

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL



A TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

Under Maine law, a school administrative unit with a public school in which at least 50% of students qualified for a free or reduced-price school meal during the preceding school year is required to serve breakfast after the start of the school day and qualifies for state funding.

Learn more at:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/programs/breakfast>

Any school not eligible for state funding to support breakfast after the bell is encouraged to apply for a Full Plates Breakfast Grant.

Learn more at:

<https://www.fullplates.org/grants/school-breakfast-grant-program/>

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

Teachers



WHAT?

A wide variety of nutritious and delicious food choices that meet USDA nutrition guidelines.



WHEN?

One model, "breakfast in the classroom" has students eating during the first 10-15 minutes of class. In another model, "second chance breakfast", usually seen in secondary schools, students eat after the 1st period or during a built-in break.

1



WHY?

Students who eat school breakfast are more likely to perform better on tests, attend more days of school, and graduate from high school.

2



WHERE?

Make breakfast an integral part of the school day by moving it out of the cafeteria and into the classroom.

3

4



WHO?

Breakfast is available for ALL students!

5

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

Teachers

WHY?

Participation in school breakfast programs has traditionally been very low due to barriers such as parents or busses dropping students off too late, students not knowing about school breakfast, students choosing to socialize with friends, or the stigma of sitting in the cafeteria to eat. Recognizing the connection between school breakfast and academic achievement and behavior problems, policy makers across the country are rethinking how and where breakfast is served. The goal is to close the participation gap and ensure kids have the nutrition they need to succeed. As an added benefit, many teachers and principals cite breakfast in the classroom as an opportunity to incorporate social and emotional learning for younger students into the school day. Sharing a meal together in the classroom also reduces the stigma associated with school breakfast for low-income children and provides social bonding time for students and teachers.

WHAT?

School Nutrition Programs and food vendors work together to find breakfast foods that kids like and that meet strict USDA nutritional guidelines. These include breakfast sandwiches, pancakes, muffins, breakfast bars, cereal choices, yogurt, fruit, milk, and lots more. Your school nutrition staff will likely distribute a breakfast menu. We want kids to look forward to eating their morning meal at school with their teacher and classmates.

WHERE?

Whether students pick up their breakfast and head to the classroom or it is delivered to them by school nutrition staff, students will eat at their desk with their classmates and teacher.

WHEN?

For older students, if the school opts for the model, "Second Chance Breakfast" it happens after the first period or during a built-in break where students get their meal and either eat it in their second period classroom, or if time permits, in the cafeteria. For Breakfast after the Bell, students eat during the first 10-15 minutes of class. This includes clean-up time! Depending on individual school or teacher daily schedule, this may be during morning announcements or while the teacher takes attendance, checks homework, or reviews lessons. Some teachers also use breakfast in the classroom as a means to teach valuable nutrition lessons or incorporate breakfast into reading, science, or math lessons.

WHO?

Breakfast is available to ALL students. The National School Breakfast Program is a federal school nutrition program, just like school lunch. Meals are made affordable for all students through subsidies and reimbursements provided by the federal government. If a child gets free or reduced priced meals they will get free breakfast. If a child pays full price for meals they will pay full price (usually around \$1.75) for breakfast. The money will come out of their school meal account. Students will either enter their PIN like they do at lunch, or be checked off. No money passes at breakfast and there is no outward identification of meal status. That is why it is important to urge the parents of your students to fill out and return the free/reduced price Meal Application that they receive at the beginning of the school year. The applications are available at any time during the school year, as well. Help to do everything you can to assure healthy meals for kids at school!

HOW CAN I HELP?

- Speak positively about, and promote, school breakfast in the classroom
- Learn the nutrition regulations programs must follow. (include copy of required components)
 - (include a couple of spec sheets on breakfast items showing whole grain and reduced sugar) - highlight healthy food options
- Learn how the reimbursable meals work (one per student, money in accounts, etc)
- Eat with the kids.

MYTHS:

Breakfast after the Bell takes away from instructional time.

Some teachers report that they GAIN instructional time due to fewer behavioral disruptions, visits to the school nurse, tardiness and absenteeism. In fact Breakfast in the Classroom has been shown to increase student scores on standardized math and reading tests, particularly in vulnerable populations, proving that when students aren't focused on hunger pangs, they can concentrate on the lessons being taught in the classroom. (*)

It places an unnecessary burden on teachers

Many teachers spend hundreds of dollars yearly of their own money to feed hungry kids in their classroom. BAB alleviates this burden. Studies show that BAB improves student's behavior, particularly students' level of respect and preparedness for class, which means teachers can spend more time teaching and less time disciplining students. (*)

The food is unhealthy

School breakfast is healthier than most people realize. School breakfast must provide ¼ of the RDA for many nutrients and there are tight restrictions on calories, saturated fats and sodium. Breakfast grain products are whole grain rich, milk is skim or 1% fat, juice may be offered but cannot exceed ½ cup and the other fruit servings must be either fresh, frozen, dried or canned in water or light syrup. (*)

School Breakfast-Healthier Than You Think

The Connection Between Food Insecurity, the Federal Nutrition Programs, and Student Behavior

Breakfast for Learning

The Impact of Breakfast After the Bell

TESTIMONIALS

My learners walk through the door, anxious to see what smells so good, put their things away for the day, choose their breakfast and sit with friends at the tables while they eat. I see happy learners, filling their bellies while they build relationships with their classmates. A fantastic way to begin our day!

-Jen Brown
Kindergarten Teacher
Chelsea Elementary
RSU 12

Noble Middle School, Berwick, Maine 8/2019

Initially, when I first heard about the breakfast cart, I thought it would be an interruption. I was wrong. It's not at all. It comes at exactly the same time every morning. The students are served quickly and then they head back to class. If this service was not offered, many students would simply skip breakfast. That is not a good way for a child to begin their day. There are a variety of choices offered to the students. Nothing goes to waste. Students are encouraged to take everything that is offered. If they don't like the item, they can simply give it away to a student who does. Without this service, and only having students get breakfast in the cafeteria upon arrival, many students would opt to go to the gym and hang out with their friends rather than have to eat, rather quickly, in the cafe. I'm all for the breakfast cart!

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