



Starting The Day Right!



Resource Guide

65%

of
America's
teachers
consistently
see kids
coming
to school
hungry
because
they are
not getting
enough to
eat at home.¹



Introduction

Imagine being eight years old and walking in to your second grade classroom. You sit at your desk and your belly starts to growl – and all you hope is that your friends can't hear it. You hope that they don't realize you haven't eaten since lunch yesterday.

Now, imagine being the second grade teacher for that class. The children in front of you come from varying backgrounds – including income, family structure and working parents. You can see on their faces that they haven't had breakfast; you can feel their low energy.

Fortunately, these scenarios are unnecessary. There are federal resources already available to your school to ensure kids start their day full of nutritious food and ready to learn.

This toolkit will help you to join in being part of the solution.

Schools are eligible to receive federal reimbursement for breakfasts served to children through the School Breakfast Program though many schools do not participate. Even in schools that do serve breakfast participation is often low when compared with total enrollment or participation in the National School Lunch Program.

Children who eat breakfast perform better in school and on standardized tests and they have fewer behavioral and health problems. The School Breakfast Program is designed to allow schools to ensure that all children start the day alert and engaged.

Expanding the School Breakfast Program in your school is a simple strategy that will improve your school environment. There are various strategies that can expand school breakfast and help the program reach more students. In this Backing Breakfast expansion guide you will find resources to help you expand your program and reach more children.



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WHY?

Increase School

Research Demonstrates that School Breakfast Improves Children's Education, Health, and Well-Being

Did you know? Studies show that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, especially for children. Eating school breakfast improves children's educational performance, behavior, and health.

School breakfast improves children's educational performance:

- Children who eat a complete breakfast make fewer mistakes and work faster on math tests than children who eat a partial breakfast. ²
- Children who eat breakfast at school, closer to class and test-taking time, perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home. ³
- Children who eat breakfast show improved cognitive function, attention, and memory. ⁴
- Participating in school breakfast is associated with improved math grades, attendance, and punctuality. ⁵

School Breakfast improves children's attendance and behavior:

- Schools that provide breakfast in the classroom to all students show decreases in tardiness and suspensions as well as improved student behavior and attentiveness. ⁶
- Providing students with breakfast in the classroom is associated with fewer disciplinary measures. ⁷
- Children who participate in school breakfast have lower rates of absenteeism. ⁸

Breakfast improves children's diets and overall health:

- Children who eat breakfast tend to have more adequate nutrient intake than children who do not. ⁹
- Children and adolescents who eat breakfast are more likely to maintain a healthy body weight. ¹⁰

Adapted from The Food Research and Action Center's "Breakfast for Learning" Child Nutrition Factsheet.

For additional research on the benefits of the School Breakfast Program, see USDA "Discover School Breakfast Toolkit" www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/default.htm



Breakfast Participation:



HOW?

To Increase

Determining Whether or Not Your School Will Serve Free Meals to All Students

Many schools that offer school breakfast have low participation in the program. This is often because breakfast is served at a time or place that is not opportune for students. There are various serving methods that can increase participation. The key to increasing breakfast participation is selecting the serving method that best fits the environment of your school and the needs of your students.

Serving Breakfast Free to All Students

The most effective methods for increasing participation in school breakfast is a universal breakfast program that serves breakfast free to all students regardless of income. Determining whether a school can afford to serve a universal breakfast is the first step.



What are the benefits of serving all meals free?

- Increases participation: Serving breakfast free to all students helps increase participation. Students who previously paid for breakfast have an added incentive to participate.
- Allows more flexibility in serving meals: When all meals are served free, there is a greater flexibility about where to serve the meal.
- Reduces administrative work: Many school food service staff report that serving all meals for free greatly simplifies and reduces paperwork and allows them to spend more time and resources on the meal – not just reporting.
- Reduced stigma associated with school breakfast: In many schools breakfast is considered a program that is just for the poorest students. This stigma associated with the program reduces participation by low, middle, and higher income students alike. When breakfast is served free to all it becomes a normal experience for children of all income levels.
- Student and Teacher Relationships: Many schools find that serving breakfast free to all students and staff provides an opportunity for students and teachers to interact. When teachers and staff eat along with their students they model healthy eating habits and serve as good role models.

How will my school get reimbursed if all meals are served free?

When all meals are served free, meals are claimed for reimbursement based on the students' eligibility. Although the reduced-priced and paid fees are not collected from families, increased participation allows schools to break-even or even make money. If for example a school served breakfast to 500 students each day of which 50% of students qualify for free meals, 10% for reduced price meals and 40% for full price the school food service would be reimbursed \$565 for each day.¹¹ Super Schools that have a large percentage of low-income students benefit from higher subsidization associated with free and reduced eligible students as well as funding associated with "severe need."





School Breakfast Participation:

If we serve all breakfast free, do families still have to fill out free and reduced-price meal applications?

Yes! Although breakfast may be served free to all students it is still important to collect free and reduced-price meal applications. This is because reimbursement will be calculated based on the percentages of students qualifying for free, reduced-price, and full-price meals. In addition, various streams of education funding are based on this percentage. For more information on how to run an effective school meal application campaign visit www.frac.org.

How can I determine if my school should serve breakfast free to all students?

The higher the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced-price meals, the greater the reimbursement your school would receive when serving all meals free. Many schools need to be at least 40 percent free and reduced-priced to break even when serving all meals free. Other schools find that they need at least 60 to 70 percent of students who qualify for free or reduced price meals. The “break even” point depends on the cost to run your breakfast program and the size of your school. The school nutrition director can determine if all meals can be served free.

My school has a low percentage of free and reduced price students, how can I best expand breakfast without offering all meals free?

Many other breakfast serving methods can be employed if students are charged for reduced price and paid meals. The effectiveness of some of these models will depend on the “point-of-sale” system—meaning the way in which students pay for meals. Many schools now use advanced point of sale systems such as a PIN number or student ID card that can be swiped when the student receives food. If a school already uses an advanced point of sale system there will be greater flexibility in deciding which breakfast serving method to implement. In other schools, school food staff check students’ names off a check-list and then cross reference the list against their school meal eligibility. This method tends to work best in smaller schools.

Keep in mind that the USDA requires that students are not identified by their income level. This means that any system that clearly identifies which students get free or reduced-price meals must be avoided.

The
higher
the
percentage
of students
qualifying
for **free** and
reduced-price
meals, the
greater the
reimbursement
your school
would **receive**
when serving all
meals free.

MODE

For

Different Breakfast Serving Methods

Traditional Breakfast

This model is a common approach to serving breakfast – usually served before the school day begins in the cafeteria. Many schools find that participation is low when students are required to get to school before the bell rings to eat breakfast in the cafeteria. Various factors can limit children’s access to before-the-bell breakfast including:

- School buses do not arrive in time for breakfast
- Long lines in the cafeteria discourage participation
- When given an option, many children will choose to spend time with friends or play outside before class begins
- Traditional breakfast is often associated with “poor students.” When students feel stigmatized about their need to eat at school, participation will be low.

Despite these challenges it is possible to make traditional cafeteria breakfast more accessible. Some schools find that they can have high participation in before-the-bell cafeteria breakfast. Strategies for increasing the success of this serving model include:

- Ensuring that all buses arrive in time for school breakfast
- Having students enter the building at the door closest to the cafeteria
- Make eating in the cafeteria a normal and fun part of the day

Breakfast-in-the-Classroom

Serving breakfast in the classroom either during homeroom or first period is one of the most effective ways of increasing breakfast participation. It is often thought of as the “silver bullet” in making sure that all children have access to breakfast.

Breakfast is brought into each classroom in containers that keep the food hot or cold. Meals are distributed to children and a meal count is taken by the teacher or by cafeteria staff which is returned to the school nutrition staff. In some schools food service staff distribute meals in the doorway of the classroom. Trash bags are provided to each classroom and trash is collected immediately. The containers are returned to the cafeteria. During breakfast teachers often eat with their students, take attendance, read and provide other educational activities. Because all students eat breakfast as a normal part of the school day, classroom breakfast eliminates the stigma often associated with school breakfast. In most schools breakfast is also served free to teachers and staff who model good eating habits for the students.

While this method works best when all meals are served free, it is possible in schools that charge for reduced and full-priced meals as well. Check with the school nutrition director to see if this method would work in your school.





Serving Breakfast:

Grab and Go Breakfast

This is a popular method for serving breakfast, especially in middle and high schools.

Food is distributed in carts that are located in high traffic areas in halls or at the entrance to school. Children “grab” a meal and “go” to their next class, where they eat. Depending on the point of sale system in place in a school this can work in schools where breakfast is free for all students, or in schools that charge for reduced and paid meals.

Breakfast After First Period

Many children, especially teenagers, are not hungry when they first wake up in the morning, but some time before lunch their stomachs start to grumble. Breakfast After First Period, also known as “Second Chance Breakfast” allows these students to eat when they are hungry. Food is distributed during a “nutrition break”

later in the morning. This can be done with the Grab and Go style between classes or during an official break in the school day. This method can be employed in schools with universal free breakfast program or in schools that do not serve all breakfasts free.



Breakfast on the Bus

In school districts where most students have long bus rides to school, serving breakfast on the bus can help students get through a long commute and arrive at school focused and ready to learn. In this method food is kept in containers and served as students get on the bus. This method is usually employed by schools that serve universal free breakfasts.

Vending Machines

Some schools have employed methods where students can enter their student ID or PIN number into a machine that will produce a reimbursable meal, including milk. This method is especially popular in high schools and can be implemented even if students are required to pay for reduced-price and free meals.

Adapted from USDA “Discover School Breakfast Toolkit” and Maryland Hunger Solutions “Students Can Have Their Breakfast and Eat it Too”.

Strategies

Gaining
Support
From:
Parents,
Teachers,
Principals,
Building
Engineers,
School
Nutrition
Staff
and
Superintendents

Superintendents

As a school superintendent you can help prepare students for success by promoting and supporting School Breakfast Programs in your community. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, optimal physical and mental development, and lifelong health and well-being. School nutrition programs positively influence students' eating habits.

Students need your voice to reinforce the importance of school breakfast programs in your district. With your support, students will have access to healthy breakfast options through the School Breakfast Program.

Strategies for Success:

- Let staff and the community know that you value and enthusiastically support a healthy school nutrition environment, including the School Breakfast Program. Let your actions reflect your values.
- Establish a policy that requires a breakfast program in every school.
- Support non-traditional serving options to encourage participation (such as classroom breakfast, second chance breakfast, grab-n-go, breakfast on the bus, etc.).

Expanding school breakfast participation requires the involvement of the entire school community. Although everyone working with students will likely benefit from the improved educational performance, behavior, and health of their students, implementing change can be challenging. Despite the proven benefits of the school breakfast program, there can be resistance on the part of the school community. Below are a list of tools and strategies to help ensure support from principals, teachers, school nutrition staff, building engineers, and families.

Principals

Principals play an important role in deciding to implement or expand the School Breakfast Program. They also lead teachers in the goal of developing successful students. They are role models for students and the leaders in the educational community. Principals can influence the success of the School Breakfast Program as well as the success of their students. For instance, some schools serve breakfast on test days because studies show an improvement in performance when students have eaten breakfast. However, breakfast is important every school day. Students must be alert and learn skills throughout the school year to do well on standardized tests.





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For Success:

Teachers

Teachers have multiple roles within the school environment and are important supporters in implementing a successful school breakfast program. The studies mentioned in the guide show that eating a healthy breakfast improves attention span, academic performance and classroom behavior. In schools that have implemented the school breakfast programs, teachers have found that concerns are easily addressed and the benefits far outweigh the challenges.

In breakfast expansion efforts, particularly methods that involve serving breakfast in the classroom, teachers may be concerned about:

Will My Workload Increase?

Teachers may be concerned that their workload will increase if they are responsible for monitoring breakfast especially if it is served in the classroom. However, if a meal count is taken while taking attendance, teachers find that their workload does not change. In addition, many teachers have found creative ways to incorporate educational activities like reading aloud, math puzzles or other activities during breakfast time. Some elementary, home economics, health education, and physical education teachers even choose to integrate school breakfast and nutrition education into their curriculum.

Will Breakfast In The Classroom Take Away From Instructional Time?

Studies have shown that breakfast is consumed quickly. No matter what the serving method breakfast can take as little as 2 minutes (Grab 'n Go) or 10 minutes (Breakfast in the Classroom) or as long as the time available (Traditional Breakfast, Breakfast on the Bus).

Will Classroom Breakfast Cause Disruption and Mess?

When breakfast is served in the classroom, food service staff provide garbage bags, paper towels and other cleaning supplies for students to use. Students assist in clean-up after eating their nutritious meal. This method of serving can limit both work and clean-up for everyone.

Strategies for Success:

- Discuss the importance of school breakfast with teachers.
- Share the research which shows that students behave and perform better after school breakfast.
- Invite an educator from a school that has already implemented the program to speak to school staff about school breakfast and answer questions.



Strateg

School Nutrition Staff

As discussed earlier, district school nutrition service is the key to providing your students with nutritious breakfast in the morning. Most school nutrition staff are eager to find ways to expand their meal service and will be able to determine the best breakfast serving method for each school.

Strategies for Success:

- Request a meeting with the school nutrition director in the district as soon as possible to begin planning breakfast expansion.
- Discuss the different serving methods and determine which method is most appropriate for each school.

Building Engineers

The role of building engineers may change when a school implements breakfast in the classroom or any method where students eat outside the cafeteria. However, many building engineers find that their work load does not increase. In addition, building engineers often appreciate that expanding breakfast makes a positive difference in the school environment and are happy to participate.

Strategies for Success:

- Work with building engineers to ensure that cleaning and waste removal will be planned and monitored.

Parents

Some parents enjoy eating breakfast with their children at home, but for many families lack of resources or busy morning routines make sitting down to eat as a family unrealistic in the morning. For this reason many parents and guardians of children not currently participating in the program may be pleased that their child will now be receiving a free or low-cost meal at school. Even if a school already serves breakfast, many families may not realize that eating breakfast at school is an option.

Strategies for Success:

- Send a letter home to all parents informing them about the availability of school breakfast, and announcing any changes in your school breakfast program such as serving all meals free in the classroom.
- Record automated “robo-calls” informing parents of changes in your breakfast program.



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For Success:



Successes

Stories of Model Programs:

SUCCESS Stories and Model Programs

All across the United States, schools are reaping the benefits of expanding breakfast. Below are a few examples of programs that have increased participation significantly.

San Angelo ISD Serves Up Breakfast in the Classroom

As of April 2011, 14 of San Angelo's 16 elementary schools serve breakfast in the classroom. Breakfast is served free of charge to all students in the building as an integrated part of the school day. Student "breakfast managers" deliver thousands of meals every day and are proud to be part of the team because it is considered a great privilege to have been chosen for this task. Breakfast takes about 10 minutes to eat, then trash is gathered in special plastic bags thick enough to withstand drink box straws and put outside the doors for school custodians to pick up the same morning. Teachers took part in the "Breakfast of Champions" planning process and were amazed at how smooth the transition was. Average breakfast participation in the San Angelo schools serving Universal Breakfast in the classroom has increased from 25% in 2009 to 78% in 2011.

Houston ISD "First Class Breakfast" Universal Breakfast Initiative

In February 2010, Houston ISD began to implement their district wide Universal Breakfast in the Classroom program called "First Class Breakfast". By September 2010, 220 of HISD schools had Breakfast in the Classroom, which reached more than 130,000 students, more than any district in the United States according to the Food Research Action Center (FRAC). Up from 30% before "First Class Breakfast" implementation, 80% of students in HISD are eating breakfast every morning. In addition to every student having access to free breakfast, the breakfast is nutritious. Students are served whole grain bakery items made from scratch daily, with dietitians and culinary experts paying special attention to the nutrition content of the meals served.

Combining Cafeteria and "Grab and Go" Carts Increases Breakfast in Arlington ISD

Arlington ISD experienced a dramatic increase in school breakfast participation using a hybrid of breakfast in the cafeteria and breakfast carts that are stationed in high traffic areas throughout the school. Students in certain grade levels get their sack breakfast from the cafeteria and wait to be dismissed to their classes. Once in the classroom, they enjoy their breakfast during morning announcements. Other grade levels wait in another area of the school and get their breakfast from the carts stationed in the hallways. This method of combining cafeteria breakfast and "Grab and Go" has their breakfast participation at over 70%.

Tulsa ISD Taps into Fuel Up to Play 60 Program to Expand Breakfast

Tulsa ISD utilized the Fuel Up to Play 60 (FUTP60) program to assist with their breakfast expansion efforts.

The initial pilot in 2009 consisted of 4 schools and in 2010 expanded to 53 schools serving over 20,000 students breakfast in the classroom every day – an increase of 21% district wide. Schools utilized

FUTP60 tools, resources, and project funding to help implement their Breakfast in the Classroom initiative. Fuel Up to Play 60 is an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by National Dairy Council (NDC) and National Football League, in collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program encourages youth to consume nutrient-rich foods (low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains) and achieve at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.



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11. Based on 2010-2011 school breakfast reimbursement rates (\$1.76 per free breakfast served, \$1.46 per reduced priced breakfast, and \$0.26 per paid breakfast). Reimbursement rates are adjusted annually. In addition, in schools where at least 40 percent of lunches are served to students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals, schools receive an addition \$0.28 for "serve need" funding for free and reduced price meals. With SB07-059, there is no reduced price for K-2nd grade.
12. 2010 Share Our Strength Teacher's Report <http://strength.org/teachers>





www.dairymax.org



TEXAS HUNGER INITIATIVE
Baylor University School of Social Work

Menu

Sample Menu Cycle provided by the Texas
Department of Agriculture

MONDAY

Carrot Pineapple Bar (2)
Yogurt Parfait with
blueberries and almonds
1% Milk



TUESDAY

Chicken Biscuit and Eggs
Apple Juice
1% Milk

WEDNESDAY

Blueberry Loaf (2)
String Cheese
Orange Juice
1% Milk



THURSDAY

Egg Quesadilla
Apples, sliced
Fruit and Nut Mix
(USDA Foods)
1% Milk

FRIDAY

Sweet Potato Star (2)
Yogurt
Banana, Petite
1% Milk

MONDAY

Biscuit with Sausage
String Cheese
Banana
Grape Juice
1% Milk

TUESDAY

Breakfast Pizza Bagel (2)
Grapes, fresh
Orange Juice
1% Milk

WEDNESDAY

French Toast
(whole grain) with syrup
String Cheese
Orange
1% Milk

THURSDAY

Breakfast Burrito on
Whole Grain Tortilla
Apples, sliced
Salsa
1% Milk

FRIDAY

Blueberry Loaf (2)
String Cheese
Orange Juice
1% Milk



The Texas Department of
Agriculture is a partner in
the promotion of Breakfast
In the Classroom.

Resources

Dairy MAX Expanding Dairy Funds for School Breakfast Programs

Dairy MAX is a non-profit organization affiliated with the National Dairy Council and funded by the dairy farming families in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and southwest Kansas. Dairy MAX is a long-time supporter of the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs and has supported schools by allocating check-off funds to provide nutrition education programs for teachers, expanding breakfast grant at the district level, and in school programs such as Fuel Up to Play 60.

Dairy MAX has funds available for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. These funds can help schools achieve the nutrition and academic benefits of greater breakfast participation through the establishment of an alternative breakfast service method such as breakfast in the classroom.

The goal of an expanded breakfast grant program is to increase average daily breakfast participation 50 percent or more by instituting one of the following alternate breakfast service options:

- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Grab and Go Breakfast
- Breakfast After First Period

Funds can be used to start-up and operate the expanded breakfast program but funds cannot be used for food, labor or routine disposable items.

Examples of how funds can be used:

- Equipment such as mobile carts, kiosks, insulated bags, tables, warmers, milk barrels and coolers, etc.
- Supplies such as trays, bins, clipboards, trash receptacles, etc.
- Marketing tools such as posters, signs, brochures, parent mailings, promotional paper bags, etc.

Visit Dairy MAX at www.dairymax.org or call (800) 332-4790 to learn more.



Resources

Fuel Up to Play 60 Supports School Breakfast Programs

Fuel Up to Play 60 is an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by National Dairy Council (NDC) and National Football League, in collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program encourages youth to consume nutrient-rich foods (low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains) and achieve at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

How does it work?

The program encourages students to work collaboratively with adults to make real changes by implementing school-wide healthy eating and physical activity “Plays” – strategies that help students “fuel up” with nutrient-rich foods and “get up and play” for at least 60 minutes a day. If a school already has existing wellness programs or efforts, Fuel Up to Play 60 can complement and enhance them with additional resources, tools, rewards and incentives for students, adult Program Advisors and the school.

How can Fuel Up to Play 60 help with breakfast?

Funding opportunities are available to K-12 schools enrolled in Fuel Up to Play 60. The competitive, nationwide funding program provides seed money – up to \$4,000 per school – to help your Fuel Up to Play 60 team jumpstart and sustain healthy nutrition and physical activity improvements. Whether you’re just starting out with Fuel Up to Play 60 or looking to expand and extend a “play” that’s already in motion, funding opportunities can help.

Funds can support one of the following Bring on Breakfast “Plays”:

- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Grab and Go Breakfast
- Taste Test Breakfast
- Breakfast Picnic
- A Hero’s Breakfast

Add a physical activity “Play” to round out your program:

- School Wide Walk It! Club
- Walk/Bike to School Program
- NFL Flag Football

Fuel Up to Play 60 can support your school’s wellness policy and help you meet national health and physical education standards. At the same time, the program aligns with other healthy school national goals and initiatives — all of which share the goal of reducing childhood obesity.



More information about funding can be found at www.fueluptoplay60.com or contact Dairy MAX for more information: (800) 332-4790.