

W LIVABLE CITY YEAR

City of Auburn

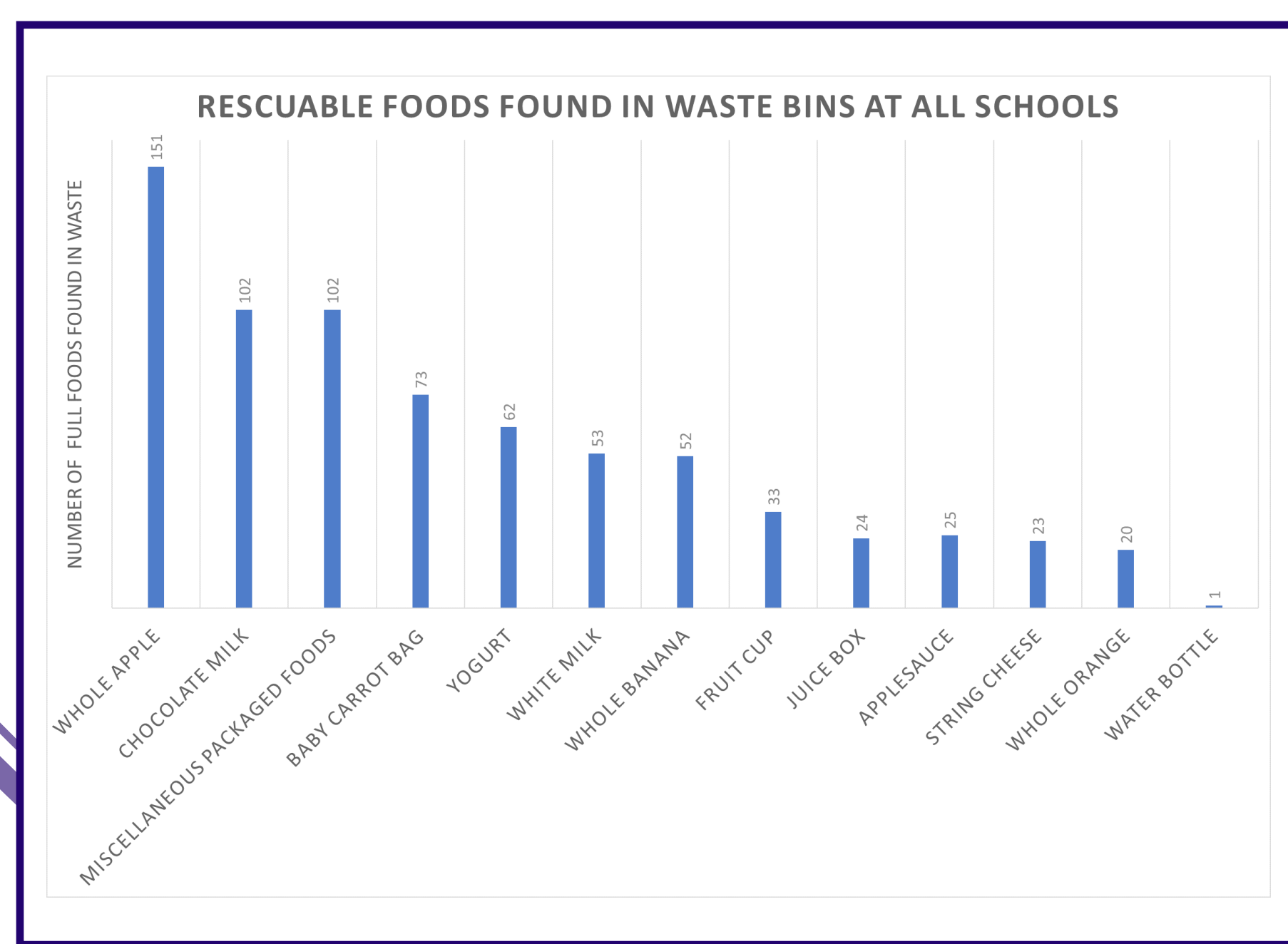
CURRENT FOOD WASTE AND POTENTIAL FOOD RESCUE PROGRAMS FOR THE AUBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Executive Summary

This project evaluated current food waste patterns within elementary, middle, and high schools in the Auburn School District to determine if wasted food could be rescued and reallocated to feed students or community members experiencing food insecurity. Waste audits revealed significant differences in overall waste sorting as well as high amounts of rescuable food in waste bins, indicating a need for stronger food waste prevention efforts and implementation of a food rescue program.



Rescuable food found within trash, recycling, and compost bins at one school after sorting all lunchroom waste. (Above)
Credit: Student Team Member



Credit: Courtney Schupp

Methods

“Trash-on-a-tarp” waste audits were completed according to the following steps:

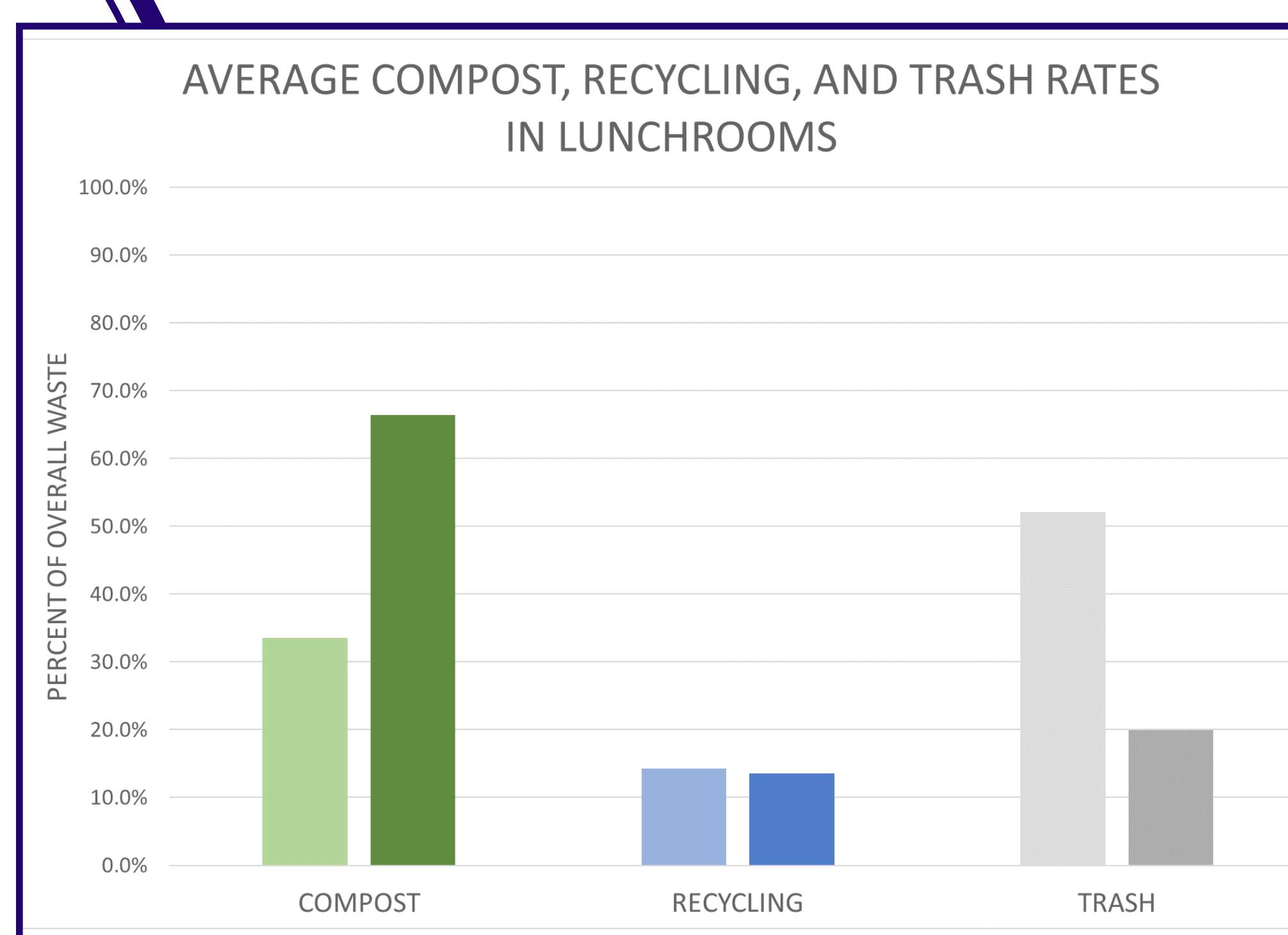
- Weigh and record current waste
- Sort all waste into correct trash, recycle, and compost bins
- Weigh and record corrected waste
- Count rescuable food items

Observational data included lunchroom layout and current sustainability efforts.

Findings

The following practices improved waste sorting and/or rescue of edible food items:

- Compost bins
- Labels on waste bins
- Participation in the King County Green Schools Program
- Using a student-run “Green Team” to help oversee waste sorting at the point of discard
- The presence of a well-labeled food share bin or area for food rescue



Credit: Courtney Schupp

Conclusions

Auburn elementary, middle, and high schools could all benefit from improved food waste reduction programming. Many schools have programs or are participating in best practices in regards to food shares, labeling, waste sorting education, and lunchroom monitoring. All schools, regardless of these programs, could improve their lunchroom compost and trash sorting rates, but participation in

the King County Green Schools Program at any level can significantly improve schools’ correctly sorted compost and trash rates. Further, implementation and adherence to a food rescue program has the potential to rescue over 85,000 calories of food from all Auburn schools on a single day for students or community members in need.

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Jennifer Otten



Example food share bin at one Auburn school.
Credit: Student Team Member