

A cardboard box filled with food waste, including apples, carrots, and plastic cups. The text is overlaid on the image.

Food Waste and Climate Change: School Solutions

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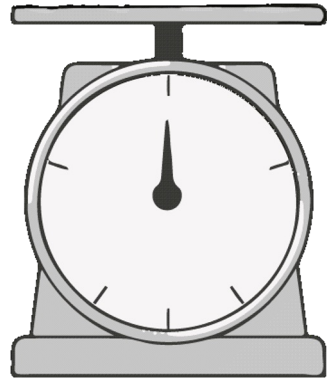
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Background on Food Waste

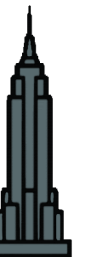
In the US we waste
30%-40%
of our food system.



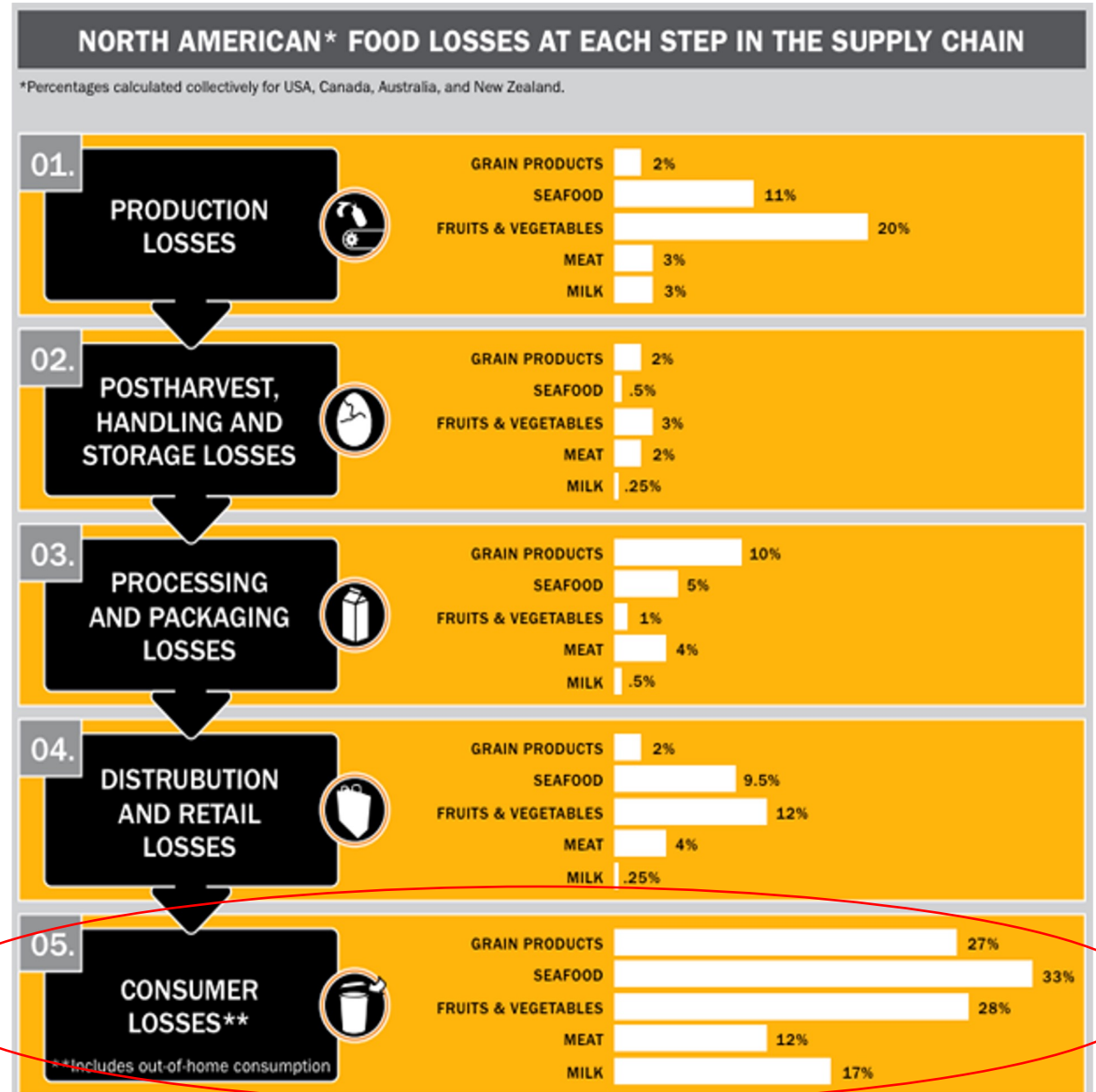
On average, each person
wastes more than
**20 pounds of food per
month**

**80
billion
pounds
each year**

Enough to fill
the Empire State
Building 1,000
times.



Where Does Food Loss & Food Waste Happen?



Why Food Waste Matters



Environmental Impact

The FAO estimates that if FW globally were a country it would be the **3rd largest emitter** of greenhouse gas after China and the US.

Economic Impact

Wasting 30-40% of the food we grow in the US is equal to throwing away **\$161-\$218 billion** per year.

Social Impact

10.5% or 13.7 million U.S. households were **food insecure**, yet we throw out food that is very nutritious.

Focus on School Food Waste



REDUCING FOOD WASTE
WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TODAY



USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that 31% of the overall food supply of the retail and consumer level went uneaten in the U.S. in 2010.

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PLATE WASTE NOW = **PLATE WASTE BEFORE**

Scheduling periods before lunch can reduce plate waste by **AS MUCH AS 30%**.

Fixing up lunch periods from **20 TO 30** minutes reduced plate waste by nearly one-third.

SMARTER LUNCHROOM STRATEGIES
Such as new foods are named and where they are placed in the cafeteria, can reduce food waste 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 opt-out of food or food items for conscientious or medical reasons
- Using individual plates on the **Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card** which reduces food waste
- Allowing students to take home food items that are not being consumed
- Using green cards
- Composting food waste for school gardens
- Collaborating with local farmers on an on-site or nearby farm-to-school program
- Collaborating with waste management companies to donate food to local hunger relief organizations
- Engaging in the U.S. **Food Waste Challenge** to share your story on the program and help inspire other schools to follow

The State of New Jersey School Food Waste Guidelines



K-12 Schools Edition

November 2019



New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
New Jersey Department of Agriculture
New Jersey Department of Education
New Jersey Department of Health
New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education





School Solutions in Action:
Training Food Service Staff

Paterson Public Schools



- Through a partnership with the Paterson Public Schools we implemented an intervention to reduce cafeteria food waste

Intervention Design



Food Waste Audit



Training School Food Service Personnel

Smarter Lunchroom Movement,
OvS,
Share Tables

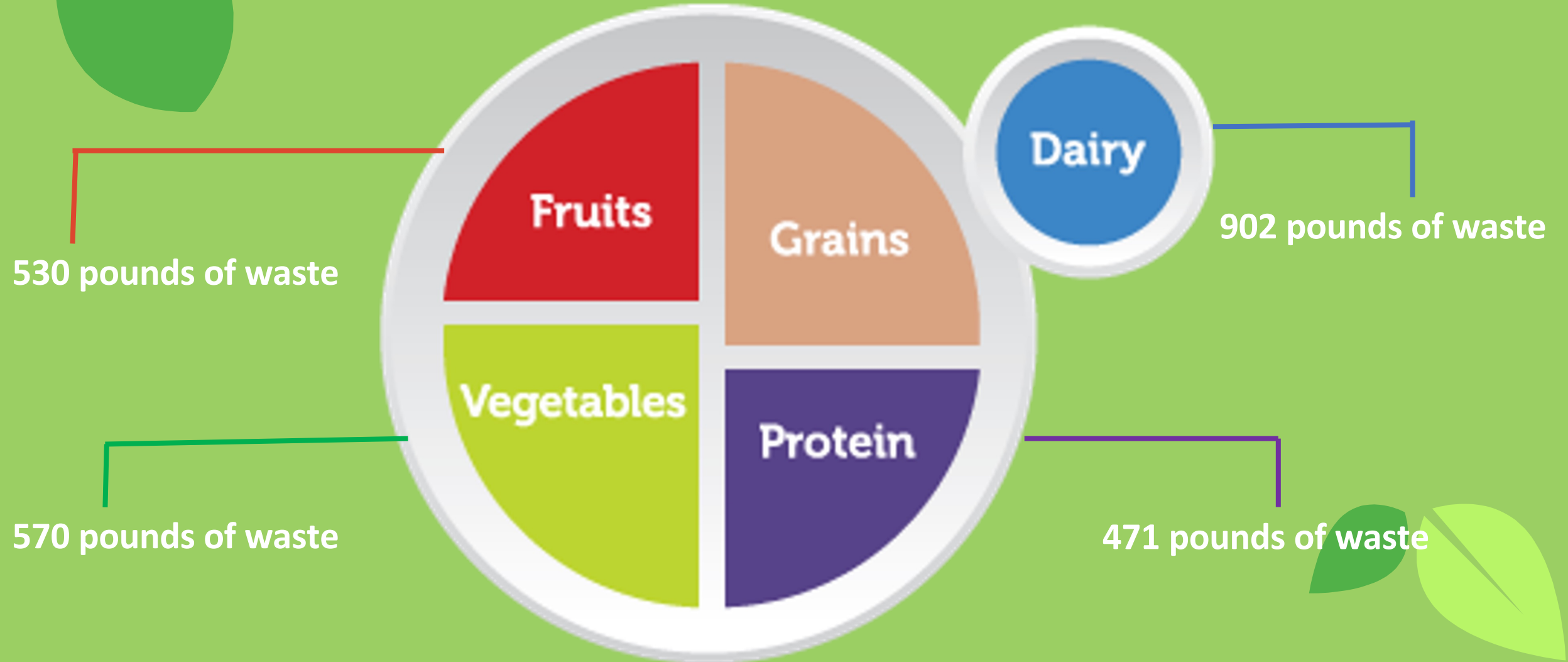


Technical Assistance



Repeat of Food Waste Audit

Food Waste-Pre Intervention



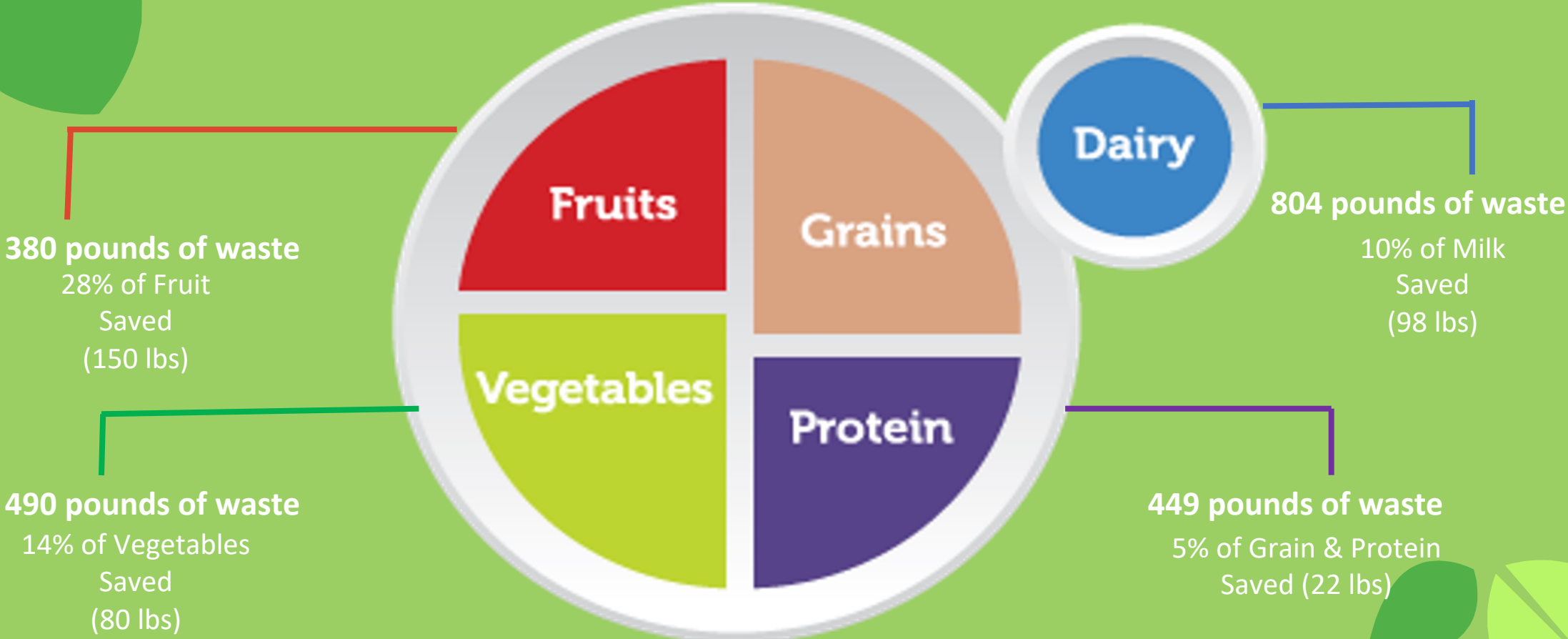


2,473 pounds

Wasted in our 30 visits in schools



Food Waste: Post-Intervention



380 pounds of waste
28% of Fruit
Saved
(150 lbs)

490 pounds of waste
14% of Vegetables
Saved
(80 lbs)

Dairy

804 pounds of waste
10% of Milk
Saved
(98 lbs)

449 pounds of waste
5% of Grain & Protein
Saved (22 lbs)

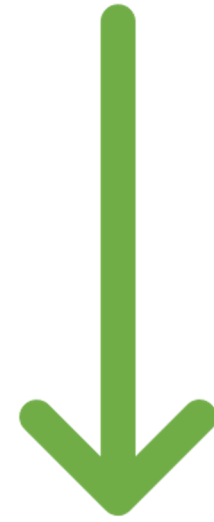


350 pounds

of food saved after our training



17% Reduction in
Food Waste



What does this mean?

- ~12 pounds of waste **SAVED** per school per day
- ~2,160 pounds of waste **SAVED** a year per school.
- ~90,720 pounds of food waste **SAVED** for the whole district for the year.



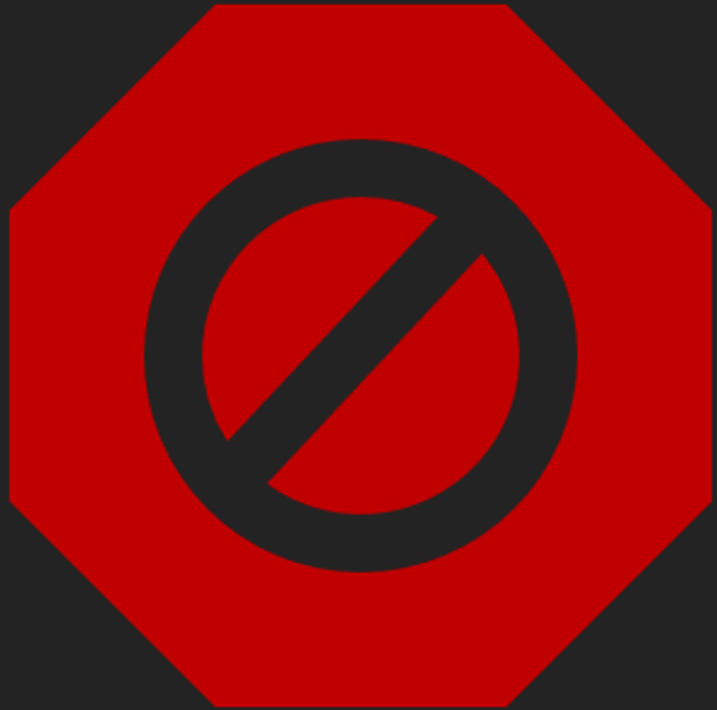
\$76,452

cost savings for the school district per year



Then...





COVID

NJDEP to the Rescue

- NJ DEP Recycling Enhancement Act FY 2021
- Proposal: Create a curriculum that teaches kids about food waste & climate change
- *(Did you know that NJ is the first state in the country to mandate climate change education for K-12?)*





Now what?





AmeriCorps

NJ School Climate Change Corps

10 Service Members

10 school districts

Service Members will:

- Conduct food waste audits
- Train food service staff
- Teach 5th graders about food waste & climate change



What questions do you have?