the future.



The Project:

Solorio's Zero Waste Club noticed the excessive usage, waste, and incorrect disposal of single-use plastics in the school lunchroom, so they created a plan to enact systemic change locally within the Solorio school building and throughout the Chicago Public School System. Students **conducted plastic waste audits**, using statistical sampling methods and project management skills to yield reliable results. They presented their findings and suggested solutions to Solorio staff, and later CPS stakeholders. Thanks to these presentations, Solorio and **the entire district are now considering various new waste management options.**

The audit of plastic forks and condiment packets calculated an average of 150.7 condiment packages and 219.4 plastic forks sent to the landfill per lunch period per day, amounting to 79,570 condiment packages and 115,843 forks per school year. They also constructed a random school-wide sample to **estimate the amount of plastics each student takes** and throws away at lunch. Solorio staff agreed on various solutions for condiment packet use and reducing utensils packets, **to be implemented spring 2022.** These include replacing packets with squeeze bottles, using napkin dispensers to reduce use of utensils packets, and using compostable utensil dispensers. CPS is looking into having bulk ketchup at all schools, portioning carrots and salads to eliminate use of plastic bags and containers, and creating well-sanitized utensil dispensers.

