Involving students in menu planning and conducting taste tests, implementing Offer versus Serve at all grade levels, providing more menu choices, serving foods with familiar flavors, serving ready-to-eat fruit, and inviting school staff and teachers to eat meals with students can reduce plate waste by as much as 30%.

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

Extending lunch periods from 20 to 30 minutes can reduce plate waste by nearly one-third.

Best practices according to school food service directors:
- Involve students in menu planning and conducting taste tests, implement Offer versus Serve at all grade levels, provide more menu choices, serve foods with familiar flavors, serve ready-to-eat fruit, and invite school staff and teachers to eat meals with students.

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 USDA's Guide to Conducting Student Food Waste Audits 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