

Developing School Composting Systems

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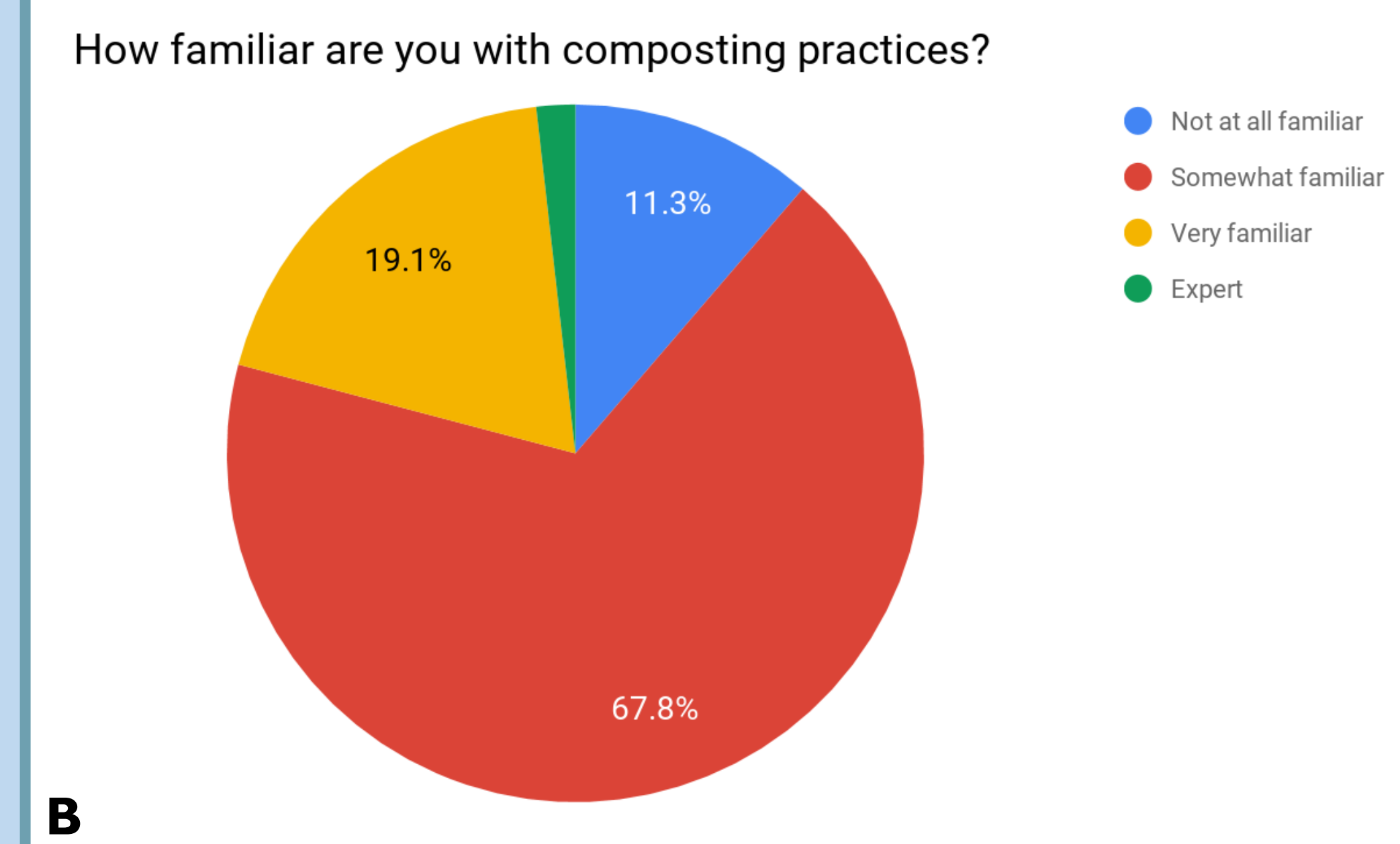
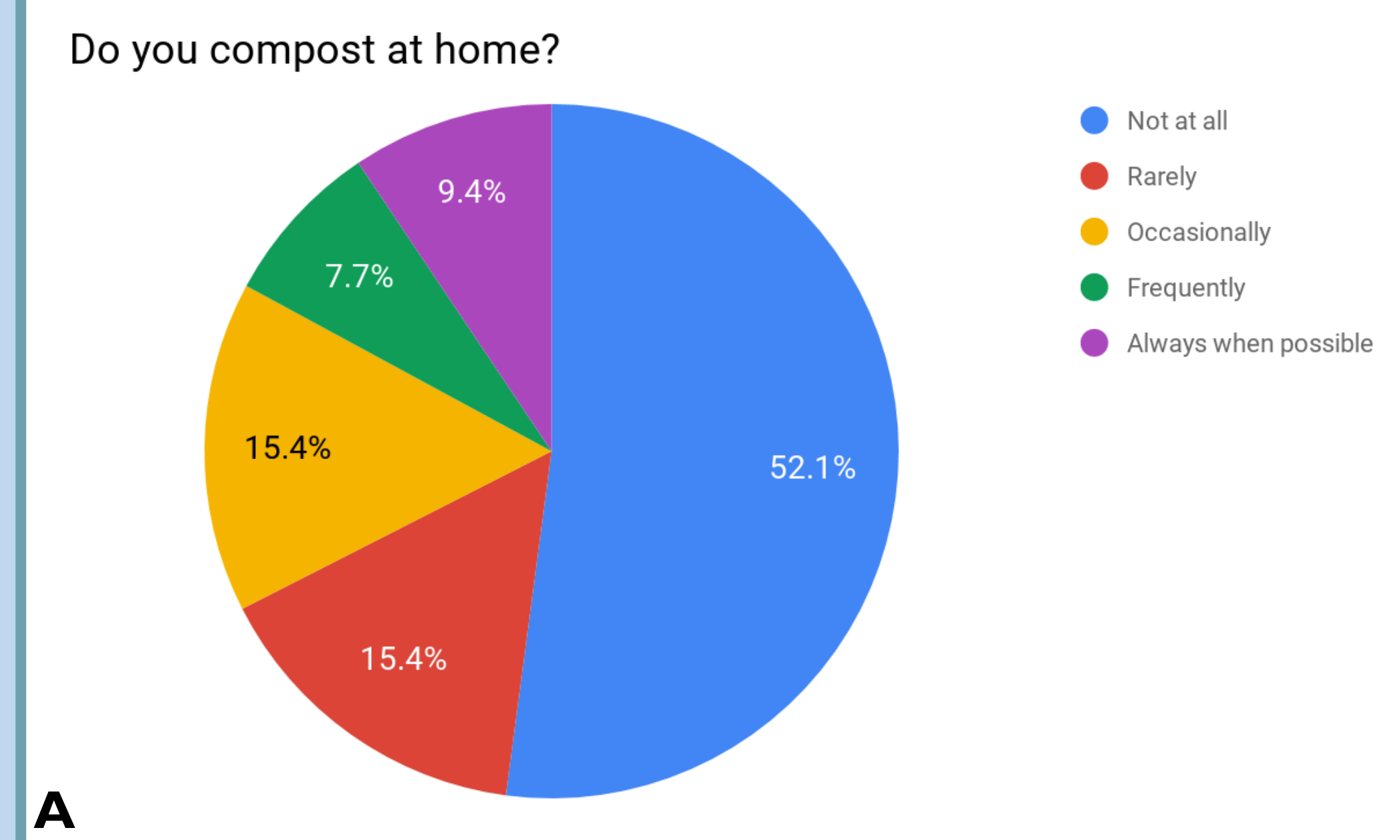
Community Partners: Nicole Freidenfelds¹, Virginia Walton²

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INTRODUCTION

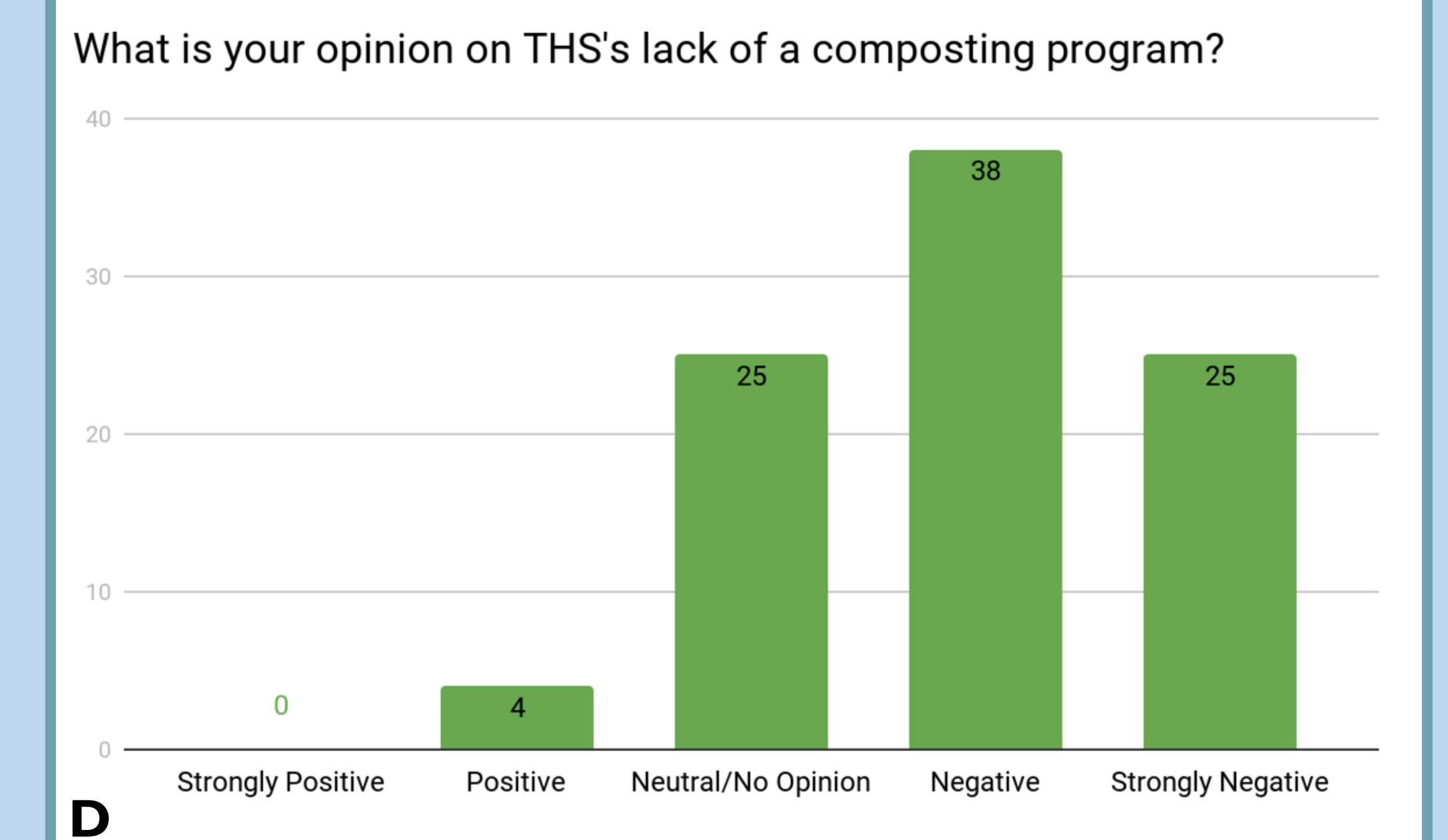
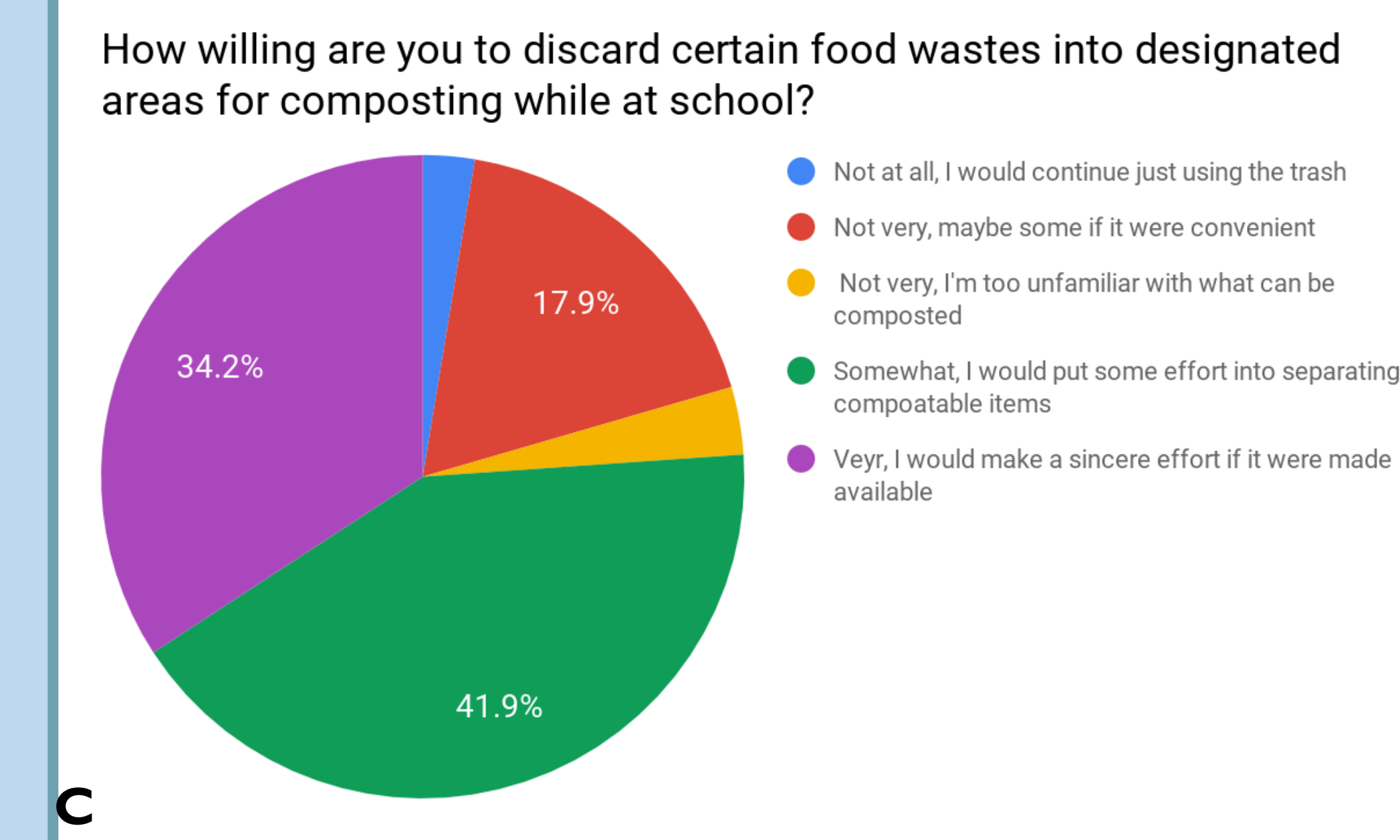
In any given lunch wave at Tolland High School (THS), an immense volume of uneaten food is thrown away. The school and town are then responsible for paying to have this garbage taken away, where it is then of no further use and deposited into landfills.

To counteract this unnecessary production of waste, a composting program for use within Tolland Schools is necessary. Creating the ability for much of this food waste to be discarded sustainably and reused as compost in school and town gardens, the school system will become more environmentally involved and reduce their waste expenses by eliminating the need to export compostable wastes.



RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

- To initially understand the necessary scope of instating a feasible composting program, the student body needed to be surveyed to understand base knowledge of composting. Survey was administered via email.
- Responses determined the depth of information necessary for an educational presentation.
- Various composting systems were researched to determine the best option for THS's needs.
 - Aerated static piles are best (Figure E)
- Compostable food was collected during all four lunch waves for one week to sample the volume of waste that would need to be accommodated in a composting system.



NEXT STEPS

- The results of the survey show that THS students know very little about composting, but are very motivated to learn more.
- However, THS administration doubts there will be lasting eagerness to maintain upkeep.
- Members of the school's new environmental club, "Green Team", are primarily upperclassmen and do not currently meet the number requirement for official club status.
- Efforts are being made to recruit younger club members to show interest and responsibility for maintaining THS's compost piles.

To officially implement a THS composting program, several actions are necessary:

- Compost bins must be built outside of school using wooden pallets (presently available)
- Compost receptacles must be implemented at all lunch waves
- Group of people and schedule developed for:
 - Bringing composted waste out daily
 - Rotating outside bins monthly
- Advisory education administered
- Begin composting food waste

RESULTS

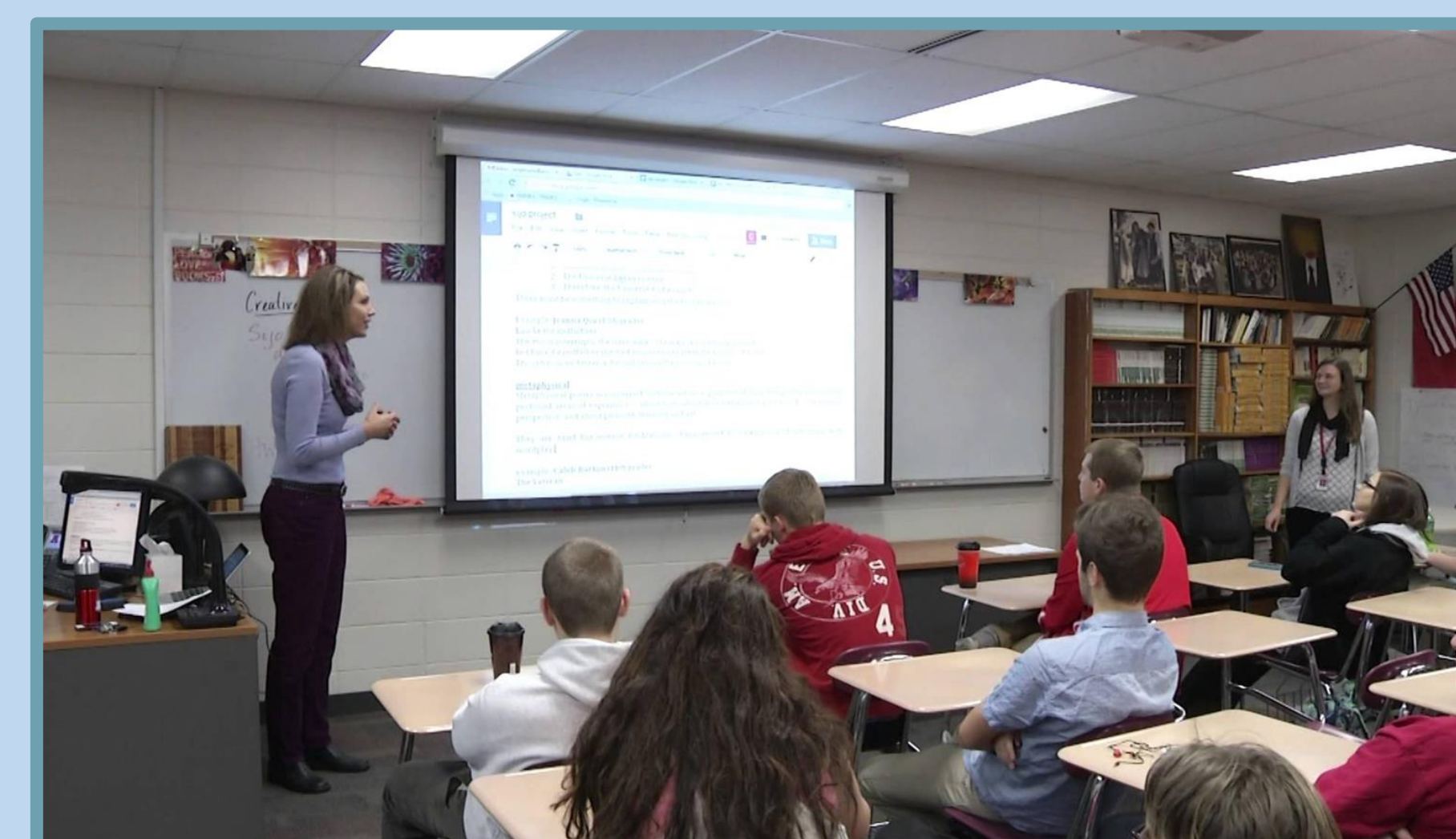
Analysis	Education	Presentation
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- 115 student responded
- 52% of students do not compost at home, and 79.1% are either somewhat or not at all familiar with composting
- Even so, the majority of students view the lack of composting at THS negatively or strongly negatively, and ~73% would make an effort to compost if made possible.

- All THS students meet monthly in advisory periods
- Composting 101 presentation and activities were created, consulting Ms. Walton's manual and an EPA explanation of composting, for use in advisory to educate students and staff about composting
- Lesson & presentation are to be scheduled into an upcoming advisory block



- Results of survey, decision of appropriate composting system, and advisory lesson plans were presented to school principal, Ms. Dominique Fox, and vice principal, Mrs. Margot Martello
- It was positively received and composting is expected to begin after final arrangements are made



REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Walton, Virginia. "School Composting - A Manual for Connecticut Schools." Ct.gov/Deep, www.ct.gov/deep/www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/compost/compost_pdf/schmanual.pdf.

"What You Can and Cannot Compost." How to Compost, 10 Mar. 2014, www.compostinstructions.com/what-you-can-and-cannot-compost/.

Mrs. Virginia Walton
Explained her development of the composting program at Mansfield Public Schools

Ms. Nicole Friedenfelds
Aided in connecting with the student body and THS administration

Ms. Dominique Fox
School principal; provided support for idea

Ms. Abby Beissinger
Assisted in project and idea development; reviewed poster and data