



BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

STATEWIDE AND DISTRICT POLICY REQUIREMENTS FROM ACROSS THE U.S.

School breakfast changes lives. Students who eat school breakfast are more likely to perform better on tests, attend more days of school, and graduate from high school. Despite this, just over half of the low-income students who eat school lunch are also eating school breakfast. Recognizing the connection between school breakfast and academic achievement, policymakers across the country are rethinking how and where school breakfast is served, in order to close this participation gap and ensure kids have the nutrition they need to succeed.



POLICY SOLUTION

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

Schools traditionally serve breakfast in the cafeteria before the start of the school day, but too many kids miss out because of late arrival times, stigma, and a host of other issues. When schools make breakfast a part of the school day by serving it in the classroom or through other models outside of the cafeteria, participation rates skyrocket. Schools that implement these innovative breakfast models report better attendance, fewer disciplinary issues, and higher test scores.

States have enacted a range of policies related to school breakfast, but the policies with the largest impact on connecting students to school breakfast require schools to make breakfast a part of the school day. These policies can be structured in different ways. Some require all schools to implement an after-the-bell model. Others target schools by grade level or level of need, based on the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Policies can incorporate funding to help schools comply with a requirement, but many successful examples exist without this funding.

For more on school breakfast policy, including policy briefs, case studies, updates on school breakfast legislation, and more visit NoKidHungry.org/bfastpolicy

COLORADO

Colorado enacted legislation requiring that all high need schools serve breakfast after the bell beginning in the 2014-15 school year. The bill garnered support from a broad coalition of anti-hunger, health, and education groups. Colorado jumped from being ranked 20th in the nation to 14th in the third year since the law was enacted. A study examining the impact of breakfast in the classroom programs in Denver found that there was a positive impact on chronic absences, excessive tardiness and office referrals.¹

DALLAS

The Dallas Independent School District Board of Trustees established a policy for district-wide breakfast in the classroom implementation beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. Dallas' breakfast participation rate has skyrocketed from 48 percent to 82.3 percent since the policy change has been in effect.²



HOUSTON

Breakfast participation rose from 45 percent to 87 percent in the years since the Houston Independent School District board approved a policy to require breakfast in the classroom for all elementary and middle schools.³ An evaluation of the program found statistically **significant increases in attendance and passing rates for math tests and a decrease in disciplinary actions** after the first year of implementation.⁴

ILLINOIS

In 2016, the Illinois General Assembly unanimously passed a bill requiring high need schools to implement Breakfast After the Bell law. This law will expand school breakfast access to 175,000 low-income students. The law was implemented in the 2017-2018 school year among schools with more than 70 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

LOS ANGELES

Breakfast participation in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest school district in the country, is higher than lunch participation after implementing breakfast after the bell in all of its schools.⁵ Among the largest school districts in the country, LAUSD is ranked 1st in school breakfast participation in the SY2016-17.⁶ An evaluation of the program found that schools implementing classroom breakfast had increased student attendance and classroom engagement. Teachers have reported reduced student tardiness and absenteeism, and that students are more prepared for the school day. The financial gains include \$15 million in additional federal USDA meal reimbursements, the retention of 900 part-time jobs, and additional hours provided to part-time workers.⁷

NEVADA

After passing a law to require high need schools to serve breakfast after the bell, school breakfast increased from 56% to 63.9% in the second year—12.7% increase. The state School Breakfast Program participation rank dramatically increased from 25th in school year 2015-16 to 7th in school year 2016-17.⁸ In the second year of implementation, Nevada received an additional \$5 million in federal breakfast reimbursement.⁹

THE STATE SCHOOL
BREAKFAST PROGRAM
PARTICIPATION RANK
INCREASED FROM

25TH

IN SCHOOL YEAR
2015-16 TO

7TH

IN SCHOOL YEAR
2016-17

NEW JERSEY

In 2018, New Jersey enacted legislation requiring that in the school year 2019-2020 and each year thereafter every public school establish Breakfast After the Bell program in schools with 70% or more free or reduced-price eligible students. The law is projected to impact an estimated 500 schools across the state, reaching tens of thousands of low-income children. It is also estimated to generate an additional \$89 million in federal funds annually.

NEW MEXICO

The number of children eating a breakfast at school rose by 13 percent after passage, with bipartisan support, of a 2011 law that required high need elementary schools to serve breakfast after the bell. Governor Susana Martinez (R) signed a 2014 law to expand this requirement to middle and high schools. Participation is now at 73 percent and New Mexico is ranked 2nd in the nation for breakfast participation.¹⁰

73%

BREAKFAST
PARTICIPATION
IN NEW MEXICO

▶ RANKED #2 IN
THE NATION

NEW YORK CITY

In June 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio and the City Council announced an investment of \$17.9 million to phase-in breakfast in the classroom to all elementary schools by school year 2017-2018. This change was projected to impact 339,000 additional students.

NEW YORK STATE

In 2018, New York enacted legislation requiring that in the school year 2018-2019 all schools with 70 percent or more free and reduced-price eligible students offer Breakfast After the Bell to all students. The law is projected to ensure that tens of thousands of additional children have access to school breakfast every day in 1,400 schools across the state while generating significant additional federal funds and boosting the state return on investment.

WASHINGTON, DC

School breakfast participation rose by 32 percent in the first year after the 2010 Healthy Schools Act required universal breakfast after the bell for high-need elementary schools. With 67.7 percent of participation, Washington DC is ranked 3rd in the nation in SY 2016-17.¹¹

67%

BREAKFAST
PARTICIPATION
IN D.C.

▶ RANKED #3 IN
THE NATION



WASHINGTON STATE

In 2018, Washington enacted legislation requiring that in the school year 2019-2020 and each school year thereafter all public school provide Breakfast After the Bell in schools with 70% or more free and reduced-price eligible students. The law is projected to impact thousands of children from low-income families and generate significant additional federal funds for schools.

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia lawmakers passed legislation requiring all schools to implement a Breakfast After the Bell model by the fall of 2015. For the fourth year in a row, West Virginia is ranked number 1 in the nation with an 85.3 percent breakfast participation rate in SY2016-17, a six point jump from the prior year.¹²



¹ "Breakfast in the Classroom: Student Outcome Study." The Center for Research Strategies, November 2015.
² "School Breakfast: Making it Work in Large School Districts." Food Research and Action Center, February 2018.
³ Ibid.
⁴ "First Class Breakfast Program: Findings Related to Student Performance, 2010-2011." Houston Independent School District, April 25, 2012.
⁵ Supra note at 2.
⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The Los Angeles Fund for Public Education: 2014 Impact Report.
⁸ "School Breakfast Score Card: School Year 2016-17." Food Research And Action Center, February 2018
⁹ "SB503 Breakfast After the Bell: 2016-2017 School Year Final Report." Nevada Department of Agriculture, October 2017
¹⁰ Supra note at 8.
¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Ibid.



center for BEST PRACTICES

ABOUT THE NO KID HUNGRY CENTER FOR BEST PRACTICES

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 6 kids will face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger by connecting kids to the healthy food they need, everyday. We're also teaching families how to cook healthy, affordable meals through our Cooking Matters nutrition skills program and we're investing in community organizations that fight hunger.

Learn what works in the fight against childhood hunger and discover toolkits, case studies, hunger stats, issue briefs, reports and more at BestPractices.NoKidHungry.org.

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