



FIRST CLASS BREAKFAST IN MARYLAND: A GUIDE TO EXPANDING SCHOOL BREAKFAST

A PROJECT OF KAISER PERMANENTE AND THE MARYLAND PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER

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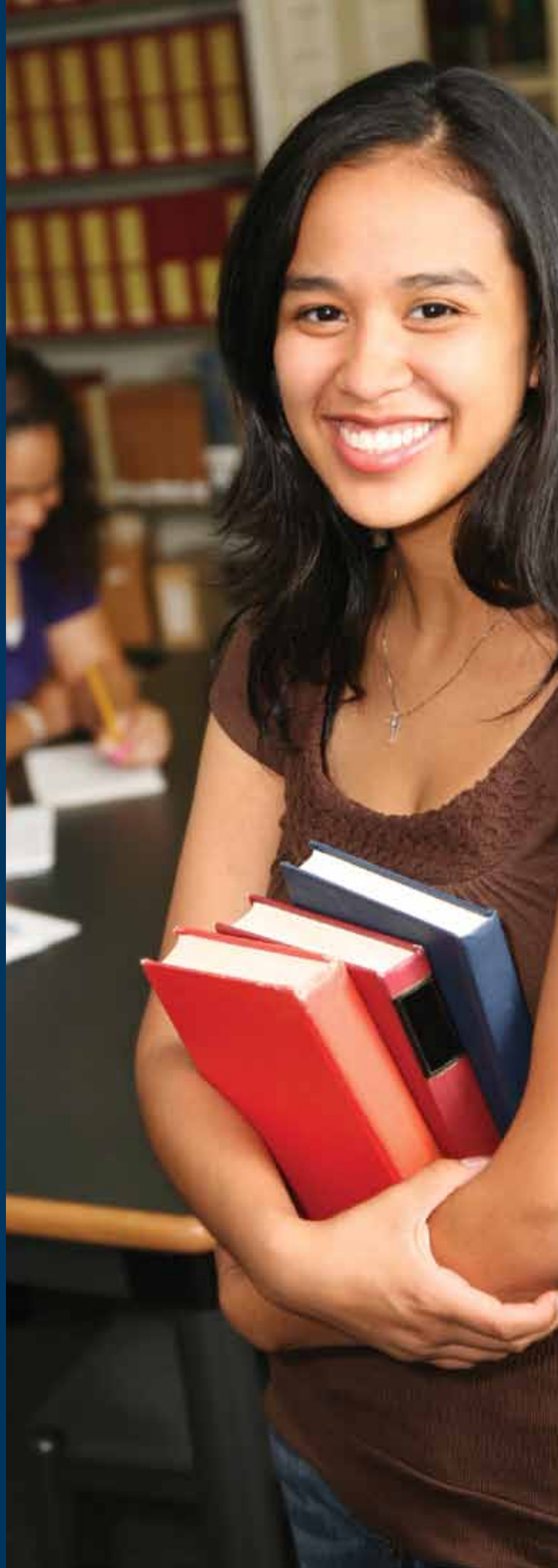
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INTRODUCTION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, yet during the 2009-2010 school year only 45.4 eligible low-income children in Maryland participated in school breakfast for every 100 who participated in school lunch.

Barriers to participating in the School Breakfast Program exist. Students can be prevented from eating school breakfast if they struggle with:

- Tight morning schedules.
- Incompatible transportation.
- Not experiencing hunger first thing in the morning.
- Preference or peer pressure to socialize or play instead of eat breakfast.
- Stigma when obtaining school meals.

These factors were evident in a recent survey of over 400 Maryland students which suggested that making breakfast easier to get would make them more likely to eat it, especially if breakfast were part of the school day.

When these barriers are addressed, students can reap the academic and nutritional benefits of breakfast every day, as well as look forward to better academic and health outcomes in the long run.

By taking these factors into consideration and by taking advantage of the resources available through the Maryland First Class Breakfast initiative, schools can develop a plan for expanding breakfast participation through adoption of an innovative delivery model.

This toolkit illustrates creative steps some schools in Maryland have taken to increase breakfast participation by structuring breakfast as a part of the school day. These schools find that incorporating breakfast formally into the school day dramatically increases participation by making it convenient and accessible to all. Some models schools have used include:

> BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

Providing breakfast in the classroom is an effective way to boost breakfast participation. Students eat breakfast in their classroom either at the beginning of the school day or early during the day. While the students eat breakfast during the first ten minutes of class, teachers may use the time to take attendance, do usual administrative tasks, or read with their students. Teachers see the difference that classroom breakfast makes – students pay more attention and are more focused on their work.

> GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST

All the components of a reimbursable school breakfast are conveniently packaged so students can grab a bag quickly, either from the cafeteria line or from carts on school grounds. Students can eat in the cafeteria, the classroom or elsewhere on school grounds. Grab and go breakfast bags are especially convenient for middle and high schools with large numbers of students on the move. Custodial staff commonly find that, with planning, waste produced in the program is easily managed.

> BREAKFAST AFTER 1ST PERIOD

For the many students who do not like to eat breakfast first thing in the morning, schools may offer a “second chance breakfast.” Breakfasts are available in the cafeteria, from “grab and go” carts in the hallway, other high traffic areas, or in the classroom. A second chance breakfast means that students get a healthy meal and the energy they need to power through the rest of the morning.

While efforts such as convenient breakfast packaging and stronger marketing yield positive results, schools with the greatest successes in increasing breakfast participation are the schools that have structurally changed how breakfast is delivered to their students. Whether breakfast is served in the classroom or the hallways, the flexibility to eat during the morning in school is essential to ensure optimum participation.

INTRODUCTION

THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The School Breakfast Program is a federally funded meal program operating in schools that served breakfast to students in 1,018 Maryland schools during the 2009-2010 school year. The program was established to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors.

The School Breakfast Program operates much like the National School Lunch Program. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free meals to children.

BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY BREAKFAST

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day – educationally and nutritionally. A key component of boosting children’s well-being and improving schools is to ensure that each child can start the day right with a healthy breakfast at school.

• BREAKFAST HELPS CHILDREN LEARN.

Studies show that breakfast improves learning and attendance, and reduces behavior problems and tardiness. Children who eat breakfast at school – closer to test-taking time – perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home.

• BREAKFAST PROMOTES GOOD HEALTH.

Eating breakfast at school results in fewer visits to the school nurse, improves children’s diets, reduces absenteeism, and helps build healthy eating habits. Additionally, children who start the day with a good breakfast are less likely to be obese.

The benefits of breakfast are substantial, but too many children in Maryland miss out on a healthy start to their day. During the 2009-2010 school year, only 45.4 eligible low-income children across the state participated in school breakfast for every 100 who participated in school lunch (*School Breakfast Scorecard, Food Research and Action Center, Jan 2011*). Because eating breakfast is essential to children’s ability to learn, stay healthy, and behave in school, it is vital to monitor how well schools, school districts, counties, and the state as a whole are doing in reaching students with school breakfast.

With less than half of eligible children participating in the breakfast program and more children becoming eligible as families are harshly affected during this weak economy, it is imperative to reduce barriers to participation and prioritize the expansion of breakfast participation in our schools.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed for stakeholders who would like their students to start the day with a healthy breakfast by implementing alternative serving models to maximize participation.

It will help you determine the type of delivery service most suited for your school and suggest ways the delivery service can be implemented. Whether you are a school principal or a food service director, there is something in this toolkit to help you enlist support from key decision makers and begin planning your improved breakfast program. This toolkit also showcases innovative breakfast delivery models from around Maryland.

INCLUDED ARE THE FOLLOWING TOOLS:

- Descriptions, ideas, and examples of various delivery service options.
- Information and problem solving ideas for stakeholders at every level.
- Resources and tools to communicate breakfast to various stakeholders.
- A video highlighting the successful implementation of an alternative breakfast program.
- A Maryland student survey on attitudes and feelings towards breakfast, which is summarized here and available at nokidhungrymd.org.

MARYLAND STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON BREAKFAST¹ – JANUARY 2011

IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION IN MARYLAND, WE RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF DIRECT STUDENT INPUT AND FEEDBACK.

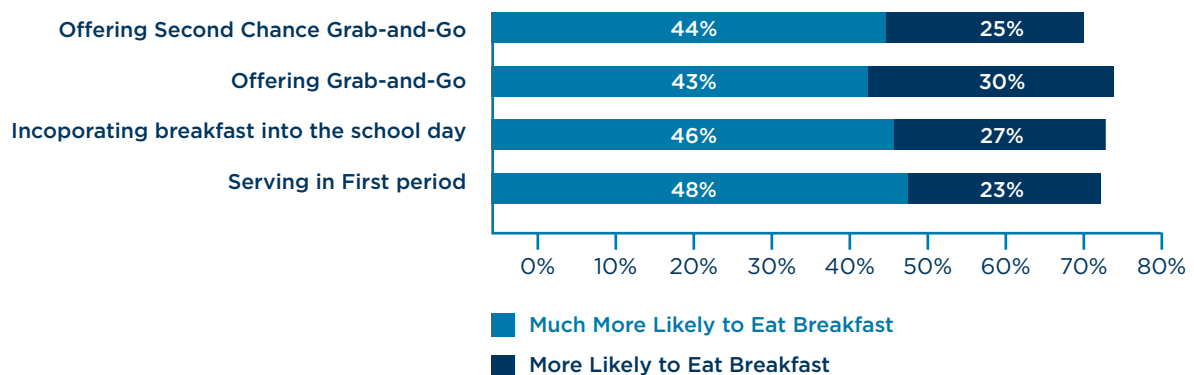
Lake Research Partners designed and administered a statewide survey for the First Class Breakfast Project. The survey reached a total of 413 students currently enrolled in grades 6-12 in a public middle or high school in Maryland. The survey was conducted December 9th, 2010 through January 9th, 2011, using a mixed-mode methodology, which included:

- 202 interviews conducted by telephone, using professional, trained phone interviewers. The telephone numbers were drawn from a sample of households likely to have children based on consumer indicators.
- 211 of the interviews conducted online by Harris Interactive, which provided the sample and administered the online survey. The sample was drawn from the Harris panel of youth.

IN PLANNING FOR EXPANDING BREAKFAST, THE SURVEY INDICATED IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING STUDENT ATTITUDES:

- Students express a desire to eat breakfast and three-quarters say they would eat breakfast if they had the time.
- Making breakfast easier to get would impact students. Nearly two-thirds of students say they would be more likely to eat breakfast at school if it were easier to get, with majorities of students across demographic groups saying they would be more likely to eat breakfast if it was easier. Additionally, making breakfast easier to get is particularly important for those students who do not currently eat breakfast and those who eat school breakfast.
- This research suggests that continuing to boost student awareness and education about the importance of breakfast for students should still be an on-going task for advocates and policymakers. Yet, another important goal should be to make school breakfast more convenient for students and to strive to meet students where they are in terms of priorities (socializing, quick pick-up, eating in the classroom) to help students fit breakfast into their routines.
- Students respond positively to a range of different approaches to how breakfast could be served in their schools. They respond most positively to having breakfast served in their first period class at the beginning of the class period and making breakfast part of the school day.

HOW TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM: STUDENT INTEREST IN A VARIETY OF APPROACHES



¹ A survey of 413 middle and high school students throughout Maryland.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST BASICS

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally-assisted meal program that operates in public and private nonprofit schools and residential child care institutions. Just like the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced price meals. All other children are offered a low-cost meal.

MANY STUDENTS SKIP BREAKFAST

- There is a significant disparity in participation rates at breakfast compared to participation rates at lunch, especially for low-income students.
- Not all students eat breakfast at home.
 - Students may not have access to food before coming to school.
 - Students may not be hungry first thing in the morning.
 - Students and families may lack the time to eat in the morning.
- Middle school and high school students are less likely to eat breakfast than elementary school students.
- Only 35 percent of parents of children ages 6 to 11 report eating breakfast each day with their children (Food Research and Action Center, *School Breakfast Scorecard-School Year 2007-2008*, January 2009).
- Only 22 percent of parents of middle and high school students report eating breakfast daily with their children (Food Research and Action Center, *School Breakfast Scorecard-School Year 2007-2008*, January 2009).

BENEFITS

- Enhances academic performance.
 - Children score higher on certain tests including memory recall, reading and math.
 - Improved attentiveness.
- Improves student behavior.
 - Children aren't as restless.
 - Fewer discipline problems.
- Improves the learning environment.
 - Children are absent less frequently.
 - Children are tardy as less frequently.
- Improves the quality of children's diets.
 - Increased consumption of fruit and milk.
 - Increased intake of vitamin C, vitamin A and calcium.
 - Increased variety of foods eaten.

PARTICIPATION

- In Maryland, only 45.4 eligible low-income children participated in school breakfast for every 100 who participated in school lunch during the 2009-2010 school year. However, participation is ranged from 20.6 to 84.1 per 100 in the NSLP depending on the county. This figure varies widely by county.
- Nationally, only 47.2 eligible low-income children participated in school breakfast for every 100 who participated in school lunch during the 2009-2010 year. Maryland is performing below the national participation rate in school breakfast.

ELIGIBILITY

- All children at participating schools are able to purchase a meal as part of the School Breakfast Program.
- A child whose household income is less than 130 percent of the poverty level is eligible for free breakfasts (<\$28,665 for a family of 4 in 2010).
- A child whose household income is between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level is eligible for reduced-price breakfasts (<\$40,793 for a family of 4 in 2010). A student who qualifies a reduced-price breakfast may not pay more than \$0.30 per meal.
- Other children may also participate in the breakfast program, but pay full price for their meal.

NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Breakfasts offered as part of the School Breakfast Program must meet current Dietary Guidelines.
- Breakfast must contain 1/4 of the Recommended Daily Allowance for calories, protein, calcium, iron, Vitamin A, and Vitamin C.
- No more than 30 percent of calories can come from fat, with no more than 10 percent of calories as saturated fat.
- Breakfasts contain a serving of milk, fruit or fruit juice, and 2 servings of grains or 2 servings of meat/meat alternate group (e.g., egg or peanut butter), or 1 serving of each.

REIMBURSEMENT AND FUNDING

- The Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture funds the program nationally.
- In Maryland, the School Breakfast Program is administered through the State Department of Education.
- For the 2010-2011 school year, each meal served as part of the School Breakfast Program is reimbursed as follows:

REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM (2010-2011)

	Non-Severe Need School	Severe Need School	Price of Meals to Children
Free	\$1.48	\$1.76	\$0
Reduced price	\$1.18	\$1.46	\$0.30 (Maximum)
Paid	\$0.26	\$0.26	Varies

- Schools with greater than 40 percent of their students purchasing free or reduced price lunches qualify as a severe need school. An additional \$0.28 for each free and reduced price breakfast is reimbursed.

STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL BREAKFAST EXPANSION

- Alternative service methods to traditional breakfast consumed in the cafeteria prior to the start of the school day, including Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab and Go Breakfast, Breakfast After 1st Period.
- Other options include initiating a comprehensive outreach to students and parents, offering extended meal times, eliminating the reduced-price meal category, and offering universal breakfast to all students.

Nationally, the school districts that make breakfast a part of the school day (such as serving breakfast in the classroom) are those that have the highest participation rates. The top performing districts in the country, serving more than 90 low-income students breakfast for every 100 that receive lunch, feature universal breakfast and alternative service models that make breakfast an essential part of the school day.

ASSESSING THE NEED IN YOUR SCHOOL

Prior to expanding the breakfast program, it is important to assess the demographics, need, and interest of your school. Some questions to ask about your school:

DOES YOUR SCHOOL CURRENTLY HAVE THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM?

If your school does not currently have the program and is interested in finding out more information about reimbursements, program regulations, and more, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/> for more details.

WHAT IS CURRENT PARTICIPATION?

Compare your participation rates for breakfast and lunch with total enrollment for each school. In addition, compare your participation rates for breakfast to participation rates in free and reduced price lunch. For many counties and schools, significant gaps exist between participation rates of students in free and reduced price lunch and participation in the breakfast program. If you identify a gap, use this toolkit to find the best solution for your school and ensure that kids have access to a nutritious breakfast and lunch.

If your school does not currently have the program and is interested in finding out more information about reimbursements, program regulations, and more, please go to http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/schoolnutrition/meals_achieve.htm for more details.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM?

Determine what barriers might exist that keep students from participating in the breakfast program. What are some of the reasons breakfast participation does not reach its potential? Consider asking your food service staff, teachers, students, and parents for their opinions.

WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM WORK WELL?

What strengths does your school or district have that your school can utilize to make implementing an alternative breakfast delivery program a success?

WHO NEEDS MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHY BREAKFAST IS IMPORTANT?

Breakfast is beneficial for students, but do all of your stakeholders know why? By eating a healthy meal before school, students are better prepared for learning. Determine who needs more information and provide studies to educate them on why expanding breakfast is imperative. The *Stakeholders* section of this toolkit outlines those who would be instrumental in assisting with school breakfast expansion and their potential concerns.

DOES YOUR SCHOOL QUALIFY FOR MARYLAND MEALS FOR ACHIEVEMENT?

Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) is a state-funded breakfast program administered through the State Department of Education. First started in 1998 in several Maryland elementary schools, MMFA provides free breakfast in the classroom to all students, regardless of their family's income. MMFA in-classroom breakfast increases breakfast participation.

Schools where more than 40 percent of students enrolled are eligible for free and reduced priced meals may apply for state MMFA funding. The state seeks applications from all eligible schools and factors geographic diversity, rates of free and reduced price meal eligibility into the evaluation of applications. Factors taken into consideration include geographic diversity and rates of free and reduced price school enrollment. The state provides funding to the schools for the meal costs or proportion of meal costs that are not reimbursed by the federal government. An evaluation by researchers from Harvard University found that MMFA schools reported a decrease in tardiness and suspensions and an increase in Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) scores and grades.

ASSESSING YOUR SCHOOL

USDA has several great resources on expanding breakfast including goal sheets and cost calculation sheets to evaluate breakfast at your school.

Please go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/CND/Breakfast/expansion/assessingpotential.htm> for more information.



BREAKFAST SERVING MODELS

BREAKFAST SERVING MODELS

There are alternative breakfast service methods in addition to traditional breakfast. The breakfast serving methods are:

> TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST

Breakfast consumed in the cafeteria at the same time for all students or in shifts.

> BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

Breakfast delivered to the classroom and consumed in the classroom setting before school starts.

> GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST

Breakfasts packaged in bags with all components of the meal available at sites throughout school for pick up on the go, before school or during 1st period.

> BREAKFAST AFTER 1ST PERIOD

Breakfast served/consumed after the 1st period between classes (and finished during 2nd period) or during their break.

In selecting the best meal service method(s) for your school, talk to other schools that have already been through the process and have selected a service method you may be considering. Ask them what works, what does not work, what resources they needed to get started and what obstacles they needed to overcome. In addition, consult the contact sheet for a listing of First Class Breakfast Coordinators.

Evaluate your own school for these opportunities to begin a program or increase participation. Structuring breakfast as part of the school day, however, is the most effective way to increase participation. Whether breakfast is served in the classroom or the hallways, the flexibility to eat during the morning in school ensures optimal participation.

TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST

BENEFITS

- The Cafeteria is already set up for large flow of students in one location.
- It requires no special transportation or packaging of foods.
- Conducive to serving hot food options.

DOES TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST WORK FOR MY SCHOOL?

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. School buses arrive early enough to allow students sufficient time in the cafeteria. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 2. Non-bussed students can arrive at school in time to participate in a cafeteria meal. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 3. The cafeteria can easily serve as a central meeting place for students in the morning. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 4. Staff is available and willing for morning service. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 5. Cafeteria is available for use/not in use for other purposes before school. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 6. Cafeteria is centrally located for ease of service. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 7. Teachers are likely to eat breakfast with students. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 8. Cafeteria is large enough to serve potential participants. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then a Traditional Breakfast model might be ideal for achieving a higher participation rate in your school.

SUCCESS STORY

SCHOOL: **GENERAL WOLFE STREET ACADEMY (SCHOOL #23)**

SCHOOL SYSTEM: **BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

GRADES SERVED: **PRE-K — 5TH**

ENROLLMENT: **203**

FREE AND REDUCED MEAL ENROLLMENT: **88 PERCENT**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BREAKFASTS SERVED (DEC. 2009): **113/DAY**



Each morning, doors to General Wolfe Street Academy open at 7:20AM to welcome its students and families in the morning. School breakfast ends at 8:00AM when classes begin, however, the serving line closes around 7:50AM. Families are encouraged to bring their children early to school to participate in breakfast and also to attend the school's community meeting conducted by the principal. Community announcements are made and teachers report on general classroom progress. The cafeteria staff serve the breakfasts, parents help feed their younger children who need assistance with breakfasts, and custodial staff clean-up when students are dismissed to class with their teachers. The school offers a quick breakfast to late students until 9:00AM. They either eat quickly in the cafeteria or take milk and graham crackers to their classroom. General Wolfe Street Academy has been able to achieve such high participation in the morning because they make the cafeteria a central gathering place for students and encourage families to get involved in the program.

SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST A SUCCESS

- Offer breakfast for an extended period in the morning to maximize students' ability to get to the cafeteria.
- Require all students to enter the building through the door closest to the cafeteria or make the cafeteria the mandatory morning gathering place for students.
- Encourage teachers and administrators to assist with the program.
- Ensure that parents know about breakfast and invite them to come into the school in the morning.
- Provide quick service by running two serving lines, creating a self-service breakfast bar, or offer foods that are easy to grab.

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

BENEFITS

- Breakfast in the classroom yields the highest participation rates. It is the best way to bring the benefits of school breakfast to all the students. Once you bring the food to the kids, just about every child eats.
- Breakfast in the classroom provides nutritious meals to students who do not have time to eat breakfast before school.
- Children can look forward to a good breakfast in the comfort of the familiar surroundings of their classroom.
- If the cafeteria is too small, crowded or in use, more students can eat a good breakfast when served in the classroom. Breakfast in the classroom is convenient and can be prepared quickly, with little extra cost for labor or equipment.

HOW DOES BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM WORK?

Students eat breakfast in the classroom at the beginning of the school day or during morning break time. Breakfasts can be individually packaged in easy to grab bags. Breakfasts can be either hot or cold, depending on a school's facilities. Breakfast can be delivered to the classroom in one of two ways: food service staff can deliver breakfast to each floor or classroom before class begins or student representatives from each class can pick up pre-packed meals from the cafeteria and deliver them to the classroom. Carts, crates, and/or coolers can be used to transport the breakfast items. Following breakfast, students or staff can return the coolers and any remaining food to the cafeteria.

Concern about losing valuable instructional time is valid, however, little teaching time is lost, as breakfast in the classroom only takes 10 to 15 minutes for the students to receive and eat. Many teachers use that time to take attendance, collect homework, deliver announcements, read to the class, or share current events. Alternatively, students are free to complete their homework or work on exercises or chat with each other. Everyone helps with a quick clean up, the trash goes outside the classroom door for custodial staff to collect, and the untouched food and food service equipment is returned to the cafeteria. After a few weeks, students develop routines and classroom eating manners. And, each morning, all the students are fed a healthy breakfast, and the class is really ready to learn.

Many teachers feel this is a valuable use of time and that their classes are more productive when students start their day with a healthy breakfast. Many teachers state that breakfast in the classroom does not interfere with their ability to teach and that the time spent in breakfast in the classroom is more than made up in the quality of the instruction throughout the day.

WHEN DOES BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM WORK BEST?

Breakfast in the classroom can work in a variety of schools, but it works particularly well in elementary schools where the students stay in their homeroom. Breakfast in the classroom also works best in schools with the following characteristics:

- Buses and students arrive just before the start of classes.
- Students are in the same room at the start of each school day.
- Teachers would be supportive of the change in location from the cafeteria to the classroom.
- There is limited space to serve breakfast in the cafeteria.
- The cafeteria is centrally located to facilitate delivering the breakfast to individual classrooms.

WILL BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM WORK FOR MY SCHOOL?

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. School buses arrive right before school begins. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 2. Non-bussed students arrive right before school begins. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 3. Classroom schedules are flexible enough to incorporate breakfast into the day. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 4. The cafeteria is small and crowded. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 5. The cafeteria is centrally located for ease of service. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 6. Classrooms and the kitchen are on the same floor or have accessibility ramps | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 7. School administrators, teachers, food service, and custodial staff are open to trying a new breakfast delivery model. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then a Breakfast in the Classroom model might be ideal for achieving a higher participation rate in your school.

SUCCESS STORY

SCHOOL: **WILLIAMSPORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (SCHOOL #202)**

SCHOOL SYSTEM: **WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

GRADES SERVED: **K — 5TH**

ENROLLMENT: **511**

FREE/REDUCED: **37 PERCENT**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BREAKFASTS SERVED (OCT. 2009): **148/DAY**



For the 2010-2011 school year, Williamsport Elementary School has implemented a universal in-classroom breakfast program in an effort to boost breakfast participation and reduce late arrivals from the cafeteria.

In-classroom breakfast starts at 8:00AM and ends at 8:30AM each school day. In the morning, the cafeteria staff and older student helpers distribute the meals to the classrooms and then cafeteria staff collect the empty coolers and leftovers from each classroom.

Because the school lacks the enrollment to sustainably self-fund a universal free breakfast in the classroom program, the food service office helped the school launch a modified version of the program. The school offers breakfast to every student in the class and teachers record those who participate. Students eligible for free or reduced priced meals receive their breakfast for free. Students not eligible for the free or reduced priced meals are charged \$1, which is deducted from their student account. No cash is exchanged in the classroom, so there is no stigma associated with participating in the program.

During breakfast, some teachers use that time to do character building focusing on their school themes of respect and honesty to set the tone for the day. Other teachers use the time simply to interact with their students and model good social skills. For cleanup of in-classroom breakfast, the school utilizes large, plastic trash cans for kids to drop their waste. They say it is cleaner than leaving a garbage bag on the floor. Each class also designates a student helper to assist the teacher with spills and clean up.

As a result of structuring their school breakfast around an in-classroom breakfast model, Washington County Public Schools has had a tremendous response including increased student breakfast participation and improvements in student punctuality and attendance. In just the first two months of the 2009 school year, Williamsport Elementary increased breakfast participation by 25 percent over 2008 rates.

SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM A SUCCESS:

- If the cafeteria staff need additional assistance, use student volunteers and offer service hours or recruit parent volunteers to help distribute meals.
- Ensure all school staff members are on board with the service method: principals, teachers, cafeteria staff, and custodial staff.
- Have all components of the breakfast and accountability sheets well labeled for maximum organization.
- Encourage food service to prepare/package cold breakfasts the afternoon before.
- Allow teachers to eat breakfast with their students to model good breakfast eating habits. This can also increase teacher support of the breakfast in the classroom program.

GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST

BENEFITS

- Grab and go breakfasts are convenient. They take less time to prepare than most traditional breakfast meals and decrease long lines.
- A bagged breakfast can be enjoyed on the go, before school or during break.
- Secondary students like grab and go breakfast for opportunities to eat at different locations and times.
- Schools are able to serve breakfast more effectively by reaching more students in a quicker manner.

HOW DOES A GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST WORK?

Grab and go breakfasts are packaged in paper or plastic bags, boxes or trays. Students pick up their breakfast before school and are able to eat it when and where they want, within school guidelines. Food service staff pack reimbursable breakfasts into individual bags, generally the day before. Alternatively, food service can purchase prepackaged reimbursable breakfasts in boxes (more information on these breakfasts can be found later in this section). The breakfasts are then served with milk. Breakfasts are usually cold; however, with a little bit of preparation in the morning, they may include hot items as well.

Grab and go breakfasts may be served first thing in the morning, between classes, or at a mid-morning break. Bags can be served from carts located in the hallway, school entrance, cafeteria, or other high traffic areas at the school. Students may take the breakfast and eat it outside, in the hall, in class, or in the cafeteria, depending on what the school decides is appropriate, allowing for flexibility.

HOW DO BREAKFAST CARTS WITH GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST WORK?

Instead of having the students come to the cafeteria for breakfast, breakfast carts act as mobile serving areas for the meal. Reimbursable grab and go breakfasts work best with a breakfast cart. Breakfasts can be prepackaged; however, some schools offer choices from their breakfast cart.

Schools typically put their breakfast carts in high traffic areas such as the main entrance, hallway, outside the front door, near the gymnasium, or wherever the students congregate. Carts are often equipped with a portable device that allows the cost of meals to be automatically debited from the student's account at the free, reduced-price, or paid level. Carts are filled with breakfast items, including milk from the cafeteria and then taken to the location outside the cafeteria. A food service staff operates the cart before school, during morning break, or between classes, depending on the school.

There is almost no other added cost or time for the food service staff to assemble and serve breakfast. Students are responsible for their trash and for following school rules as to where and when they can eat their breakfast.



WHEN DOES A GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST WORK BEST?

Grab and go breakfasts seem to work particularly well in middle and high schools because older students enjoy the flexibility of this model. Grab and go also works best in schools with the following characteristics:

- Buses and students arrive just before the start of classes.
- The cafeteria or gym is crowded or not available for breakfast.
- Students rely on vending and convenience foods from outside the school for breakfast.
- The cafeteria is not located where students enter the building or hang out.
- The cafeteria tends to be congested or is too small to serve breakfast.

WILL GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST WORK FOR MY SCHOOL? CHECK YES OR NO AFTER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. School buses arrive right before school begins. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 2. Non-bussed students arrive right before school begins. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 3. Food carts are available or space exists for placement of tables in entrances for “curb side” services. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 4. Breakfast needs to be served faster and serving areas need to be more accessible. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 5. Students grab soft drinks and snacks from vending machines as they rush to class. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 6. Meal payment system does not require cash at point of service. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 7. The cafeteria is small and crowded. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 8. Congestion in cafeteria dining room needs to be reduced. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 9. School administrators, teachers, food service, and custodial staff are open to trying a new breakfast delivery model. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then a Grab and Go Breakfast model might be ideal for achieving a high participation rate (at least 60 percent of total enrollment) in your school.

SUCCESS STORY

SCHOOL: **RIPPLING WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (SCHOOL #3392)**

SCHOOL SYSTEM: **ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

GRADES SERVED: **PRE-K – 5TH**

ENROLLMENT: **665**

FREE/REDUCED: **38 PERCENT**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BREAKFASTS SERVED (MARCH 2009): **149/DAY**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF BREAKFASTS SERVED (MARCH 2005): **41/DAY**



Anne Arundel County has instituted “Breakfast with Class” for some of their schools that are not eligible for Maryland Meals for Achievement. “Breakfast with Class” is an innovative breakfast delivery program that allows students to receive breakfast through the cafeteria but eat breakfast in the classroom. During the allotted time set for school breakfast, students stream through the cafeteria serving line with personal bags to place their breakfast items in. Students still fall under the three categories for meals and pay according to eligibility. They then bring their bags to their respective classrooms and eat breakfast in the classroom. Teachers are also offered breakfast and are encouraged to join in with their students. Anne Arundel County has seen higher breakfast participation rates for the eight schools that have “Breakfast with Class” than schools that do not. Rippling Woods Elementary is one of eight schools with “Breakfast with Class” in this county’s school system.

*"I am very pleased with the "Breakfast with Class" program. We have seen several improvements, there are fewer behavior problems, students are in class on time and have the opportunity to begin class work while they eat. I would not want to return to serving breakfast in the cafeteria."
-Administrator*

"I think it is a good idea because some kids don't have breakfast in the morning. I also think it's a good idea because they can just listen to the teacher's directions while they're eating. Plus they won't be late for class." -Student

At Rippling Woods Elementary School, the cafeteria serves breakfast at 7:50 AM and stops at 8:15PM. School officially starts at 8:20AM. There are two serving lines that students are able to go through to pick up their bag with the breakfast components plus milk and juice and pay if necessary. Students take breakfasts to their classrooms and enjoy eating with their classmates and teacher. Cafeteria staff pre-package breakfasts the afternoon before the serving and rotate through a variety of cold breakfasts. Teachers often use the time students use to eat to make classroom announcements. Clean up is simple: students place their trash in the bags the breakfast came in and place it in the classroom's trash can. Custodial staff pick up the trash bags at the end of the day and appreciate that they do not have to clean the cafeteria in the morning. The principal and teaching staff are supportive of "Breakfast with Class" and regularly send out newsletters reminding parents and families of the program.

As a result of this innovative method, breakfast participation has increased substantially over the past few years at Rippling Woods Elementary.

SUCCESS STORY

In October of 2008, Baltimore City Public Schools launched "Breakfast Breaks" in the city's public schools. "Breakfast Breaks" facilitate grab and go breakfast for food service programs with all breakfast components, including whole grain cereal and 100 percent fruit juice, packaged in a shelf-stable box. Students are able to grab the box and a bottle of cold milk in the morning.



Breakfast Breaks qualify as federally funded reimbursable meals as part of the National School Breakfast Program. For more information on how Baltimore City Public Schools utilized Breakfast Breaks and have customized the boxes to fit their needs, please contact their Food and Nutrition Services department (**contact information provided in the appendix of this toolkit**).

Other distributors have also created similar pre-packaged breakfast boxes, such as Kellogg's cereal.

SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE GRAB AND GO BREAKFAST A SUCCESS

- Encourage food service to prepare/pre-package breakfasts the afternoon before.
- Place breakfast carts/tables in high-traffic areas, particularly near school entrances.
- Run multiple points of service and only offer breakfasts in an easy to grab format.

BREAKFAST AFTER 1ST PERIOD

BENEFITS

- Breakfast served following the first instructional period provides students a nutrition break.
- Students who ate little at home may be hungry again by this time.
- A mid-morning breakfast gives students a nutritious choice versus vending machine items or a non-reimbursable milk break.

HOW DOES BREAKFAST AFTER 1ST PERIOD WORK?

This model is also known as “second chance breakfast” where students eat breakfast during a break in the morning after their first class. Reimbursable breakfasts are served in a grab and go fashion, often offered from mobile carts or tables located in high traffic areas as students head toward their next class. Breakfasts can either be hot or cold.

WHEN DOES BREAKFAST AFTER 1ST PERIOD WORK BEST?

Breakfast after 1st period seems to work particularly well in middle and high schools. Breakfast after 1st period also works best in schools with the following characteristics:

- A morning break already exists or class scheduling is flexible enough to incorporate one.
- There is no time to serve breakfast before classes or participation is low when breakfast served before school.
- Students rely on vending and convenience foods from outside the school for breakfast.
- The cafeteria is centrally located.

WILL BREAKFAST AFTER 1ST PERIOD WORK FOR MY SCHOOL? CHECK YES OR NO AFTER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. There is flexible class scheduling to accommodate a breakfast break. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 2. Food carts are available or space exists for placement of tables in high-traffic areas. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 3. Students grab soft drinks and snacks from vending machines as they rush to class. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 4. There are one or more areas in the building where breakfast could be distributed. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 5. Meal payment system does not require cash at point of service. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 6. The cafeteria is small and crowded. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| 7. School administrators, teachers, food service, and custodial staff are open to trying a new breakfast delivery model. | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then Breakfast After 1st Period might be ideal for achieving a high participation rate (at least 60 percent of total enrollment) in your school.

FURTHER EXPANSION



FURTHER EXPANSION

ELIMINATION OF REDUCED PRICE BREAKFAST

HOW DOES THE ELIMINATION OF REDUCED PRICE BREAKFAST WORK?

By eliminating reduced price breakfasts, schools offer their students two prices for breakfast – free and full price. In this model, students who would qualify for the reduced price meal are able to receive their breakfast for free. Even though the school only uses two categories for charging students, the school still claims the federal reimbursement at the correct income category for that student.

Schools that eliminate reduced price breakfasts often see an increase in participation in the lunch program as well as in their breakfast program. By saving money at breakfast, a student is more likely to have extra money to buy lunch. Schools find that participation, and as a result, federal reimbursements, increase enough to cover the cost of serving breakfast to this group of students for free.

WHY ELIMINATE REDUCED PRICE BREAKFASTS?

Offering breakfast for free to students that qualify for reduced price meals removes any financial barrier that these students may experience. Even though the cost of reduced priced meals are low, for a low-income family these expenses may add up and become prohibitive. When you eliminate reduced price breakfasts, more students participate.

WHEN DOES ELIMINATING REDUCED PRICE BREAKFASTS WORK BEST?

Eliminating reduced price breakfasts works well in schools with a high percentage of students that qualify for free and reduced price meals, but have low participation of reduced price qualifying students in the breakfast program.

SUCCESS STORY — ELIMINATING REDUCED PRICE CATEGORY

SCHOOL SYSTEM: **WASHINGTON COUNTY**

GRADES SERVED: **PRE-K – 12TH**

ENROLLMENT: **21,338 STUDENTS**

FREE/REDUCED: **42.7 PERCENT**

Washington County has eliminated the reduced price meal category and serves breakfast for free to all students whose family income falls under 185 percent of the federal poverty level. A few years ago, Washington County noticed a significant difference in breakfast participation in the reduced price category for students at MMFA schools vs. non-MMFA schools. This resulted in the decision to eliminate the reduced-price category mid-school year of 2002-2003. The increase in participation yielded an additional \$27,600 in federal subsidy that school year. Prior to eliminating this category during the 2002-2003 school year, approximately 12 percent of eligible reduced-priced students ate breakfast. During the 2009-2010 school year 46 percent of eligible reduced-priced students were eating breakfast. For additional information, please contact the Food and Nutrition Services department of Washington County Schools (**contact information provided in the appendix of this toolkit**).



UNIVERSAL FREE BREAKFAST

HOW DOES UNIVERSAL FREE BREAKFAST WORK?

When universal free breakfast is offered, breakfast is available at no charge to all students, regardless of their household income. It is usually offered at schools that have a high percentage of students that qualify for free or reduced price meals. Because students don't need to bring cash, tickets or cards, universal free breakfast works well with the breakfast in the classroom model. However, it also works with other meal service options. Breakfast is given free to any student who wants it that day; however, the school claims the federal reimbursement at the correct income category for that student. This data is obtained from their meal applications or direct certification lists.

Many schools find that Universal Free Breakfast increases participation so drastically that they do not actually experience a loss from otherwise paying students. Some schools combine Universal Free Breakfast with Provision 2 or 3, which decreases the paperwork involved with offering breakfast in schools with minimal growth from year to year. For more information on Provision 2 and 3 issues, please go to http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/prov-1-2-3/Prov1_2_3_FactSheet.htm.

WHY SERVE UNIVERSAL FREE BREAKFAST?

Universal Free Breakfast reduces the stigma attached to eating breakfast at school. It makes breakfast available to those students who may not want to participate in the program for fear of being labeled "poor." It also removes a financial barrier to those who cannot afford the cost of a school breakfast.

WHEN DOES UNIVERSAL FREE BREAKFAST WORK BEST?

Universal free breakfast works well in schools with greater than 70-75 percent of students eligible for free and reduced price meals. However, schools with fewer eligible students have operated the program successfully.

SUCCESS STORY — UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST

SCHOOL SYSTEM: **BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

GRADES SERVED: **PRE-K — 12TH**

ENROLLMENT: **83,676 STUDENTS**

FREE/REDUCED: **83.5 PERCENT**

Baltimore City offers free breakfast to all of its students—regardless of income—by utilizing Provision 2. For additional information on implementing Provision 2, please contact Maryland State Department of Education.

OUTREACH TO MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Unlike elementary school children, middle and high school students have more autonomy and freedom to purchase food from local corner stores and fast food restaurants before arriving to school. Additionally, middle school and high school students often do not feel hungry when they first arrive at school and are more apt to feel stigma associated with school meals. Due to these factors, schools need to work extra hard to compete for older students' business. Below are some concrete suggestions to reach this challenging audience.

GET STUDENTS INVOLVED

- Create a school breakfast advisory group. Ask the group to research student perceptions of school breakfast and the barriers to eating at school. Request that the group propose solutions and help the food service staff and school administrators implement changes.
- Have students design and administer promotional activities, posters, slogans and broadcast announcements.
- Hold taste tests for students and have them vote on their favorite breakfast items. Add these foods to the menu.
- Ask student club advisors and sports team coaches to hold their meetings in the cafeteria during breakfast if that is where it is served.
- Solicit stores or vendors to donate prizes for a monthly raffle for students who participate in the school's breakfast program. Allow school students to administer the raffle.

MAKE BREAKFAST MORE CONVENIENT

- Institute grab and go breakfast by placing breakfast carts around the school where students hang out.
- Keep the cafeteria open later in the school day so that students who arrive later or have morning free periods can eat breakfast.

STAKEHOLDERS

> PRINCIPALS

Principals have strong interests in the academic 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. Principals play an important role in deciding to expand the School Breakfast Program. They also lead teachers in the goal of developing successful students. Principals can influence the success of the School Breakfast Program as well as the success of their students.

A PRINCIPAL MAY BE CONCERNED ABOUT:

SCHEDULING: The School Breakfast Program has various methods of serving students, so times of service may vary from program to program. However, certain methods, like breakfast in the classroom, can take as little as 10 minutes. Other methods allow students to eat their breakfast during a scheduled break between classes or on the way to class. If scheduling is an issue, there is almost always a method of service that can accommodate your school's needs.

COSTS: Expanding breakfast adds additional cost, but often the participation is high enough to support the program through economies of scale. Not only will there be revenue generated through participation, but federal reimbursement for breakfast can cover the additional food and/or labor costs.

RESOURCES: In Maryland, the State Department of Education administers the School Breakfast Program. The department is interested in the success of your students too and can provide support. Additional support for food service staff when expanding the School Breakfast Program is available through various organizations such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the American School Food Service Association. Other schools are also a resource; talk to other school food service staff or departments to see if you can emulate your peers' experiences. In addition, consult the contact sheet for a listing of First Class Breakfast Coordinators.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST TIPS FOR PRINCIPALS

PLAY A DIRECT ROLE IN HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY

- Implement a schedule that ensures that students have ample time and access to breakfast.
- Affirm students for “starting smart” with a good breakfast by joining them in the morning.

SUPPORT TEACHERS

- School breakfast helps children behave better and be more attentive in class. It also reduces disruptive hunger-related visits to the school nurse.
- Distribute information to teachers about the link between breakfast and academic success (i.e., Breakfast for Learning fact sheet in the appendix of this toolkit). Encourage them to reinforce this message.

PROVIDE A KEY RESOURCE FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

- Inform parents that they can count on school breakfast when family schedules are rushed and children do not feel like eating.
- Send a letter or flyer to parents at the start of the year to make sure they know about the School Breakfast Program. Send regular communication home.
- Encourage more families to complete their free and reduced meal applications. Reduce disruptive hunger-related visits to the school nurse.
- Distribute information to teachers about the link between breakfast and academic success (i.e., Breakfast for Learning fact sheet in the appendix of this toolkit). Encourage them to reinforce this message.

PROVIDE A KEY RESOURCE FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

- Inform parents that they can count on school breakfast when family schedules are rushed and children do not feel like eating.
- Send a letter or flyer to parents at the start of the year to make sure they know about the School Breakfast Program. Send regular communication home.
- Encourage more families to complete their free and reduced meal applications.
- Consult the contact sheet for a list of First Class Breakfast Coordinators.

“BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM HELPS TEACHERS TOO. IT’S THE KIDS WHO DON’T EAT WHO ARE DISRUPTIVE. ALSO, BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM GIVES TEACHERS TIME TO MODEL SOCIALIZATION SKILLS FOR THE STUDENTS, WHICH IS IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN. . . THEN ONCE BREAKFAST IS OVER, KIDS ARE ALREADY SITTING IN THEIR SEATS. THERE IS NO LOST TRANSITIONAL TIME.”

-PRINCIPAL, BALTIMORE CITY

> TEACHERS

Teachers are important supporters in expanding the School Breakfast Program. Teachers have multiple roles within the school environment. Studies show that eating a healthy breakfast improves attention span, academic performance and classroom behavior (see the *Breakfast for Learning fact sheet in the appendix of this toolkit*). In schools that have successfully expanded the School Breakfast Program, teachers have found that concerns are easily addressed and the benefits far outweigh the costs.

A TEACHER MAY BE CONCERNED ABOUT:

TEACHER WORKLOAD: Teachers do many things besides teaching to support a successful learning environment. Studies show that school breakfast has a clear and direct impact on learning. School food service staff, janitorial staff or the students themselves, handle any additional work.

CLASSROOM ORDER: The menu and methods of serving can limit both work and clean up for everyone. How to properly clean up and dispose of breakfast should be modeled first by the teacher.

TIME COMMITMENT: Studies have shown that breakfast, regardless of the serving method, can take as little as 2 minutes (grab and go) or 10-15 minutes (breakfast in the classroom).

“BREAKFAST IN OUR CLASSROOM HAS ADDED A NEW DIMENSION TO OUR SCHOOL DAY. WE ARE ABLE TO START THE DAY LIKE A REAL FAMILY HAVING A WARM ATMOSPHERE WITH FOOD, CONVERSATION AND MORNING ACTIVITIES.”

-TEACHER, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

> SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE STAFF

School food service directors and personnel are vital to the educational process. Their work completes the cycle of providing a healthy learning environment through serving school meals.

FOOD SERVICE STAFF MAY HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT:

WORKLOAD: Expanding the School Breakfast Program does not necessarily mean more work for food service personnel. Depending on the breakfast service method you choose, it can be set up to work with current operation with very little change. Also, prepackaged breakfast foods keep labor to a minimum.

“THESE NEW BREAKFAST BREAKS ARE ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL. THAT IS WHEN THE CEREAL, THE JUICE, AND THE CRACKERS ARE ALL COMBINED, AND THE KIDS COME BY. THEY DON’T EVEN NEED A TRAY. THEY JUST GRAB A MILK, AND THEY ARE GONE.”

-FOOD SERVICE STAFF MEMBER, BALTIMORE COUNTY

> SCHOOL CUSTODIAL STAFF

Support from custodial staff is important to making school breakfast expansion successful. Their participation in the School Breakfast Program is critical to maintaining a safe and healthy school learning environment throughout the day for students and staff.

SCHOOL CUSTODIAL STAFF MAY HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT:

WORKLOAD: Expanding the School Breakfast Program does not necessarily mean additional work for custodial staff. Students can, and are often eager to, pitch in to ensure all the trash is properly disposed of and that classrooms remain clean. Having students participate in the clean-up process can also provide additional leadership and learning opportunities. Custodial staff in schools where the School Breakfast Program has been expanded generally do not find that the program produces additional work or leads to an increase in pest problems.

> PARENTS

Parents are important decision makers in the school environment. However, not every child is prepared to learn in the morning for various reasons, including lack of sleep, bussing schedules or lateness. One way to assist students and parents with a successful school day is through a nutritious breakfast.

A PARENT MAY BE CONCERNED ABOUT:

CHILD ALREADY EATS AT HOME: It is great that some families eat together in morning; however, many eat unhealthy breakfasts on the run and others do not eat breakfast at all. Whether or not students have time to eat at home, the School Breakfast Program ensures a healthy option is always available.

COST: Breakfast at school is affordable. A full breakfast costs less than convenience store items. If students qualify for the lunch program, they also qualify for the breakfast program, with no additional paperwork. Payment is based upon family income and is confidential.

CHILD NOT HUNGRY: Often, children are not hungry first thing in the morning. Some of these children go to school and are ready to eat when they arrive or after 1st period. Eating school breakfast not only satisfies their hunger, but it also helps students focus during the morning school hours.

BREAKFAST ALTERNATIVE: Children, like adults, base their food choices on what is available. They may make unhealthy choices if vending machines are the only option. Although some schools may have good breakfast vending options, these foods are often high in sugar and fat. Convenience stores and fast food locations are similar in providing high calorie choices. School breakfast is a value for parents and students alike.

STUDENT ADVISORY GROUP

What better way to address the needs of students than by asking them? Ask students to volunteer to test new menu items, create flyer designs and generate marketing ideas. Students from the class councils, associated student body, Honor Society or other organizations may want to participate too.

Find out what they think of school meals and ask how school breakfast can be more appealing. What kinds of foods would they like to eat? Have them help you design or create a menu for their age group.

Students will provide a quick response and will generate ideas to increase participation. These students can also help develop or choose new items to add to the menus depending upon their own personal tastes. Engaging students in the process will help with generating interest and marketing the program to their peers.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION



BREAKFAST CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS: FAQs

HOW CAN I INCREASE BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION?

Students don't participate because breakfast is served too early and they don't come to school in time to eat breakfast. Sometimes the solution is bringing breakfast to the students. Schools that have an in-classroom breakfast model generally have a higher participation rate than those that don't. In a study of districts with universal breakfast, the five districts that made breakfast a part of the school day served an average of 72.5 low-income students' breakfast for every 100 that ate lunch. Districts that did not include breakfast as part of the school day only served 44.2 low-income students' breakfast for every 100 that ate lunch.

- Incorporate breakfast as part of the school day through in-classroom breakfast or grab and go breakfast.
- Create a “pass” for tardy students to eat breakfast. After the third “pass,” the parents or guardians are included in a discussion of the tardiness.
- Let parents know about the importance of breakfast and send constant reminders on when breakfast is served.

HOW DO I CREATE BUY-IN FROM MY TEACHERS FOR IN-CLASSROOM BREAKFAST?

Almost all teachers that have breakfast in the classroom grow to love it and don't want it taken away!

- Invite teachers from other schools to talk with your teachers about the positive effects of in-classroom breakfast.
- Allow teachers to visit schools who have successfully implemented an alternative breakfast delivery model.
- Provide teachers with breakfast in the morning to eat with their students.
- Demonstrate that breakfast is a foundational tool for teachers by providing statistics on the importance of breakfast to test scores, attendance, discipline, and overall school performance (see the Breakfast for Learning fact sheet in the appendix of this toolkit).
- Create a section in your school newsletter that features breakfast and the benefits it provides for the students and school.
- Consult the contact sheet for a listing of First Class Breakfast Coordinators.

I CAN'T DO THIS WITHOUT SUPPORT FROM MY SUPERVISOR AND COLLEAGUES. HOW DO I CONVINC THEM THAT IN-CLASSROOM BREAKFAST IS A GOOD MODEL?

Find out what other schools are doing so you can adopt a similar model in your own school.

- Talk to principals in schools where in-classroom breakfast is taking place.
- Talk to your regional food service managers about how your school can serve breakfast to more students.
- Consult the contact sheet for a listing of First Class Breakfast Coordinators.

MY SCHOOL IS REALLY OLD AND HAS NO WORKING ELEVATORS. HOW DO I SERVE BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM?

Creative solutions exist that may work for your school.

- Use the “grab and go” model where students pick up their own meals in convenient carrying cases in the cafeteria or hallway before heading up to class.
- Use community volunteers to help carry the food up to the classroom.
- Take all the dry foods up to the classroom for the entire week and only bring up the other components each day.

WON'T IN-CLASSROOM BREAKFAST LEAD TO PROBLEMS WITH TRASH AND GET MY CLASSROOMS DIRTY?

Focus on the importance of breakfast as a learning tool! Studies show that in-classroom breakfast does not make a big difference in classroom cleanliness because students are quickly provided a structured routine for clean-up in the classroom.

- Get carpet sweepers for every classroom or enough to share.
- Get buckets and mops in every classroom or enough to share.
- Provide trash containers in hallways outside the classrooms for pick up.

WE DON'T HAVE THE STAFFING IN THE SCHOOL TO SERVE IN-CLASSROOM BREAKFAST. HOW CAN WE GET MORE STAFF OR TRAINED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP OUT?

Schools with breakfast success have generally recruited and used their volunteers efficiently.

- Use students to do “community service” work and help with classroom breakfast.
- Create a “Breakfast Buddies/Club” with students or parents who will be responsible for helping with breakfast. (Participating as a volunteer can be good motivation for chronically late students.)
- Create a training program for all volunteers so that they can be “certified” to help with breakfast – include parents.
- Reach out to the community, including the faith-based organizations in the area for volunteers.
- Serve breakfast to all volunteers.
- Use volunteers to help fill out meal applications. Make the volunteers available for parents if the parents need help (i.e., interpreters, individuals to assist in filling out the forms, etc.).
- Use volunteers to bag breakfast items the day before.

DOCUMENTING MEALS CAN BE COMPLICATED. HOW DO I ENSURE THAT EVERYONE FOLLOWS THE RULES?

This is a challenge for many schools as they make the transition from “traditional” serving methods, but county school administration and the state want to work with you to make it as easy as possible.

- Provide training for teachers and everyone who will be doing accountability for the meals.
- Offer frequent refresher training courses.
- Try using a share table where students can put extra food that they took. (Remember the food cannot go back to the kitchen, but could go to other places such as to the school nurse.)

**LETTERS TO GO HOME TO PARENTS ABOUT EXPANDING BREAKFAST
AT YOUR SCHOOL. ALSO AVAILABLE AT NoKidHungryMD.org**

<Date>

Dear Parents:

This year, we are evaluating our school community to make sure all of our students are fully prepared for academic success. As we all recognize that hungry children cannot learn, the first step in fostering a productive academic environment is ensuring that all students begin the school day with a nutritious breakfast at home or at school.

The School Breakfast Program is available to all students every weekday morning. No advanced registration is necessary; your child can attend every day or only occasionally. These supervised meals, are based on the nutrition recommendations set out in the Dietary Guidelines.

School Breakfast is an ideal solution on mornings when kids are running late or parents have early commitments. Whatever the reason, if breakfast at home is not convenient, please take advantage of breakfast here at school. *<Insert more details about the delivery method, price, time, etc.>*

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

**LETTERS TO PRINCIPALS ABOUT EXPANDING BREAKFAST AT YOUR SCHOOL.
ALSO AVAILABLE AT NoKidHungryMD.org**

<Date>

Dear Principal:

Research shows that offering breakfast at school results in increased math and reading scores, fewer nurses' office visits, improved classroom behavior, improved attentiveness, decreased student absences and tardiness, and overall improved performance. Let's take advantage of the benefits of school breakfast by increasing student participation. While most schools traditionally offer breakfast prior to the start of the school day, barriers to participation exist. Many schools around the state have succeeded in eliminating these barriers by changing how breakfast is delivered to their students.

There are a number of models that schools can develop to expand school breakfast participation. Some include:

- Extended breakfast periods before school.
- In-classroom breakfast.
- "Grab and go" carts in the hallways or other locations in addition to the cafeteria.
- "Second chance" breakfast served between first and second periods.
- Any combination of these or your own ideas that result in a plan that works for your individual school and your students.

Make increasing breakfast program participation part of your strategy for school improvement.

Your school can expand breakfast without financially burdening the food service program. Schools can choose what they charge for breakfast based on their costs; they usually charge less than a dollar. USDA provides reimbursement for every breakfast served, based on each student's eligibility category. For each meal served, your school may receive up to \$1.76 in reimbursement. Breakfast meals may increase the productivity of the food service staff you already employ.

For the health and well-being of your students, expand the School Breakfast Program in your school. Students need access to a nutritious breakfast every day.

Sincerely,

<Enclosures>

A BREAKFAST CHALLENGE TO PROMOTE BREAKFAST TO INCREASE STUDENT PARTICIPATION. ALSO AVAILABLE AT NoKidHungryMD.org

BREAKFAST IN [COUNTY NAME] CHALLENGE

To: **School Leaders**

From: **Food and Nutrition Services**

Date: *<Insert Date>*

There is strong commitment from [County Name] Public Schools to ensure that students in [County] eat breakfast because research shows that offering breakfast at school results in increased math and reading scores, fewer nurses' office visits, improved classroom behavior, improved attentiveness, decreased student absences and tardiness, and overall improved performance. Our goal is to increase school breakfast participation, and we will be launching a district-wide competition to encourage schools to make breakfast a priority in their pursuit of academic improvement. The school with the highest participation for *<insert time period>* will receive *<insert prize>*. *<Insert additional terms and condition>*

By signing and returning this pledge, you accept the Breakfast in [County] Challenge and will aim to increase breakfast participation for the *<insert year>* school year.

Please select your school's breakfast delivery model (all that apply):

___ **Classroom Breakfast:** Breakfast items will be taken to the classroom by school and cafeteria staff and served to the students in the classroom under supervision of the teacher.

___ **Grab and Go (Cafeteria):** Students will come to the cafeteria to pick up their pre-bagged breakfast and take it to the classroom to eat under the supervision of their teacher.

___ **Grab and Go (Hallway or Entrance):** Students will pick up pre-bagged breakfast from carts in the hallway/entrance and take their breakfast to the classroom to eat under the supervision of their teacher.

___ **Traditional School Breakfast:** Students will come to the cafeteria to pick up their breakfast and eat their breakfast in the cafeteria. (This will require additional outreach because less students use this method of delivery)

Outreach items and additional support will be provided by Food and Nutrition Services if requested.

School: _____

Principal's Signature: _____

Date: _____

BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING

RECENT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON THE LINK BETWEEN CHILDREN'S NUTRITION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

MISSING BREAKFAST AND EXPERIENCING HUNGER IMPAIR CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO LEARN

- Children who skip breakfast are less able to distinguish among similar images, show increased errors, and have slower memory recall.^{1,2}
- Children experiencing hunger have lower math scores and are more likely to have to repeat a grade.³
- Behavioral, emotional and academic problems are more prevalent among children with hunger.⁴
- Children experiencing hunger are more likely to be hyperactive, absent and tardy, in addition to having behavioral and attention problems more often than other children.⁵
- Children who are undernourished score lower on cognitive tests when they miss breakfast.^{6,7}
- Teens experiencing hunger are more likely to have been suspended from school, have difficulty getting along with other children, and have no friends.⁸
- Children with hunger are more likely to have repeated a grade, received special education services, or received mental health counseling, than low-income children who do not experience hunger.⁹

EATING BREAKFAST AT SCHOOL HELPS CHILDREN PERFORM BETTER

- Children who eat a complete breakfast, versus a partial one, make fewer mistakes and work faster in math and number checking tests.¹⁰
- 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.¹¹
- Providing breakfast to mildly undernourished students at school improves their speed and memory in cognitive tests.^{12, 13}
- Children who eat breakfast show improved cognitive function, attention, and memory.¹⁴
- Participating in school breakfast is associated with improved math grades, attendance and punctuality.^{15, 16}
- Children perform better on tests of vocabulary and matching figures after eating breakfast.^{17, 18}
- Consuming breakfast improves children's performance on demanding mental tasks and reaction to frustration.¹⁹

SCHOOL BREAKFAST IMPROVES STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- Schools that provide breakfast in the classroom to all students show decreases in tardiness and suspensions as well as improved student behavior and attentiveness.^{20, 21}
- Providing students with breakfast in the classroom setting is associated with lower tardy rates and fewer disciplinary office referrals.²²
- School breakfast programs can lower absence and tardiness rates and improve standardized achievement test scores.²³

“WHAT WE FIND PARTICULARLY EXCITING IS THAT THIS [SCHOOL BREAKFAST] IS A RELATIVELY SIMPLE INTERVENTION THAT CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE CHILDREN’S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING.”

**-J. MICHAEL MURPHY, EDD, SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM RESEARCHER,
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL & HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL**

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAMS YIELD POSITIVE RESULTS

- Children who participate in universal school breakfast have lower rates of absence and tardiness.^{24, 25}
- Schools that provide universal school breakfast have higher breakfast participation, especially when breakfast is served in the classroom, and students who significantly increase their breakfast participation are more frequently on time and in attendance.²⁶
- Schools providing all students with free breakfast have greater positive changes in academic performance.²⁷

Citations available at <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/breakfastforlearning1.pdf>.

RESOURCES

Included in this section are links to tools to assist with your outreach. All of the following components are customizable and available for download at www.nokidhungrymd.org:

- A PowerPoint presentation outlining the importance of breakfast, types of breakfast delivery models, and what your school can do to improve.
- A newsletter that details breakfast delivery types and additional strategies to ease implementation.
- A brochure that details breakfast delivery types and examples of schools that have implemented different models.

SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES THAT MAY ASSIST WITH YOUR SCHOOL'S EXPANSION ARE LINKED TO AT www.NoKidHungryMD.org.

> Marketing resources from USDA's Food & Nutrition Service, including:

- Benefits of Breakfast Flyer
- Article for School Newsletter (in English and Spanish)
- Monthly School Newsletter Inserts
- Letters to Parents about Free and Reduced Meal Applications
- 10 Reasons to Try Breakfast in the Classroom Flyer
- Public Service Announcements

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/expansion/marketingresources.htm>

> *Breakfast in Maryland Counties, Maryland Hunger Solutions*

Provides county-by-county comparison and analysis of school breakfast participation in Maryland.

<http://www.mdhungersolutions.org/fedfoodprogs/breakfast.shtm>

> *Maryland Meals for Achievement Findings, Maryland State Department of Education*

Summarizes the findings from year 3 of the Maryland Meals for Achievement classroom breakfast pilot program.

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/CA432B36-F5D2-41DA-9E0D-4D01C373AA75/1541/Classroom_Breakfast.pdf

> *Expanding the Reach of School Breakfast, Food Research and Action Center*

Briefly describes strategies for boosting participation in the School Breakfast Program.

www.frac.org/pdf/expanding_breakfast.pdf

> *Provision 2, Food Research and Action Center*

Explains the provision in the federal School Breakfast Program that reduces paperwork and allows schools to provide universal breakfast to its students.

<http://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/provision2.pdf>

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ABOUT KAISER PERMANENTE OF THE MID-ATLANTIC STATES

Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States region, headquartered in Rockville, Maryland, provides and coordinates complete health care services for almost 500,000 members through 30 medical centers in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Founded in 1980, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States is a total health organization comprised of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., and the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group, P.C., an independent medical group that features approximately 900 physicians who provide or arrange care for patients throughout the area. Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States is considered one of Maryland's "Top HMOs," according to the Maryland Health Care Commission. The health plan was ranked in the nation's 100 top commercial health plans and 20 top Medicare health plans – and the #1 Medicare plan for Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. – by "NCQA Health Insurance Plan Rankings 2010-2011 Private." For more information about Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, visit www.kp.org.



WALMART

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are proud to support the charitable causes that are important to customers and associates in their own neighborhoods. The Walmart Foundation funds initiatives focused on education, workforce development, economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, and health and wellness. From Feb. 1, 2009 through Jan. 31, 2010, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation gave more than \$512 million in cash and in-kind gifts globally, \$467 million of which was donated in the U.S. In addition to generous donations to many organizations in Maryland, Walmart has also supported the fight against hunger through active participation in the Maryland Partnership to End Childhood Hunger.



WEIGHT WATCHERS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Weight Watchers International, Inc. is the world's leading provider of weight management services, operating globally through a network of Company-owned and franchise operations. Weight Watchers holds almost 50,000 meetings each week where members receive group support and learn about healthy eating patterns, behavior modification and physical activity. WeightWatchers.com provides innovative, subscription weight management products over the Internet and is the leading Internet-based weight management provider in the world. In addition, Weight Watchers offers a wide range of products, publications and programs for those interested in weight loss and weight control.



MID-ATLANTIC DAIRY ASSOCIATION

Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association is one of 18 state and regional promotion organizations working under the umbrella of the United Dairy Industry Association. We are the local affiliate of the National Dairy Council, which has been conducting nutrition education and nutrition research programs since 1915. Headquartered in Philadelphia, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association is supported by more than 7,500 dairy farmers in the Mid-Atlantic region through the national 15-cent dairy checkoff program. We work closely with Dairy Management Inc.™, the Milk Processors Education Program (MilkPEP) and regional counterparts to bring a fully integrated national promotion program to the Mid-Atlantic region. www.dairyspot.com.



MARYLAND HUNGER SOLUTIONS

Maryland Hunger Solutions (MDHS) aims to end hunger and improve nutrition in the state of Maryland. MDHS focuses on using federal nutrition supports (school meals, summer and afterschool nutrition programs, food stamps, and other nutrition programs) to reduce hunger and its adverse effects on health, learning, productivity and well-being; to improve nutrition; and to strengthen community institutions. Its goal is to increase access to these programs and other nutritious food sources in low-income areas across Maryland through public education, training and technical assistance and advocacy to improve program participation and implementation. Established in 2007, MDHS is a separately staffed and funded initiative of the Food Research and Action Center. Maryland Hunger Solutions is a core member of the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger, a public-private coalition led by the Governor's office to raise awareness about childhood hunger in the state and increase participation in nutrition programs that combat hunger.



SHARE OUR STRENGTH

Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit, is ending childhood hunger in America by connecting children with the nutritious food they need to lead healthy, active lives. Through its No Kid Hungry® Campaign—a national effort to end childhood hunger in America by 2015—Share Our Strength ensures children in need are enrolled in effective federal nutrition programs; invests in community organizations fighting hunger; teaches families how to cook healthy, affordable meals; and builds public-private partnerships to end childhood hunger, at the state and city level. Working closely with the culinary industry and relying on the strength of its volunteers, Share Our Strength hosts innovative culinary fundraising events and develops pioneering cause marketing campaigns that support No Kid Hungry. Visit Strength.org to get involved.



PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN MARYLAND

Maryland's Governor Martin O'Malley is the first Governor in the nation to commit to ending childhood hunger by 2015. To make this commitment a reality, in the fall of 2008, Governor O'Malley, the Governor's Office for Children and Share Our Strength, announced the creation of the Maryland Partnership to End Childhood Hunger. This public-private partnership includes organizations, federal and state public agencies, local leaders and representatives from the faith community. The partnership is working with stakeholders around the state to increase participation in nutrition programs. Participants include the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Human Resources, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Comptroller's Office of Maryland, Maryland Hunger Solutions/Food Research and Action Center, Advocates for Children and Youth, the Capital Area and Maryland Food Banks, Seedco, Sodexo, Walmart, End Hunger in Calvert County, MD Cash Campaign, Maryland Family Network and the United States Department of Agriculture, among others. www.nokidhungrymd.org.



MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

The Governor's Office for Children promotes the well-being of Maryland's children through interagency collaboration and state/local partnerships. The Children's Cabinet, led by the Executive Director of the Governor's Office for Children, works collaboratively to create and promote an integrated, community-based service delivery system for Maryland's children, youth and families. It coordinates child integrated, community and family-oriented care within the State's Child-Serving Agencies by emphasizing prevention, early intervention and community-based services for all children and families. The office leads the development of a three-year plan establishing goals and strategies for delivery of integrated services to children and families. GOC works to promote the well-being of children by collaborating with Local Management Boards, expanding SCYFIS (State Children Youth and Families Information System), and developing and implementing Integrated Systems of Care for Maryland's children. www.goc.state.md.us.



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) promotes the nutritional well-being of students as part of the effort to offer all children in Maryland a world-class education. The School and Community Nutrition Program Branch (SCNPB) administers the federally funded nutrition programs including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, At-Risk Afterschool Supper Program, the Summer Food Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. In 2009-2010, over 121.8 million nutritionally balanced meals and snacks were served to Maryland Children in public schools, participating private nonprofit schools, residential child care institutions, and child care programs. MSDE works to enhance child nutrition programs through initiatives including the Maryland Meals for Achievement, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Farm to School programs, and the Governor's Partnership to End Childhood Hunger. For more information about the school nutrition programs in Maryland visit www.eatsmartmaryland.org.

THIS REPORT WAS AUTHORED BY MARYLAND HUNGER SOLUTIONS WITH INPUT FROM THE MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. DESIGN AND PRINTING WERE PROVIDED BY THE PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN MARYLAND.

This toolkit is available for viewing online at nokidhungrymd.org and mdhungersolutions.org.

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