



Waste Reduction Incentive Program

Several schools choose to use incentives to motivate students to help reduce waste.



What schools are doing

Blake School - Highcroft - Wayzata

Blake School Highcroft is stressing the reduction of all waste at individual lunch periods, morning meetings, and assemblies. In the second semester they did a one-month Food Waste Challenge in which the winning lunch period was able to choose the first dessert of the next month. They are going a step further in using a white board to post waste numbers daily. They have also begun a more cooperative approach by listing a school total to work toward. Also, each month they do the Great Food Waste Cooperation, in which they will attempt to meet a school goal for food waste with a celebratory award (special treat and announcement) at the end. This has raised awareness even more and has reduced their food waste. They are also fostering school-wide participation in zero waste lunch days that not only helps to reduce waste but also sets up a waste reduction mindset in students and staff.

Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center - Lanesboro

Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center says that even with the knowledge of the environmental, ecological, and nutritional benefits of conserving food resources, students



often need additional motivation. They recommend implementing an incentive program. Incentives can come in any form. One such is the Golden Clean Plate Award. There is an Eagle Bluff saying to earn the clean plate award: *"Take what you can eat, and eat what you take!"*

Carondelet Catholic School - Minneapolis

A key factor in this program was a "zero waste" campaign called "Let's Slash Our Trash!" Children were educated on S.M.A.R.T (Save Money and Reduce Trash) lunches and encouraged to use reusable containers, and avoid single serve wrappings. The end goal was to have as close to a "zero waste" lunch room as possible. Information is on the school website with tips for packing SMART lunches and avoiding ziplocs, juice boxes and other items that couldn't be reused or composted. Kindergarten students have a special lesson on SMART Lunches and can receive a smiley face stamp if they have a SMART lunch (one or less pieces of trash) The young students are very motivated to get that smiley face.

Bayview Elementary School - Waconia

At Bayview Elementary School, posters are clearly visible that outline waste reduction and recycling practices. GreenCorps members conducted presentations using visual props and interactive role-play with students and staff. They also use "Cafeteria Coaches" (staff and parent volunteers) during all meals to mentor students on appropriate food consumption practices, which includes selection of appropriate portion sizes, encouraging students to eat all they select, and assisting with disposal procedures as needed. High school students from the "Living Better... Living Green" initiative have also given presentations to elementary students on waste reduction practices.

Students have demonstrated increasing support for waste reduction and recycling through service learning projects and active participation in the Conservation Club, which has grown from 25 to over 300 members within the last six years.

School Recycling Incentive Program in Cambridge

Schools make a large impact on, and contribution to, the City's recycling rate. The School Recycling Incentive Program aims to:

- Recognize and reward teachers who teach students about the importance of recycling and reduction of solid waste. FREE assistance is available to teachers.
- Provide teachers with relevant recycling curricula, hands-on educational opportunities linked to in-school recycling programs and professional development options.
- Provide an incentive to each school to increase the amount of material that it recycles.
- Encouraging friendly competitions between classes to see which ones produce the least waste from their lunches can be an effective tool.
- Have students weigh the garbage at the end of the lunch period, make a graph of the results and post it on the cafeteria wall.
- Host a "zero waste" fundraiser by selling zero waste lunch kits (a durable lunch bag, thermos, and reusable sandwich and snack retainers.

(Northeast Recycling Council 2011)

Resources

***Celebrate Success:
The Recycle More Minnesota toolkit***

<http://www.recyclemoreminnesota.org/how/school.html>

Eagle Bluff Golden Clean Plate Award

<http://www.eagle-bluff.org/top/projects/foodwise/>