

Cafeteria Share Tables



Why Arkansas schools should have this program

Food Waste and
Poverty in Arkansas

Poverty

- In 2016, 9.8% of families in the US were in poverty (that is about 8.1 million families)
- Additionally, 12.3% of families in the US were food insecure in the US at some point during 2016
 - However, 19.7% of Arkansans are food insecure
 - 28% of Arkansas Children are food insecure

Food Waste

- 40% of food in the US is wasted every year, which in turn wastes 165 billion dollars.
- Most children in schools do not finish their breakfasts and lunches, and because most schools do not allow food to be taken out of the cafeteria, the uneaten food usually ends up in the trash can.
- There are signs of reduced waste in schools that take breakfast and lunch to the classrooms.

Cafeteria Share Tables

The Idea

- Each school cafeteria has a spot where the kids can place unopened food that came from their school provided lunches.
- Students are not be allowed to place anything from their homemade lunches on the table.
- Leftover food is used at the school's after-school program or donated to a local food bank or homeless shelter.
- Food is also taken home by the students in backpack program.

Putting it into action

- The US Department of Agriculture provides guidelines for the safety of the foods on the share tables
 - Food must follow the safety requirements outlined in 7 CFR 210.13, 220.7, 226.20(l), and 225.16(a)
 - Any additional guidelines on the state level must also be followed

Arkansas Department of Education Guidance

- ADE supports local control when deciding if share tables are allowed.
- Districts are encouraged to have local school board adopted policies.
- Districts are also encouraged to engage their wellness committees in crafting local policy.

Next Steps

- Promotion of the idea
- Support of local districts
- Marketing of the idea
- Prioritizing hunger relief efforts