

Due to our public school's location in a wealthy community, breakfast and lunch is provided for those who are food insecure. For this school year the USDA provides free breakfasts and lunches for public schools across the United States but in normal years, our school normally provides scholarships to help provide students with food. This allows everyone to have food at our school, but there is a stigma around the food served. Most students at our school prefer home-lunches to avoid eating school food. Thus, creating a clear divide between students who bring lunch and students eating school lunches. Along with that, we noticed the foods most often left unfinished and thrown away are fruits and vegetables.

We observed at our school the majority of students who receive free lunches and breakfasts come from a Muslim background. However, many people of all backgrounds at our school also eat school lunch but they may not need assistance in paying for their meals. This is important because it reveals a bigger picture of who in our community has access to better, more fresh foods compared to those who do not. Looking at this from an even broader view, it shows the idea that minority races often lack money and accessibility to have lots of fresh, non-processed foods.

Our school has an MDE Educational Benefits program that families can apply for that not only helps students gain access to free meals but allows students to be able to gain access to things they would otherwise not have been able to afford. Also, our school has a meal fund specifically targeting the problem of food insecurity for families at our school through financial support. One simple solution we can make is to collect unopened packaged foods that can be sent home with students who are food insecure. Since our school has already implemented a program to help combat food insecurity we mainly focused on a solution to lessen the food waste that is produced from the unwanted fruits and vegetables. An addition that can be made to the educational benefits program is to create a school garden and composting program that will help reduce waste of fresh foods and lower the environmental footprint of our school.

We will try to get this school garden implemented by talking to our school's principal first to get logistics figured out. If it is possible we will then try to get funding from the school, local companies and organizations to help build a greenhouse on school grounds. We will also try to get funding from more companies and organizations to buy seeds, baby plants, and supplies to start the garden. This will allow the school to have fruits and vegetables to grow during fall and winter since we live in Minnesota. To help gain plants and help maintain the fruits and vegetables in the garden we will start a gardening club that will consist of students from the school. The club will help encourage more students to practice more eco-friendly practices and build a community of students who want to help provide more fresh foods for the

school. This idea of a school greenhouse garden will help provide fresh and local foods for students at our school and any excess fruits and vegetables we plan to donate to local shelters or give to students who may want to bring them home. In order to contrast the fruit and vegetables that are thrown in the trash everyday at our school, we will try to get our principal to implement a composting program at our school. This will only require the school to purchase a few more trash cans and put labels with things that can be composted. Now this uneaten food can later become fertilizer that we could potentially use in the gardens to help give nutrients to so the vegetables and fruits plants can grow.



Works Cited:

<https://www.edinaschools.org/domain/106>

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