

# KANSAS

## Section 1: School Demographics

**School Name**

Maize South Elementary School

**Principal's name**

Meg Thimmesch

**School Address**

3404 N. Maize Rd  
Wichita, Kansas 67205  
United States

[Map It](#)

**Number of students (total enrollment)**

600

**Lowest grade**

1

**Highest grade**

5

**This school is:**

- A public school

Please explain:

**Number of students by grade level**

**Elementary or lower Middle grades High or upper school**

600

**Number (or percent) of students eligible for free or reduced lunch**

**Free lunch Reduced lunch Neither free nor reduced lunch**

108

44

448

## **Section 2: Background about school lunch**

**How many students buy lunch in the school's cafeteria?**

51 to 70 percent

**How many minutes do students have to eat lunch?**

20

**Are students allowed to eat lunch in rooms/buildings other than the cafeteria?**

Yes

**Are students allowed to leave campus for lunch?**

Yes

**Which students are allowed to leave campus for lunch?**

Any students may leave with a parent or guardian ( Also, this school goes down to Kindergarten but this form would not allow a "K")

**Are there any times during the school year when breakfast or lunch is free to all students?**

No

Please explain:

**Who controls the portions and servings students receive?**

Other

Please explain:

Both B & D - (B) Cafeteria staff portion items into servings, but students select items & Number of servings and (D) Meals are prepackaged. Students & staff do not affect portions or servings received.

**Does the school serve set meals (e.g. chicken nuggets with potatoes and carrots) or can students choose what they want from the menu?**

Other

Please explain:

Students choose entrees.

**Are fruits/vegetables required with every meal?**

Yes, fruits/vegetables are included in the price

**In your teams' opinion, are students content with the meal options at school?**

Neutral

Please explain:

Some students seem very happy w/ most meals, while other students always bring their own lunches.

**What type of utensils do students use to eat?**

Other

Please explain:

A & D - (A) Reusable utensils, such as metal as well as (B) Disposable utensils, such as standard plastics

**What type of plates/trays are used to serve the food?**

Other

Please explain:

A & D - (A) Reusable plates or trays, such as plastic and (D) Styrofoam plates or trays that are

recovered for recycling

### **Section 3: Food waste activities at the school**

**Does the school use any of the following waste reduction activities?**

- Menus revised to reduce commonly wasted food items
- Procedures put in place to reduce food loss to expiration
- Offer smaller portions for students who may want less food
- “Offer versus serve” policy in place

Please explain:

**Has the school performed a food waste audit previously?**

No, a waste audit has not been considered

Please explain:

**Which of the following generates the majority of food waste at your school?**

Student food waste

Please explain:

**On average, do you think food waste is an issue at your school?**

Yes, somewhat important

### **Section 4: School Waste Data Form**

**School name**

Maize South Elementary School

**Date of audit**

03/30/2017

**Students in attendance on day of audit**

572

**Numbers of lunches served on day of audit**

356

**Menu served on day of audit**

Note: We audited only the four 4th grade classes out of the entire school of K-5 children. 104 4th graders were in the lunchroom that day.

Taco salad, black beans, pineapple tidbits, & milk - w/ alternate packaged foods offered - peanut butter & Jelly sandwiches and cheese sticks.

**Waste type: Unopened food**

<b>A: Type of food</b>	<b>B: Number of items</b>	<b>C: Weight of empty bin</b>	<b>D: Total weight</b>	<b>E: Net weight (Total - Empty)</b>
Fruit sides	1	0	5 oz	5oz
Lunchables	1	0	4 oz	4 oz
Chips	3	0	2.625 oz	2.625 oz
Milk	1	0	9 oz	9 oz
PB & J sandwiches	12	0	34.5 oz	34.5 oz
Cheese sticks	19	0	18.75 oz	18.75 oz
Fruit snack	1	0	0.375 oz	0.375 oz
condiments	2	0	0.75 oz	0.75 oz

**Total net weight of unopened food**

4.69

**Notes regarding unopened food**

Items were weighed in ounces, converted total to pounds

**Waste type: Food waste**

<b>A: Bin/Bag Number</b>	<b>B: Weight of empty bin</b>	<b>C: Total weight</b>	<b>D: Net weight (Total - Empty)</b>	<b>E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)</b>	<b>F: Percent full</b>
1	1.2 lbs	13.2 lbs	12.0 lbs	y	75%
2	1.2 lbs	3.4 lbs	2.2 lbs	n	15%

**Total net weight of food waste**

14.2

**Waste type: Liquid waste**

<b>A: Bin/Bag Number</b>	<b>B: Weight of empty bin</b>	<b>C: Total weight</b>	<b>D: Net weight (Total - Empty)</b>	<b>E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)</b>	<b>F: Percent full</b>
1	1.5	5.2	3.7	y	10%
2	1.5	2.2	0.7	n	2%

**Total net weight of liquid waste**

4.4

**Waste type: Recycling**

<b>A: Bin/Bag Number</b>	<b>B: Weight of empty bin</b>	<b>C: Total weight</b>	<b>D: Net weight (Total - Empty)</b>	<b>E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)</b>	<b>F: Percent full</b>
1	1.2	3	1.8	y	95%
2	1.2	3	1.8	y	100%
3	1.2	2.4	1.2	y	100%
4	1.2	2.9	1.7	n	100%
5	1.2	1.2	0.1	n	20%

**Total net weight of recycling**

6.6

**Waste type: Other (Landfill)**

<b>A: Bin/Bag Number</b>	<b>B: Weight of empty bin</b>	<b>C: Total weight</b>	<b>D: Net weight (Total - Empty)</b>	<b>E: Picture taken of the bin? (Y/N)</b>	<b>F: Percent full</b>
1	1.2	2.8	1.6	y	90%
2	1.2	2.6	1.4	y	100%

**Total net weight of other wastes (landfill)**

3.0

**Notes regarding food, recycling, and other (landfill) wastes**

Even though we put the paper taco "bowls" into the recycling bucket, they probably weren't recyclable due to the greasy taco meat & sauce on them. The milk cartons also would have to have been rinsed out before recycling.

**Describe the process you used to establish clear guidelines for students to follow to sort their food waste.**

As the Maize South Elementary 4th grade students were sitting at the lunchroom tables, one of our team members, Sam, spoke with a microphone to introduce our team and to explain why we were there. Sam pointed out to the students the various containers that were to be used for each of the food waste items. These 5-gallon buckets (for trash, recyclables, food waste & liquid waste) and boxes (for unopened foods) were clearly labeled with the colorful LifeSmarts Food Waste Audit signs. These containers were lined up in the location that students normally dumped their food waste products.

As the MSE students lined up to dump their trays, our team members positioned themselves behind and beside the buckets as well as further up the line of students, helping to inform the 4th graders as they got closer to the waste containers, which items were to go into which container.

## Upload photos

- [Trash.jpg](#)
- [Tim-and-Cale-weighing-recyclables.JPG](#)
- [Sorting-the-lunch-wastes-into-containers.JPG](#)
- [Sam-holding-up-bucket-explaining-project.JPG](#)
- [Recycling-bucket-closeup.JPG](#)
- [Liquid-Waste.jpg](#)
- [IMG\\_2173.JPG](#)
- [Food-Waste.jpg](#)
- [Food-Waste-Audit-interview-with-Principal.jpg](#)
- [Food-Waste-Audit-9.jpg](#)
- [Explaining-project-to-students.JPG](#)
- [Ashley-weighing-unopened-foods.JPG](#)

## Link to files unable to upload

Link to folder with 12 photos. Forgot to label photo IMG\_2173, but it is called "Labeling Containers"  
If you need to only have 10 photos, disregard that IMG\_2173 one and Food Waste Audit 9 since those were the last 2 we put on.

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0Bx\\_5nQBZ-zlhOXVxZjQzX0JSZTg?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0Bx_5nQBZ-zlhOXVxZjQzX0JSZTg?usp=sharing)

\*One other note: this page did not let me put in a label for all the Total Net Weights - all Total Weights are in pounds.

**Would your team be interested in being part of the food waste panel at Nationals?**

No

## Section 5: Critical Thinking

**Based on your observations during the food waste audit, make three recommendations to your School Board to reduce food waste.**

Dear School Board members:

After completing a food waste audit with the 4th grade students at Maize South Elementary and learning about the amount of food wasted daily in our district, we have three recommendations that we would like for you to consider to help reduce food waste overall in our school district -

- 1) Promote planting of school gardens, helping us determine where we could help create these gardens
- 2) After creating, sending out and tabulating results of a survey to students and a separate survey to parents to help determine what to provide for lunches, find professional chefs willing to volunteer their time to help advise cafeteria personnel create menus to make meals tastier
- 3) Look into the FoodBus.org program, which is a non-profit organization working to help schools begin actions to help reduce food waste

Thank you for your time and consideration of these recommendations.

**Justify a school's role in teaching children about food waste and the impact food waste has on school budgets, the environment, and hunger in the community.**

**The US Environmental Protection Agency has set a goal to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. Based upon your experience conducting this food waste audit, will the US meet this goal? Explain why or why not.**

**Detail two or three findings or observations that surprised you. Describe how conducting this food waste audit has impacted you and your team, and the way you think about food in America.**

1) Food waste in schools is bigger than we thought. Extrapolating our data over 5 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools made us realize how much is possibly being wasted just in our school district alone. The food tossed away (both food waste & unopened foods) by one grade level (4 classes of 4th graders) at the elementary school we visited was 18.89 lbs or about 19 lbs. Taking that 19 lbs x 6 grades x 5 elementary schools = 570 lbs. (The cafeteria staff mentioned that the day we collected the food waste was a "light" waste day, too). Adding in comparable waste at the 2 middle schools and 2 high schools (while realizing that there may be a large margin of error due to many variables) in just our district could be up to 1710 lbs of wasted food PER DAY.

2) We were surprised that recyclable items were not being recycled at the school. Aluminum cans could be easily set aside to recycle. Milk cartons are also recyclable, but not quite as easily. The recycling center in town would prefer that milk cartons be rinsed out since they may be in a "bale" for a month before being sent to be recycled.

3) Unopened foods are not being taken to shelters or offered to teachers given to hungry children during the day or to take home.

All this made us think about how much of this waste could go to use - feeding hungry children or homeless people or saving the school money or helping save the environment by recycling - and made us wonder what we can do to promote less waste.

**What is one obstacle your team faced during the audit and how did you work to resolve it? If the issue went unresolved, what steps would you take to reevaluate your approach?**

Our food waste audit went relatively smoothly - so we only had a couple small weighing "obstacles" to deal with. We needed to weigh the buckets of food, trash, and recyclables but the digital scale we decided to use wasn't sensitive enough to weigh under about 20 lbs very accurately or at all. So our "weighing person" weighed himself with and without each bucket and found the difference. He happened to weigh exactly 150 pounds; so it was nice that it was easy mental math since we were all very busy..

Also, the amount of unopened foods was not very large in our audit. We thought that if we had a smaller scale to weigh the items individually it would be more accurate. We asked the kitchen staff about weighing those items, and they had 2 small food scales for us to choose from to use. The one that weighed food in ounces was perfect for our use. We then converted our weights in ounces back to pounds for the total weight of unopened foods.

## **Bonus Question**

**Should all schools be required to do food waste audits on a regular basis? Why or why not? Support your answer.**

Discovering any area of unnecessary waste and identifying measures of how to reduce that waste is important and should be encouraged. Considering a shocking amount of American children aren't adequately fed, we should do everything possible to maximize the value of food we give to our children and minimize the waste of that food. Being aware of how much food schools dispose of is a necessary step in the right direction.