

# Nebraska School Breakfast **CHALLENGE**

2011-2013

Help Your Students By:



**ADDING**

a School Breakfast  
Program



**INCREASING**

School Breakfast  
Participation

School  
Breakfast  
**TOOLKIT**





## From Sally Ganem, First Lady of Nebraska and Dr. Roger Breed, Nebraska Commissioner of Education

It is our great pleasure to announce the Nebraska School Breakfast Challenge. Many of you have devoted your career to helping Nebraska children grow and prosper. You also see each day the struggles of students who don't start the day with a nutritious breakfast. The good news is that we can solve this problem, and we can do it in a way that does not add financial burden or take away from classroom instruction time.

That is why we are so excited about the Nebraska School Breakfast Challenge. Every Nebraska school district will be automatically enrolled in this competition that challenges school districts to increase participation in the School Breakfast Program by at least 35 percent. We are confident that most districts can far exceed this goal. The top-performing districts, those with the greatest increases in participation, will receive cash prizes for their outstanding efforts.

Breakfast is a vital start to the day. Studies have shown that students who eat a healthy breakfast have increased test scores, are better able to focus throughout the day, are less likely to be absent, and make fewer visits to the school nurse. We also hear from teachers that behavior problems decrease and mornings are much calmer when breakfast has become a communal activity.

Many children do not or cannot eat breakfast at home. Many parents have been hit hard by the economic downturn with record job losses and increases in food costs, making it challenging to put nutritious meals on the table. Even for families with enough resources, breakfast at school can be a welcome solution to busy parents who don't have enough time to make and serve breakfast at home. Fortunately, the School Breakfast program provides federal and state funding for schools to provide nutritious meals to their students.

Our hope is that all children in Nebraska will have access to a nutritious breakfast that will help them learn and succeed in school.

## Introduction

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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.**

Nebraska 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.

Starting or expanding the School Breakfast Program in your school is a simple strategy that will improve your school environment. In this Nebraska School Breakfast Toolkit you will find resources to help you start or expand a school breakfast program and reach more children.

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# WHY

## Increase School Breakfast Participation:



*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. <sup>1</sup>
- ✓ 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. <sup>2</sup>

- Children who eat breakfast show improved cognitive function, attention, and memory. <sup>3</sup>
- Participating in school breakfast is associated with improved math grades, attendance, and punctuality. <sup>4</sup>

***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. <sup>5</sup>
- Providing students with breakfast in the classroom is associated with fewer disciplinary measures. <sup>6</sup>
- Children who participate in school breakfast have lower rates of absenteeism. <sup>7</sup>

***Breakfast improves children's diets and overall health:***

- Children who eat breakfast tend to have more adequate nutrient intake than children who do not. <sup>8</sup>
- Children and adolescents who eat breakfast are more likely to maintain a healthy body weight. <sup>9</sup>

Adapted from The Food Research and Action Center's "Breakfast for Learning" Child Nutrition Factsheet (<http://www.frac.org>).

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

# HOW

## To Increase School Breakfast Participation:

### Serving Models



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.

### Breakfast Serving Models:

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#### **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 a student 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 a story and provide other educational activities. This method can be counted as instructional time if students and teachers are engaged in educational activities. <sup>11</sup> 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-price meals as well. Check with your school nutrition director to see if this method would work in your school.

## **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 the cafeteria 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 your 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 a free breakfast program or in schools that do not serve all meals 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 meals.

## 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".*

## Starting a School Breakfast Program

There are several factors to consider and steps to take when deciding whether or not to start a breakfast program.

- Assess your school. Surveys are an excellent tool to help assess your school's level of interest in starting a breakfast program. Distribute the survey to students and parents to learn more about their patterns of breakfast behavior. Sample surveys can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/CND/Breakfast/toolkit/resources.htm>. The results will provide a good indication about the school's readiness to start a breakfast program.
- Second, determine the target audience that will be served by the program. Is your school an elementary, middle, high school or combination? Who composes the population you are serving? What are the demographics? This will help to assess the needs of the group and the tactics used to make the breakfast program a success. For example, a campaign with a cute mascot and colorful cartoon characters may not be successful in targeting a high school group. Similarly, you would not hand out wordy flyers for elementary students.



Finally, it is important to get the support of key stakeholders. Assess the interest of key players in starting a breakfast program. Does the community think parents should feed students breakfast? Does the principal/administrator feel that breakfast is important? Is the School Board receptive to the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program benefits not only the food service program, but also parents, students, teachers and principals. Parents are assured knowing they have another option for providing a nutritious breakfast for their children. Principals and teachers see improved attendance and a reduction in tardiness, as well as improved academic performance, in students. Determine who needs more information and provide the necessary statistics or studies to educate them on why breakfast continues to be the most important meal of the day.

## Checklist: Items schools may need to start up an alternative meal service model

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### **Grab and Go**

#### *Food Service items*

- Heated food cart or insulated portable cabinets for storing hot foods
- Mobile serving cart
- Portable tables
- Kitchen carts
- Hand-held point of service scanners
- Disposable breakfast bags for breakfast food item
- Plastic serving gloves
- Disposable silverware/napkin kits

## **Breakfast in the Classroom**

### *Classroom items*

- Wet wipes (for students to clean their hands after breakfast)
- Spray bottle (fill with water to spray on desks for daily cleaning)
- Paper towels (for wiping off desks)
- Trash container or stand
- Extra trash bags
- Clipboards (to hold classroom accountability rosters)
- Extra pens (for teachers to check off accountability rosters)

### *Custodial items*

- Large rolling trash bins and trash bin liners
- Extra trash bags

### *Food Service items*

- Insulated food bag: depending on your school's budget, there are many alternatives to traditional insulated food bags.
- Wheeled cart to deliver food to classrooms (can be anything from a traditional food service cart to a wheeled insulated bag to a small "red flyer" wagon or a grocery cart)

*Note: See **page 30** for a list of grant opportunities to help you purchase some of these items if needed.*

## **How To Determine The Best Serving Model**

Whether a school chooses Breakfast on the Bus or Breakfast in the Classroom; the key to success will be in determining which serving model fits your school the best. A *Discover School Breakfast Toolkit* is available from USDA (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm>).

The kit is packed full of resources that can help you determine which model is best for your school district. Before making your decision, talk with other schools that have already been through the process. Find out what works, what does not work, what resources they needed to get started, and what obstacles they needed to overcome. Once a district has narrowed down their model choice, the next step will be to examine potential opportunities and barriers. Storage space, bus routes, administrative, teacher and custodial support are just a few things to consider when determining the best serving model for your district.

### **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 even if you continue to charge for reduced price and paid meals. The effectiveness of some of these models will depend on your “point-of-sale” system - meaning the way in which your students pay for their 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 your school already uses an advanced point of sale system you will have 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.

### Serving Breakfast Free to All Students

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

Provision 2 is a federal School Breakfast option for schools to reduce the paperwork and simplify the logistics of operating school meal programs when they serve meals to all students at no charge. Schools should contact the State Agency or Nutrition Services for assistance on implementing Universal School Breakfast through Provision 2.

Many school districts that serve a large percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced-priced school meals find that they can break even when they serve breakfast at no charge to all, even without adopting the Provision 2 option. The increased participation brings in a sufficient amount of revenue to cover the additional costs.

### **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 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-price and paid fees are not collected from families, increased participation allows schools to break-even or even make money. If for example your 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 your school food service would be reimbursed \$559 for each day. <sup>10</sup> Schools that have a large percentage of low-income students benefit from the higher subsidization associated with free and reduced eligible students as well as funding associated with "severe need."

## **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.

## **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.

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 Calculating Costs section of USDA's *Discover School Breakfast Toolkit* has worksheets available to help calculate the costs of implementing the School Breakfast Program. The worksheets will allow Foodservice Directors to determine:

1. Revenue Per Reimbursable Breakfast
2. Daily Revenue for Breakfast
3. Analyze Annual Revenue
4. Convert Annual Expenses to Average Daily Costs
5. Calculate Break-Even Point
6. Analyze Program Costs

The Department of Education, Nutrition Services in your state can also assist in evaluating your program.

## Meal Requirements

Serving a nutritious breakfast that children enjoy will help ensure that participation remains high.

For a breakfast to be reimbursable by the USDA, the meal must contain:

*One-half pint of fluid milk served as a beverage,  
on cereal or both.*

**AND**

*One-half cup of fruit or vegetable,  
or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice.*

**AND a Choice of One of the Following Options:**

**Two servings of grains/breads.**  
*Examples of one serving are: one slice of whole-grain or enriched bread, a small biscuit or 3/4 cup of cold cereal.*

**OR**

**Two servings of meat/meat alternate.**  
*One ounce of meat, poultry, fish, cheese, or alternate protein product, 1/2 large egg, two tablespoons of peanut butter, four tablespoons of cooked dry beans or peas or one ounce of nuts and/or seeds are equal to one serving.*

**OR**

**One serving of grains/ breads  
and one serving of meat/meat alternate.**

*A double serving of the same food item in the meat/meat alternate and grains/breads categories can be counted as two food components. A school may serve more than the minimum quantities required, but not less. Commodity foods may be used.*

## Sample Healthy Breakfast Menu:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Whole grain bagel with low-fat cream cheese Orange Fat-free or low-fat milk	Breakfast burrito with whole wheat tortilla Banana Fat-free or low-fat milk	Whole wheat pancakes with turkey bacon Chunky cinnamon applesauce Fat-free or low-fat milk	Scrambled eggs with whole wheat toast Pineapple tidbits Fat-free or low-fat milk	Strawberry yogurt shake Granola bar Orange slices Fat-free or low-fat milk
Week 2	Whole wheat french toast sticks with turkey sausage Cantaloupe chunks Fat-free or low-fat milk	Assorted whole grain cereal Honeydew chunks Fat-free or low-fat milk	Whole grain bagel with egg and cheese Banana Fat-free or low-fat milk	Assorted yogurt and granola Blueberries Fat-free or low-fat milk	Fruit/nut squares Assorted whole grain cereal Apple slices Fat-free or low-fat milk
Week 3	Eggs with whole wheat toast and home fries Sliced oranges Fat-free or low-fat milk	Strawberry banana yogurt shake Granola bar Apple slices Fat-free or low-fat milk	Whole wheat waffles Grapefruit sections Fat-free or low-fat milk	Breakfast pizza on whole wheat crust Honeydew chunks Fat-free or low-fat milk	Oatmeal Assorted cereals Raisins Fat-free or low-fat milk
Week 4	Whole grain Muffin Yogurt Banana Fat-free or low-fat milk	Whole grain bagel with peanut butter Apple slices Fat-free or low-fat milk	Yogurt and granola Assorted whole grain cereal Banana Fat-free or low-fat milk	Scrambled eggs with whole wheat toast Pineapple tidbits Fat-free or low-fat milk	Banana bread Assorted cereals Orange slices Fat-free or low-fat milk

Source: [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)

When compared to lunch, breakfast can be a simpler meal to prepare. Pre-packaged items can be used to keep labor costs low. The meal can be self-serve and paper products used to eliminate dishwashing. Just as with lunch, cycle menus can be utilized. Some schools serve cereal, toast, juice, and milk most days and then vary the menu slightly by adding a hot item on one or two days of the week.

*Note: Current food menu requirements are reflected; proposed USDA rules may impact requirements.*

# TOOLS

To Ensure Support from



- Teachers
- School Nutrition Staff
- Building Engineers
- Parents

Expanding school breakfast participation requires the involvement of the entire school community. Although everyone working with your 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 teachers, school nutrition staff, building engineers, and families.

## Teachers

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Teachers have multiple roles within the school environment and are important supporters in implementing a successful school breakfast program. The studies mentioned in this guide show that eating a healthy breakfast improves attention span, academic performance and classroom behavior. In schools that have implemented the school breakfast program, 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 have some concerns and questions.

## **Will Teachers' Workloads 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?**

Most teachers find that breakfast in the classroom actually helps to start their day off calmly and get students working right away. Teachers often take attendance, begin bell work, make announcements or work with students individually as everyone is finishing their breakfast.

## **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 in your school.
- 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 your staff about school breakfast and answer questions. Contact information can be found in the Resources section.



## School Nutrition Staff

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As discussed earlier, your district's 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 help you find the best breakfast serving method for your school.

## Strategies for Success:

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

## Building Engineers

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The role of building engineers may change if your 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.
- Determine what type of equipment might help them.

## Parents

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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 your 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.

## Sample Letter to Parents to Inform Them About Breakfast in the Classroom

Dear Parents:

The first step of ensuring that all students are ready to learn is to make sure that they start the day with a nutritious breakfast. Research shows that children who eat breakfast perform better in school and have fewer behavior problems than those who do not.

The School Breakfast Program is available to all students every weekday morning. School breakfast is tasty and nutritious and provides children with important vitamins and nutrients that they need.

This year, we are pleased to announce that we have begun offering breakfast in the classroom to all students. Your child now has the option to receive a nutritious breakfast every morning at school.

Thank you for helping us make sure that all of our students start the school day alert, well-fed and ready to learn.

Sincerely,

Principal

*This letter can be modified to inform parents about different serving models. Adapted from USDA "Discover School Breakfast Toolkit".*

## Success Stories

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### **Kellom Elementary, Omaha, Nebraska**

Kellom Elementary (Omaha Public Schools) implemented a Grab and Go breakfast in October, 2010. The program has not only increased their breakfast participation but many teachers have commented on how their students are ready to learn every day. The culture of the school is calm, safe and conducive to learning each and every day.

Their breakfast participation increased from an average of 220 per day in September, 2010 to 385 per day in May, 2011. They have also seen a decrease in behavior referrals from 13 in September to 0 in May, 2011 and have seen a significant decrease in number of days missed and tardiness. Finally, visits to the nurse have decreased and hunger-related complaints such as stomach aches are down.

### **Comments from Teachers at Kellom Elementary**

*"You get more instruction time the way it works and it's really not extra work."*

*"Kids get more done. When the kids are eating breakfast, you can make up work one on one, other interventions, instead of waiting for those stragglers to come in from the cafeteria."*

*"I like it because as soon as they're done eating, they can start working on their bell work...Now they can start working right away."*

*"My kids are ready to begin their bell work immediately...we start our day sooner."*

*"At this point in the year, I've got kids who come in and say good morning to me before I even acknowledge that they've come into the classroom. You just really didn't see that when they were coming in so fast and so quick. You'd be saying good morning and they'd just go right by you."*

*"Just that extra time you seem to have where you can actually talk to kids and find out what their day was like...when they came down en masse, you pretty much started all at the same time."*

### ***Indian Hill Elementary, Omaha, Nebraska***

Indian Hill Elementary (Omaha Public Schools) implemented a Grab and Go breakfast in April, 2011. It was a success from the start! Out of the 590 students enrolled, only about 200-250 were eating breakfast daily when it was served in the traditional way in the cafeteria. On the very first day of the Grab and Go, over 400 students ate breakfast!

Many teachers have commented on how students are now able to focus and 'get down to business' sooner. It has also eliminated behavior issues previously seen during breakfast in the cafeteria. The consensus is that it's a great program!

### ***Gothenburg Junior/High School, Gothenburg, Nebraska***

When we first started breakfast - it was nothing big or formal. The cafeteria was used as a student lounge during the day for students in 9th -12th and so it was a place where they would come, hang out, and ask for food. We started very simply by purchasing several toasters and providing bagels and bread for them to toast. They were also provided string cheese sticks, yogurt, cereal bars, pop tarts, and cold cereal. Juice, fresh fruit and milk were in the cooler for them to have.

After selecting their meal, we had each student sign their name, making sure that they took enough for the meal to be reimbursable. Since they all came at the beginning of a class period, it would not take long. They would clean up after themselves. Breakfast was free to all students and we relied completely on the reimbursements.

We now take brunch to the classrooms between 9:50 and 10:00 a.m. and have approximately 85% of the junior/senior high students eating brunch daily. Brunch is loaded onto carts and taken to the classroom. Each route consists of 2-3 classes, depending on size. There are 8 carts servicing the junior/senior high building in a matter of 8-10 minutes. Students choose what they would like from the cart and their names are checked off a class roster. Payment is deducted from their lunch account (full: \$.65, reduced \$.25, free). Students eat while watching Channel One (an information news program) and listening to the day's announcements.

### **Comments from Gothenburg Parents:**

*"Brunch helps my child get through the day. It's a great pick-me-up."*

*"My children eat breakfast at home about 6 a.m. And brunch at school which helps them get through until lunch."*

*"Great price and convenient."*

*"Time of day when you are awake and ready to eat."*

*"Due to the brunch program, I don't worry that she has access to only junk food mid-morning."*

*"Brunch has helped my children make better food choices, which means better nutrition for them."*

### **Comments from Gothenburg Teachers/Administrators:**

*"Only 1 in 7 students in my class eats breakfast [at home], so brunch is very important."*

*"Some students can hardly function until they have something to eat."*

*"Eating makes a BIG difference in their behaviors."*

### **Comments from Gothenburg School Nurse:**

*"I've had to restructure my morning. There is now little morning 'traffic' due to headaches and stomach aches."*

## Other Comments About Breakfast

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*"I feel that overall breakfast in the classroom has been a positive experience. My students are getting to my classroom more quickly in the morning. It is taking them less time to get their morning work completed because they are starting sooner. The students can be monitored better in the classroom than in the lunchroom. In the lunchroom there were always so many students and not enough staff, the students spent much of the breakfast time playing.*

*It was a bit difficult in the beginning to work out the logistics of how it would work best in my classroom. Some of the children were struggling to get backpacks off and taken care of when they had breakfast in their hand. I learned to first have the students set their breakfast on their desk, and then to go take care of their backpacks. We saw less accidents and problems this way! Once we found a system that worked well for my classroom, things went much more smoothly.*

*[To keep students occupied] I always have bell work on the board and ready for the class every morning. The students have been smoothly transitioning from finishing breakfast to getting right to work! I also see a lot of my students looking over their bell work and thinking about the strategies they will use to complete their work while eating breakfast. It is also nice to hear students talking about bell work with other students around them. [Breakfast in the classroom] works well to "gently" slide the students into classroom thinking mode after being out of school."*

**~Teacher, Omaha Public Schools, Omaha, Nebraska**

*“In a short amount of time after implementing [breakfast in the classroom in my second grade classroom], attendance rates were up, tardiness was down, and visits to the nurse for a stomach or headache were nonexistent. The whole thing took about 10 minutes each morning and was an excellent way to build community, discuss food etiquette and learn about healthy foods. If you organize it and manage it well, it isn’t a huge distraction, it’s a godsend.”*

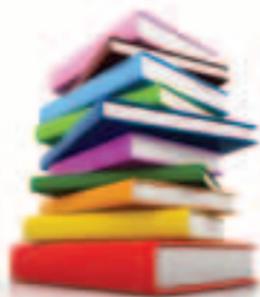
**~Teacher, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, California**

*“In the month since we began Breakfast in the Classroom, I have seen beneficial changes in my students. They enjoy sharing a meal together in their classroom and have developed a routine. Together we have worked to develop the appropriate manners for eating. The mid-morning drag and complaints about being hungry between arriving at school and lunch has drastically decreased. The students, parents, and staff are grateful for BIC and all those who helped make it a reality.”*

**~Teacher, Little Rock School District, Little Rock Arkansas**

# RESOURCES

If you are seeking more information or assistance related to breakfast expansion efforts, various resources are available to help your school implement or enhance your breakfast program.



## Funding Opportunities

Competitive grants will be available from several different sources including the Fuel Up to Play 60 initiative and Hunger Free Heartland.

- Fuel Up to Play 60** Fuel Up to Play 60 is the in-school nutrition and physical fitness program launched by the National Dairy Council and National Football League, in collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Fuel Up to Play 60 program is helping make wellness part of the game plan in schools across the country. If you're willing to engage students to help implement your school breakfast program, you'll find tools, resources and funding opportunities at [www.FuelUptoPlay60.com](http://www.FuelUptoPlay60.com). Please send an email to Caryn Kusleika, [ckusleika@midwestdairy.com](mailto:ckusleika@midwestdairy.com)
  
- Hunger Free Heartland** Hunger Free Heartland is a coalition that is focused on ending childhood hunger, starting with breakfast every day for every child. Through generous donations, we are able to make funds available to school districts that would like to start a breakfast program or increase breakfast participation. Please send an email to Sue Arment ([sarment@hungerfreeheartland.org](mailto:sarment@hungerfreeheartland.org)) and request a grant application.

## Other Grant Resources

- got breakfast? Foundation: [www.gotbreakfast.org](http://www.gotbreakfast.org)
  
- Federal Government: The Federal government often lists breakfast expansion funding opportunities on its main grants page. Visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and search for "school breakfast".

## Subject Matter Experts

Contact Name <i>Title</i>	School District	Topics	Email	Phone
<b>Tammy Yarmon</b> <i>Director Nutrition Services</i>	Omaha Public Schools	Universal Breakfast/ Provision 2 Grab and Go	Tammy.Yarmon@ops.org	(402) 557-2225
<b>Eric Nelson</b> <i>Principal, Fontenelle Elementary</i>	Omaha Public Schools	Grab and Go	Eric.Nelson@ops.org	(402) 457-5905
<b>Sharon Royers</b> <i>Principal, Indian Hill Elementary</i>	Omaha Public Schools	Grab and Go	Sharon.Royers@ops.org	(402) 734-7574
<b>Joni Jacobsen</b> <i>Nutrition Services</i>	Gothenburg Public Schools	Breakfast After First Period (Brunch)	jjacobse@esu10.org	(308) 537-3651 ext. 6127
<b>Sue Sucha</b> <i>Director of Food Service</i>	Papillion-La Vista Public Schools	Breakfast in the Classroom	SSucha@paplv.org	(402) 537-6256

## Technical and Marketing Assistance

Technical and marketing assistance is available as well. This includes examples of presentations, videos, fliers and help with recommendations on what you might need to gain support with administration, teachers, parents and students. There will also be resources to help you make the best decision on what type of breakfast works well in your school environment and connections made with individuals who have experience in this area.

## Contact Information

Midwest Dairy Council  
Beth Bruck-Upton, [bupton@midwestdairy.com](mailto:bupton@midwestdairy.com)  
Caryn Kusleika, [ckusleika@midwestdairy.com](mailto:ckusleika@midwestdairy.com)

## Hunger Free Heartland

Sue Arment, [sarment@hungerfreeheartland.org](mailto:sarment@hungerfreeheartland.org)  
<http://www.hungerfreeheartland.org/breakfast-challenge>

# NEXT STEPS

Use this checklist for expanding breakfast participation:

- Review materials in the Nebraska School Breakfast Toolkit.
- Request a meeting with your school nutrition director.
- Discuss new serving method with teachers, building engineers, and other staff.
- Send home a letter to parents about the new breakfast program.
- Announce changes to students.
- Begin serving breakfast.
- Communicate with Hunger Free Heartland to document success and trouble shoot challenges.
- Observe the benefits of breakfast in your school!

<sup>1</sup>Wyon D, Abrahamsson L, Jartelius M, Fletcher R. "An Experimental Study of the effects of Energy Intake at Breakfast on the Test Performance of 10-Year Old Children in School." *International journal of Food Science and Nutrition* 1997;48(1):5-12.

<sup>2</sup>Vaisman N, Voet H, Akivis A, Vakil E. "Effects of Breakfast Timing on Cognitive Functions of Elementary School Students." *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 1996 150:1089-1092.

<sup>3</sup>Wesnes KA, Pincock C, Richardson D, Helm G, Hails S. "Breakfast Reduced declines in attention and memory over the morning in schoolchildren." *Appetite* 2003;41(3):329-31.

<sup>4</sup>Murphy JM, Pagano M, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman R. "The Relationship of School Breakfast to Psychosocial and Academic Functioning: Cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city sample." *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 1998; 152:889-907; Powell CA, Walker SP, Chang SM, Grantham-McGregor SM. "Nutrition and education: a randomized trial of the effects of breakfast in rural primary school children." *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 1998;78:873-9.

<sup>5</sup>Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Patton K, Hall S, Marinaccio J, Kleinman R. "The Boston Public Schools Universal Breakfast Program; Final Evaluation Report." Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA, 2000; Murphy JM et al. "Maryland Meals for Achievement Year III Final Report." Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA 2001.

<sup>6</sup>Murphy JM, Drake JE, Weineke KM. "Academic & Breakfast Connection Pilot: Final Report on New York's Classroom Breakfast Project." Nutrition Consortium of New York State. Albany, New York. July 2005.

<sup>7</sup>Cook JT, Ohri-Vachaspati P, Kelly GL. "Evaluation of a Universally-Free School Breakfast Program Demonstration Project, Central Falls, Rhode Island." Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University, Medford, MA, 1996; Murphy JM, Pagano M, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman R. "The relationship of School Breakfast to Pyschosocial and Academic Functioning" 1998.

<sup>8</sup>Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metzler JD. "Breakfast Habits, Nutritional Status, Body Weight, and Academic Performance in Children and Adolescents." *Journal of American Dietetic Association* 2005; 105;743-760.

<sup>9</sup>Fiore H, Travis S, Whalen A, Auinger P, Ryan S. "Potentially Protective Factors Associated with Healthful Body Mass Index in Adolescents with Obese and Nonobese Parents: A secondary Data Analysis of the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1988-1994." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 2006;106:55-64; Barton BA, Elderidge AL, Thompson D, Affenito SG, Striegel-Moore RH, Franko DL, Albertson AM, Crockett SJ. "The relationship of breakfast and cereal consumption to nutrient intake and body mass index: the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Growth and Health Study." *Journal of the American Heart Association* 2005; 105(9):1383-1389.

<sup>10</sup>Based on 2009-2010 school breakfast reimbursement rates (\$1.46 per free breakfast served, \$1.16 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 "severe need" funding for free and reduced price meals. With SB07-059, there is no reduced price for K-2nd grade.

# Nebraska School Breakfast CHALLENGE

2011-2013



Hunger Free Heartland



SHARE OUR  
STRENGTH  
NO KID HUNGRY



NEBRASKA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

This guide was modified from the Colorado School Breakfast Challenge Expansion Guide, which was prepared by Hunger Free Colorado and funded by Share Our Strength and Western Dairy Association.

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