



Commissioner’s Back-to-School Meeting

Connecticut State Department of Education | August 15, 2018

Update from the Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness

School Breakfast: A Proven Resource for Fueling Student Success

School breakfast is not only for students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. All students benefit from school breakfast regardless of their economic status or whether they have had breakfast at home prior to arriving at school.

Years of research shows that breakfast is the most important meal of the day for students’ health and academic achievement:

- Students who skip breakfast are more likely to have lower math scores, reduced cognitive functioning, slower memory recall and are also more likely to repeat a grade.
- Eating breakfast, *especially eating breakfast at school*, has been shown to: improve concentration, alertness, and comprehension of the material; result in fewer mistakes; assist with faster completion of math problems; result in better performance on standardized tests; increase math and reading scores; and improve speed and memory in cognitive tests.ⁱ
- A social impact analysis on the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) demonstrated that students who participate in *school breakfast* attend 1.5 more days of school annually, score 17.5 percent higher on math tests and are less likely to have disciplinary problems.ⁱⁱ
- A study by the University of Connecticut also proved that having a second breakfast at school in addition to home does not contribute to overweight or obesity.ⁱⁱⁱ

Making breakfast part of the regular school day routine changes kids’ lives^{iv}

For many years, Connecticut has ranked *last in the nation* in the percentage of schools participating in the National School Lunch Program that also offer breakfast. While we have made improvements, Connecticut still ranks 45th nationally in School Breakfast Program participation.^v

Connecticut by the Numbers: School Lunch vs. School Breakfast

School Year 2017-2018	School Lunch	School Breakfast
Participating Districts	186	167
Participating Schools	1,030	881
Meals Served in School Year 2018	45,722,973	17,929,033

Join the movement to fuel student success!

Start a breakfast program

The SBP is federally funded through reimbursements, just like school lunch. In some instances, state funding is also available. Serving breakfast does not have to cost schools more money, and in many cases it can generate additional federal funding to supplement a district's food service account. Schools may begin the SBP at any point in the school year. As few as one school in a district may participate and additional schools can be phased-in over time. To ensure success, districts are strongly encouraged to have conversations between principals, custodial staff, teachers/paraprofessionals, teachers' unions, parents, students and food service staff prior to starting the SBP in a school. Reasons provided for not having a school breakfast program include logistics, school day scheduling, and restrictive policies. The many serving options below can help to mitigate these challenges.

Innovative and customizable serving options

- School breakfast may be served before school starts and consumed through a traditional cafeteria service model.
- "Breakfast after the Bell" models provide meals in the classroom while instructional activities are underway, without impacting instructional time. Breakfast can be delivered directly to the classroom door, or by having students pick up breakfast at a centralized location to bring to the classroom.
- Also known as "Grab-N-Go," breakfast items can also be made available to students between classes or en-route to their first class through multiple strategically placed hallway kiosks.
- "Second Chance Breakfast," provides meals later in the morning for students who may have a late lunch wave or arrived late to school.

We can help

Contact the CSDE Child Nutrition Office for assistance and guidance to begin participation in the SBP. The Connecticut Breakfast Expansion Team (CBET), a collaboration of the CSDE, End Hunger CT!, the New England Dairy & Food Council, Action for Healthy Kids, and the School Nutrition Association can provide one-on-one support to schools wishing to launch or improve the performance of an existing program. CBET has helped start over 280 schools begin successful SBPs and has solutions to any obstacles to implementation.

Resources and additional information:

- [CSDE School Breakfast Resources](#)
- [USDA School Breakfast Resources](#)
- [Starting a School Breakfast Program \(CSDE\)](#)
- [School Breakfast Scorecard School Year 2016-2017](#)
- [End Hunger Connecticut! - School Breakfast Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry - Center for Best Practices \(Share Our Strength\)](#)

To find out more, or to see how you can start or improve your School Breakfast Program, contact Jackie Schipke at 860-807-2123 or jackie.schipke@ct.gov

ⁱ <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/download-resource/Brochure:%20No%20Kid%20Hungry%20Starts%20with%20Breakfast.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/download-resource/Brochure:%20No%20Kid%20Hungry%20Starts%20with%20Breakfast.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/Wang_et_al-2016-Pediatric_Obesity.pdf

^{iv} Adapted from Share Our Strength: <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/school-breakfast>, accessed June 8, 2018

^v <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/school-breakfast-scorecard-sy-2016-2017.pdf>