USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TODAY

USDA's Economic Research Service estimates

31% of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level **went uneaten** in the U.S. in 2010

Scheduling recess before lunch can **reduce plate waste by**

AS MUCH AS 30%

Extending lunch periods from

20 TO 30

minutes reduced plate waste by nearly one-third

SMARTER LUNCHROOM STRATEGIES, such as **how foods are named** and **where they are placed in the cafeteria,** can facilitate healthy choices and increase fruit and vegetable consumption by **UP TO 70%**

SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE STEPPING UP TO THE CHALLENGE WITH INNOVATIVE NEW STRATEGIES, SUCH AS:

- Allowing students to keep a lunch or breakfast food item for consumption later in the school day
- Using techniques listed on the **Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card** to help reduce food waste
- Setting up a table for kids to place items they are not going to consume (packaged or pre-portioned items)
- Letting kids self-serve
- Composting food waste for school gardens
- Collaborating with local farmers on composting or food-scrap projects
- Collecting excess wholesome food after mealtimes to donate to charitable organizations
- Sign up for the **U.S. Food Waste Challenge** to share your story on how you are reducing, recovering, or recycling food waste