



**Department of
Education**

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Testimony of David Berkowitz, Executive Director
Office of SchoolFood

School Breakfast
November 20, 2008

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

New York City Council Hearing

November 20, 2008

Good afternoon Chair Jackson, Chair Rivera, and members of the Education and Health Committees. My name is David Berkowitz, and I am Executive Director of the Office of School Food at the New York City Department of Education. I am joined by my colleague, Vincent Clark, Chief Executive Officer of the Department's Integrated Services Centers.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today on the very important subject of school nutrition, specifically about our innovative program to encourage more of our school children to eat a healthy breakfast every school day.

BACKGROUND

Before I discuss the Department's breakfast program, allow me to provide some context. Nationwide, breakfast consumption has decreased in recent decades. Those more likely to miss breakfast are minorities and from low income households. Breakfast should be a part of every child's day, and studies have shown its positive effect on academic functioning, mental health and preventing obesity.

Federal meals programs, including breakfast and lunch programs, are administered by states and are in schools nationwide. The meals served in these programs must adhere to Dietary Guidelines for Americans and are affordable, with many students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals based on family income level. Participating schools receive subsidies from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for meals served, with subsidy amounts per meal varying by the categorization of meal recipients (i.e., free, reduced, full price) and the number of meals served.

Here in New York City, we at SchoolFood served over 800,000 meals each school day last year, including about 200,000 breakfasts each day, at public, charter and non-public schools. These meals met or exceeded USDA guidelines, and we continue work hard to raise our standards.

Breakfast in New York City

Since the 2003-2004 School Year, we have had a citywide Universal Free School Breakfast Program, which has made breakfast available at no charge to all students. This program is financed entirely through Federal and State subsidies, and City tax dollars. It follows a traditional service model, providing breakfast in cafeterias before the start of each school day.

We do have lower breakfast participation rates than we would like (less than 22%), in spite of steady improvement. Getting breakfast under the traditional service model requires getting to school early; one of the challenges we face is encouraging students to arrive before classes begin in order to eat breakfast. Also, in spite of continuing efforts to eradicate it, some students may perceive a stigma attached to eating breakfast at school: "Only poor kids eat school breakfast" or "It's 'not cool'." Finally, school breakfast must compete with the convenience and allure of fast-food breakfast options. We believe we are approaching or have reached the limits of growth imposed by our current service model and are seeking to supplement it with a new one.

Breakfast in the Classroom

The service model we propose to get more kids eating healthy breakfasts every school day is “Breakfast in the Classroom”. Under this program meals are served in classrooms at the start of (*not before*) each school day to every student in attendance, which increases participation by removing the barriers of inconvenience and any perceived stigma.

Meal components are similar to those of the cafeteria program: fruit, dairy, grain servings, with additional serving of dairy or grain; packaged in individual paper bags. The meals are delivered to classrooms by SchoolFood personnel or collected from cafeterias in insulated transportation bags. They are then served during 1st period for 15 minutes, allowing transition time for the teacher to take attendance, model eating breakfast or read aloud. At the end of the meal, each child’s garbage is placed in his or her paper bag and all the paper bags are placed in the transportation bag, which is then collected from the hallway by a custodian or by SchoolFood personnel.

This program, already successfully implemented across the river in Newark, by the way, was piloted in New York City during the past school year. 21 schools voluntarily participated, each enrolling either a select number of individual classrooms or the entire school. The pilot was a resounding success:

- Kids liked the food and enjoyed eating with peers,
- Parents appreciated convenience,
- Teachers noticed
 - Decreased tardiness,
 - Improved behavior and alertness,
 - Fewer health complaints;
- Administration and clean-up were easy,
- No increased pest problems resulted.

I’d like to note this pilot received invaluable support from the Heckscher Foundation for Children, which is supporting its expansion as well.

Breakfast in the Classroom - Expansion

In the wake of this successful pilot, we’ve expanded the program to a total of 48 schools as of last week. And, as Mayor Bloomberg announced last month as part of his initiatives to weather the economic crisis, about 300 additional schools are targeted for potential expansion, with participation at the option of each school’s principal. The target population at these target schools is of high need relative to the City as a whole, with over 90% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals last year. Expansion to these schools can be accomplished without additional net funding from City budget, obviously an important consideration in these troubled economic times.

In conclusion, I’d like to thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you on this important matter, and, moreover, thank the Mayor, Speaker Quinn, Deputy Mayors Walcott and Gibbs, and the Chancellor for their unstinting support of this important initiative. A healthy breakfast for every child every day would make an important contribution toward all of our children realizing their potential at school. The Breakfast in the Classroom program will permit us make dramatic strides in increasing breakfast participation without requiring additional resources from elsewhere within the budget.

I would be delighted to take any questions you may have.

Testimony
of
Benjamin Thomases
New York City Food Policy Coordinator
Office of the Mayor

before the
New York City Council
Committee on Health and
Committee on Education
regarding
In-Class Breakfast
November 20, 2008

City Hall
New York, NY

Good afternoon Chairperson Rivera, Chairperson Jackson and members of the Health and Education Committees. My name is Ben Thomases and I am the Food Policy Coordinator for New York City. First, let me thank Speaker Quinn, her staff and this committee for drawing attention to this important work and supporting this project from the beginning. I would also like to thank David Berkowitz and the staff of the Office of School Food for their initiative in developing and implementing this project.

Two years ago, Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Quinn joined together to create the position of Food Policy Coordinator and the Food Policy Taskforce. Working within the context of the Center for Economic Opportunity overseen by Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs, our efforts connect the City's food policy initiatives with the Mayor's broader, innovative anti-poverty efforts. There are two main issues that we seek to address: the growing obesity epidemic, and the continued struggle of many families to afford the food they need.

Breakfast in the classroom, the initiative we are here to discuss today, is an important response to both of these problems. In October, Mayor Bloomberg announced an 18 point plan to help New Yorkers facing new challenges in

the current economic climate. This plan will promote job creation, and support the city's homeowners and small businesses. It will also provide relief to families who are struggling to make ends meet, and expanding our efforts to serve breakfast in the classroom--by working with principals in an additional 300 schools--is an important aspect of this plan.

Increasing access to federally funded food support programs is one of the most efficient ways the City can help families stretch their food budgets. And the school breakfast program is one of the most underutilized food support programs in the City. While roughly 70% of students in our schools participate in the School Lunch program, just over 20% eat breakfast in school—even though breakfast is free for all students and lunch is not. So finding a way to increase participation in the school breakfast program is one of the most important things the City can do to ensure that our young people have enough food to eat.

This effort is especially important in these tough economic times because it enables us to draw down federal money to provide students in need with a nutritious meal.

Increasing breakfast participation will also promote healthy eating, and is an important response to the epidemic of childhood obesity. The Department of Education's Office of School Food has been a leader among City agencies in providing healthy meals. It has made dramatic improvements during the last 7 years, switching to low-fat milk, reducing the fat content of the meals overall, increasing servings of whole grains and fruits and vegetables. In September, the Food Policy Taskforce created City Food Standards that require all City agencies to meet strict nutritional requirements for the more than 225 million meals and snacks per year served by these agencies and their contractors. As a result we can expect further improvements in school food, including reductions in the sodium content and increased fiber in the meals.

Simply put, the school breakfast is a healthy breakfast. It builds healthy eating habits for the students and leaves them satisfied with a well balanced meal. Students are then less likely to rely on unhealthy snacking during the school day.

Furthermore, serving breakfast in the classroom is proven to increase participation in the school breakfast program. Low participation in the

school breakfast program is a challenge for urban school districts nationwide.

A report from the Food Research and Action Center released in August of 2007, detailed both the barriers to breakfast participation and the most promising approaches to overcoming those barriers. Portland, Oregon and Newark, New Jersey were the highest performing districts according to the study, achieving participation rates in the breakfast program nearly as high as the participation rates in the lunch program. Both of these districts had made serving breakfast in the classroom the centerpiece of their strategies to promote breakfast participation.

Here in New York City we have tested breakfast in the classroom in more than 20 schools during the last school year before committing to a more ambitious expansion of the program. These schools included a mix of elementary, middle and high schools as well as schools in all five boroughs. The results of the pilot were uniformly positive. Principals, teachers, and students were enthusiastic about the program, noting that in addition to meeting a real need for healthy meals among the student body, it helped create a supportive learning environment.

In short, serving breakfast in the classroom has many benefits: it helps families afford the food they need, promotes healthy eating, and creates a supportive learning environment. The expansion of this initiative will secure these benefits for thousands of school children and provide needed assistance in these difficult economic times. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to take your questions.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST IN AMERICA'S BIG CITIES



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August 2007

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About FRAC

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national organization working for more effective public and private policies to eradicate domestic hunger and undernutrition.

For more information about FRAC, or to sign up for FRAC's Weekly News Digest, visit www.frac.org. For information about the School Breakfast Program, go to www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sbp.html

Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to the participating school district nutrition directors and their staff. Without their responsiveness and willingness to share their experience with others, this report would not have been possible.

This report was written by FRAC staff Madeleine Levin, with invaluable assistance from Jennifer Adach, Rachel Cooper, Lynn Parker, and student intern Michael Saltzman.

This project was funded by the National Dairy Council/Dairy Management, Inc.

FRAC also gratefully acknowledges major support of our work to expand and improve the School Breakfast Program in 2006-2007 from East Side Entrées, Inc., Kraft Foods, Inc., the Sara Lee Foundation, and the UPS Foundation.

In addition, we thank the following funders whose support in 2006-2007 has helped to make possible our work on expanding and improving nutrition programs:

S. Daniel Abraham	Land O'Lakes Foundation
America's Second Harvest – The Nation's Food Bank Network	MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Anonymous	Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
The Atlantic Philanthropies	The Moriah Fund
Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation	Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
California Endowment	National Dairy Council
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Nestlé USA
Consumer Health Foundation	New Directions Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Food Marketing Institute	Presbyterian Hunger Program
General Mills Foundation	Prince Charitable Trusts
Robert P. and Judith N. Goldberg Foundation	Pritzker Early Childhood Foundation
Grocery Manufacturers Association	Public Welfare Foundation
Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund	Share Our Strength
Jewish Youth Philanthropy Institute	Taste of the NFL
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Trellis Fund
Kaiser Permanente	Unilever United States, Inc.
Koret Foundation	Weissberg Foundation

School Breakfast in America's Big Cities: Successes and Shortfalls

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Summary of Key Findings

This report examines the school breakfast programs in 23 large urban school districts in the 2005-2006 school year. Because numerous studies show that eating breakfast is essential to children's ability to learn, stay healthy, and behave in school, it is vital to monitor how well schools are doing in reaching students with school breakfast, especially low-income students whose families struggle daily with tight food budgets. A majority of these 23 districts perform above the national average in reaching low-income students with breakfast, yet almost half fail to reach a majority of their low-income students with the important morning nourishment they need to succeed in school. Some have developed innovative programs which provide important models for other school districts that lag behind in reaching low-income children with school breakfast. But many more districts around the country must adopt such methods to insure that all children have access to adequate nutrition in order to learn, grow, and thrive.

The key findings in this report are:

- **The school districts that do not offer breakfast free to all students generally do worse in reaching low-income children.** Two-thirds of the districts surveyed for this report offer breakfast at no charge to all students in most or all of their schools. Districts that do not offer breakfast free to all students (instead maintaining a means test) generally fail to reach a majority of the students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.
- **The districts that make breakfast a part of the school day (e.g., serving breakfast in the classroom) have the highest participation rates.** The two top performing districts, each serving more than 90 low-income students breakfast for every 100 that receive lunch, feature programs in which students receive breakfast at no charge and alternative service methods make breakfast an essential part of the school day.
- **A majority of the 23 districts surveyed exceed the national average for providing breakfast to low-income students, yet nearly half fail to provide breakfast on a daily basis to a majority of their low-income students.** Nationally, for every 100 low-income children receiving school lunch during the 2005-2006 school year, 44.6 received school breakfast. On an average day 15 of the 23 large urban school districts surveyed for this report exceed this national average ratio. However, 11 districts, including three of the five largest, fail to provide breakfast on a daily basis to the majority of their low-income students.
- **Only two out of the 23 districts served at least two-thirds as many low-income students at breakfast as they served at lunch. This translates into many unserved children and lost federal dollars.** If all 23 districts had reached at least 70 low-income children with breakfast for every 100 receiving lunch in the 2005-2006 school year, at least half a million more children would have been eating a healthy school breakfast every day. Districts overall would have collected an additional \$129 million in federal child nutrition funding.
- **The key strategies that school districts across the nation should adopt to expand breakfast participation among low-income students include:**
 - Implementing universal breakfast programs (i.e. breakfast at no charge) with effective district-wide promotion;
 - Making breakfast a part of the school day through breakfast in the classroom and "grab and go" programs;
 - Establishing administrative support and leadership in implementing programs; and
 - Developing strong partnerships with anti-hunger organizations and state agencies.

Introduction

FRAC has analyzed school breakfast participation at the state level for many years. Now we turn to large, urban school districts because the greater concentration of low-income families in many such districts makes them an ideal environment to offer effective school breakfast programs. With large numbers of low-income students, these districts are in a unique position to benefit from economies of scale and community partnerships to increase breakfast participation. And the concentration of poverty in many cities means that these districts have a very important mission to insure that children have access to adequate nutrition in order to learn, grow, and thrive.

The School Breakfast Program reduces hunger among low-income children and improves their health and nutrition. Studies continue to show the effectiveness of expanding school breakfast participation in improving students' nutrition and health and overall school achievement. Children and adolescents who eat breakfast are significantly less likely to be overweight, since skipping breakfast is associated with a higher risk of obesity. Research has also shown that offering breakfast at school improves students' attendance, increases their attentiveness and achievement, and reduces school nurse visits and classroom discipline problems.

Many children do not eat a nutritious breakfast at home. Millions of families in the United States cannot afford to feed their children healthy breakfasts every day. In 2005, 12.9 million children (one in six of the nation's children) lived in poverty, and the federal government found 15.6 percent of households with children under 18 (containing 12.4 million children) were food insecure – these families faced a constant struggle against hunger.

Many of these children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, but each day thousands of students who eat school lunch do not eat breakfast at school. Nationally, for every 100 low-income students who eat school lunch every day, only 44.6 eat school breakfast. Many of the children who do not eat breakfast start the educational day not ready to learn and unable to concentrate.

While the struggle to get breakfast to children particularly affects low-income households, many families, regardless of income, find that early morning school bus schedules, long commutes to jobs, and nontraditional work hours make it difficult to prepare or sit down for a nutritious family breakfast. Some children, especially teenagers, have no appetite for breakfast very early in the morning when they wake up. Other children may have to wait for long periods of time between an early breakfast at home and a late lunch at school, making breakfast at school an important option.

School breakfast improves children's diets. In addition, school breakfast can help to build lifelong healthy eating habits. Breakfasts served as part of the federal School Breakfast Program must provide one-fourth or more of the key nutrients children need every day, and contain no more than 30 percent of calories from fat and less than ten percent of calories from saturated fat.

Research has shown that children who eat school breakfast are less likely to be obese. Obesity rates have doubled among children and tripled among adolescents over the past 20 years. These alarming figures translate into increased risks of premature death and an overall lower quality of life.

A full review of the positive effects of school breakfast can be found at: www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sbp.html.

The Survey

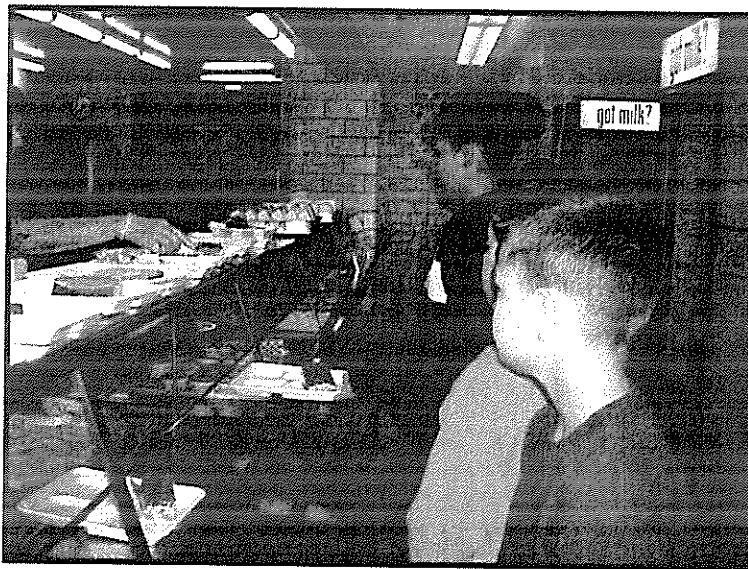
In October 2006 FRAC sent a survey regarding school breakfast participation and practices to 27 large urban school districts across the country. FRAC selected the districts based on size and geographic representation, seeking to look at the largest school districts in a substantial number of states.

School food service staff in 23 districts responded between October 2006 and January 2007 with data on the 2005-2006 school year, as well as answers to questions about current school breakfast practices and challenges. In addition, FRAC staff conducted phone interviews and/or site visits with six of the districts. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 3.

The major goals of the survey were to:

- Develop a profile of key characteristics for each district, including total enrollment, percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, effective use of the local wellness policies, and student participation in school breakfast;
- Determine the extent to which these districts reach low-income children with the School Breakfast Program, and assess trends;
- Consider the additional number of low-income students that would be served if the districts achieved a higher participation rate, and determine the federal dollars lost to the districts as a result of not providing these meals;
- Assess perceived barriers to increasing student participation in school breakfast;
- Collect information about, and examine the effectiveness of, school districts' efforts to increase school breakfast participation through the provision of breakfast at no charge to all students (sometimes called "universal breakfast"), and the implementation of programs that make breakfast part of the school day (e.g. breakfast in the classroom); and
- Collect information on promising practices in the districts which might serve as national models for increasing school breakfast participation by low-income students.

This report describes what we learned and the implications of this analysis for future school breakfast expansion efforts.



Findings

District Characteristics

1. Enrollment

Districts that participated in this study ranged in size from approximately 38,000 to 1.1 million students during School Year 2005-2006. **Table 1** lists the participating districts from the smallest to the largest enrollment, as reported by the districts. Ten of the 23 districts had a student enrollment of more than 100,000, with New York City and Los Angeles being by far the largest. Twelve of the 23 districts had a student enrollment of fewer than 75,000.

Table 1: School Districts Participating in FRAC Survey by Total Student Enrollment

School District Name	Total Enrollment
Indianapolis Public Schools, IN	38,346
Minneapolis School District, MN	39,000
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	39,300
Newark Public Schools, NJ	41,642
Seattle Public Schools, WA	44,454
Omaha Public Schools, NE	46,475
Wichita Public Schools, KS	46,502
Portland Public Schools, OR	47,008
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC	54,461
Columbus Public Schools, OH	57,000
Boston Public Schools, MA	57,900
Denver Public Schools, CO	73,018
Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	85,468
Memphis City Schools, TN	118,000
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	126,498
Detroit Public Schools, MI	134,254
School District of Philadelphia, PA	192,748
Houston Independent School District, TX	207,000
Clark County School District, Las Vegas, NV	296,000
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	356,166
Chicago Public Schools, IL	420,000
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	690,555
New York City Department of Education, NY	1,100,000

2. Student Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals

Schools take applications from students' families to determine if the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The extent of such eligibility is considered a key measure of need in a community and is often used as a proxy for determining the extent of need for financial support to a school system. On the federal level, for example, Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act uses eligibility rates for free and reduced-price meals as a part of the formula for determination of additional funds for schools serving high-risk communities. Many states use rates of eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals as a part of their formulas for determining each school district's level of state funding.

The districts responding to this survey reported the percent of their student enrollment eligible for free and reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program for school year 2005-2006. These figures provide a "snapshot" of the relative level of poverty and nutritional need. **Table 2** shows their reported percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals, as well as a total combined percentage of both free and reduced-price eligible students. The percentages varied from a low of 41 percent combined free and reduced-price eligible in Las Vegas, Nevada, to a high of 84.4 percent in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Eligibility for Free and Reduced-Price Meals: How it Works

All schools can participate in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. School boards must apply to their administering state agency – usually the education agency – in order to institute a program, which is administered nationally through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. All students in participating schools may take part in the school meals programs.

Household income determines whether students receive free meals, reduced-price meals, or "paid" meals, for which students pay most of the cost. The federal government provides these funds to a school (through the state) based on how many breakfasts and lunches it provides to students in each category. In the 2005-2006 school year schools received \$1.27 for each free breakfast, \$0.97 for each reduced-price breakfast, and \$0.23 for each paid breakfast served. Schools received an additional \$0.24 for each free and reduced-price breakfast served if they served 40 percent or higher free and reduced-price lunches during the second preceding school year. (These are called "severe need" schools.)

Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty line receive school meals for free. Children from families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty line receive school meals at a reduced price – no more than 30 cents for breakfast. All other participating students, officially designated as receiving "paid" meals, pay most of the cost for their breakfast, usually around \$1.00. As discussed later, however, some schools offer meals – or at least breakfasts – free to all students.

Table 2: Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price School Meals

School District	Percent of Students Eligible for Free Meals	Percent of Students Eligible for Reduced-Price Meals	Combined Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals
Clark County School District, Las Vegas, NV	32.7	8.3	41.0
Seattle Public Schools, WA	34.5	7.0	41.5
Portland Public Schools, OR	37.4	7.8	45.2
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	40.2	6.8	47.0
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	51.7	9.2	60.9
Omaha Public Schools, NE	50.0	11.0	61.0
Wichita Public Schools, KS	53.3	10.6	63.9
Denver Public Schools, CO	58.6	7.1	65.7
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC	61.7	5.0	66.7
Minneapolis School District, MN	61.5	7.7	69.2
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	61.3	8.8	70.1
Newark Public Schools, NJ	63.9	7.0	70.9
New York City Department of Education, NY	61.6	9.6	71.2
Detroit Public Schools, MI	68.8	3.1	71.9
Columbus Public Schools, OH	64.8	7.2	72.0
Boston Public Schools, MA	64.0	8.2	72.2
Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	63.9	8.9	72.8
School District of Philadelphia, PA	68.3	7.3	75.6
Houston Independent School District, TX	67.2	9.9	77.1
Memphis City Schools, TN	70.6	6.8	77.4
Chicago Public Schools, IL	71.1	8.6	79.7
Indianapolis Public Schools, IN	71.0	10.3	81.3
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	78.4	6.0	84.4

3. School Wellness Policies

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required every school district participating in the federal school meals programs to establish a local wellness policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year. The local school wellness policies are an important tool to begin to address obesity and promote healthy eating and physical activity through changes in school environments. Development of a local wellness policy offers districts an important opportunity to create a plan for positive change that is specific to their individual needs, goals, and resources. The law states that districts must set goals for: nutritional standards of foods available in schools; nutrition education; physical activity; and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness.

Every district in the survey reported having a completed School Wellness Policy in place, with one district's policy still awaiting final School Board approval. Seventeen of the 23 districts provided their wellness policies to FRAC. Only five include policies that promote outreach to low-income families about the availability of the school meals programs. And, only three of the districts included policies specifically addressing school breakfast promotion. The general lack of policy statements on school breakfast outreach, expansion and promotion by these districts marks a lost opportunity to set further expansion of the program as a clear goal, or to promote school breakfast as a wellness tool.

4. Participation by Schools

The districts participating in this survey serve school breakfast in the vast majority of their schools. Nineteen of the 23 districts reported that they served breakfast in every school in the district. The other four provided breakfast in the vast majority of schools: Clark County (Las Vegas) and Chicago provided breakfast in 98 percent of school buildings; New York City served breakfast in 95 percent of buildings; and Denver did so in 84 percent of buildings during school year 2005-2006.

5. Participation by Students

For this report, FRAC calculated the number of students eating breakfast (average daily participation or ADP) in each city by dividing the number of breakfasts served over the course of the year by the number of serving days, as reported in the survey by each district. **Table 3** summarizes breakfast participation data for each district, arranged by lowest to highest average daily participation.

The FRAC survey asked districts to characterize whether student participation in breakfast had been increasing or decreasing over the past three years. Seventeen districts (74 percent) said they had experienced an increase in student participation in breakfast during this time period.

Eighteen districts (78 percent) were implementing new features in their breakfast programs in the 2006-2007 school year that they hoped would result in increased student participation. For instance, Denver Public Schools began to offer “universal” breakfast (where all students receive breakfast at no charge) in the 2006-2007 school year and reported a significant increase in participation as a result.

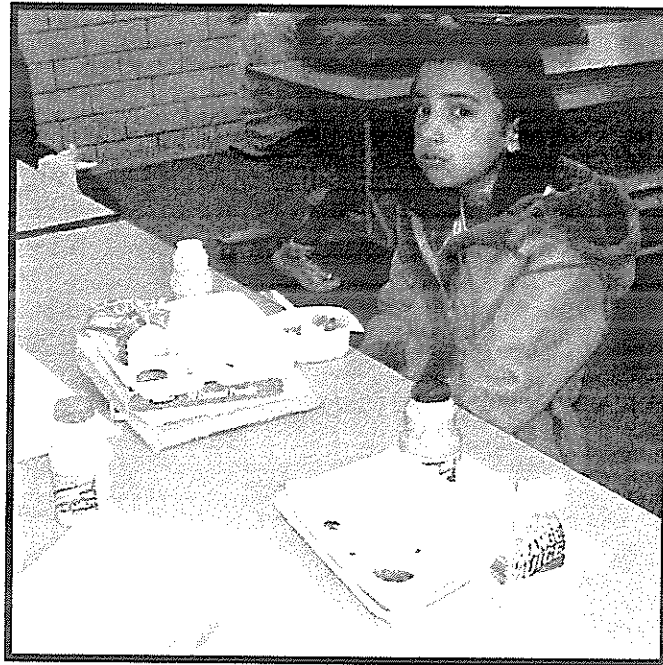


Table 3: School Breakfast Average Daily Participation (ADP) and Trends

School District	ADP for Low Income Students (Free and Reduced-Price)	ADP for All Students	District Reports an Increase in Participation in Last 3 Yrs	District Reports Changes to Increase Participation in 2006-07
Seattle Public Schools, WA	5,758	6,832	Yes	Yes
Wichita Public Schools, KS	6,952	7,865	No	No
Denver Public Schools, CO	10,278	11,111	Yes	Yes
Minneapolis School District, MN	10,848	13,298	Yes	Yes
Omaha Public Schools, NE	11,383	16,804	Yes	No
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC	11,894	14,509	Yes	Yes
Portland Public Schools, OR	13,234	14,782	No	Yes
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	13,509	14,089	Yes	Yes
Indianapolis Public Schools, IN	13,572	15,185	Yes	Yes
Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	16,562	18,361	Yes	Yes
Columbus Public Schools, OH	18,213	21,993	Yes	Yes
Newark Public Schools, NJ	19,422	27,276	Yes	Yes
Boston Public Schools, MA	19,870	21,275	Yes	Yes
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	23,107	25,654	Yes	No
Detroit Public Schools, MI	29,052	36,070	Yes	Yes
Memphis City Schools, TN	29,187	29,904	No	Yes
Clark County School District, Las Vegas, NV	30,300	38,890	Yes	No
School District of Philadelphia, PA	43,166	49,925	Yes	Yes
Houston Independent School District, TX	44,760	50,863	No	Yes
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	79,042	90,055	Yes	Yes
Chicago Public Schools, IL	80,873	83,508	No	No
New York City Department of Education, NY	154,463	177,963	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	187,290	205,103	No	Yes

Effectiveness in Reaching Low-Income Students with School Breakfast

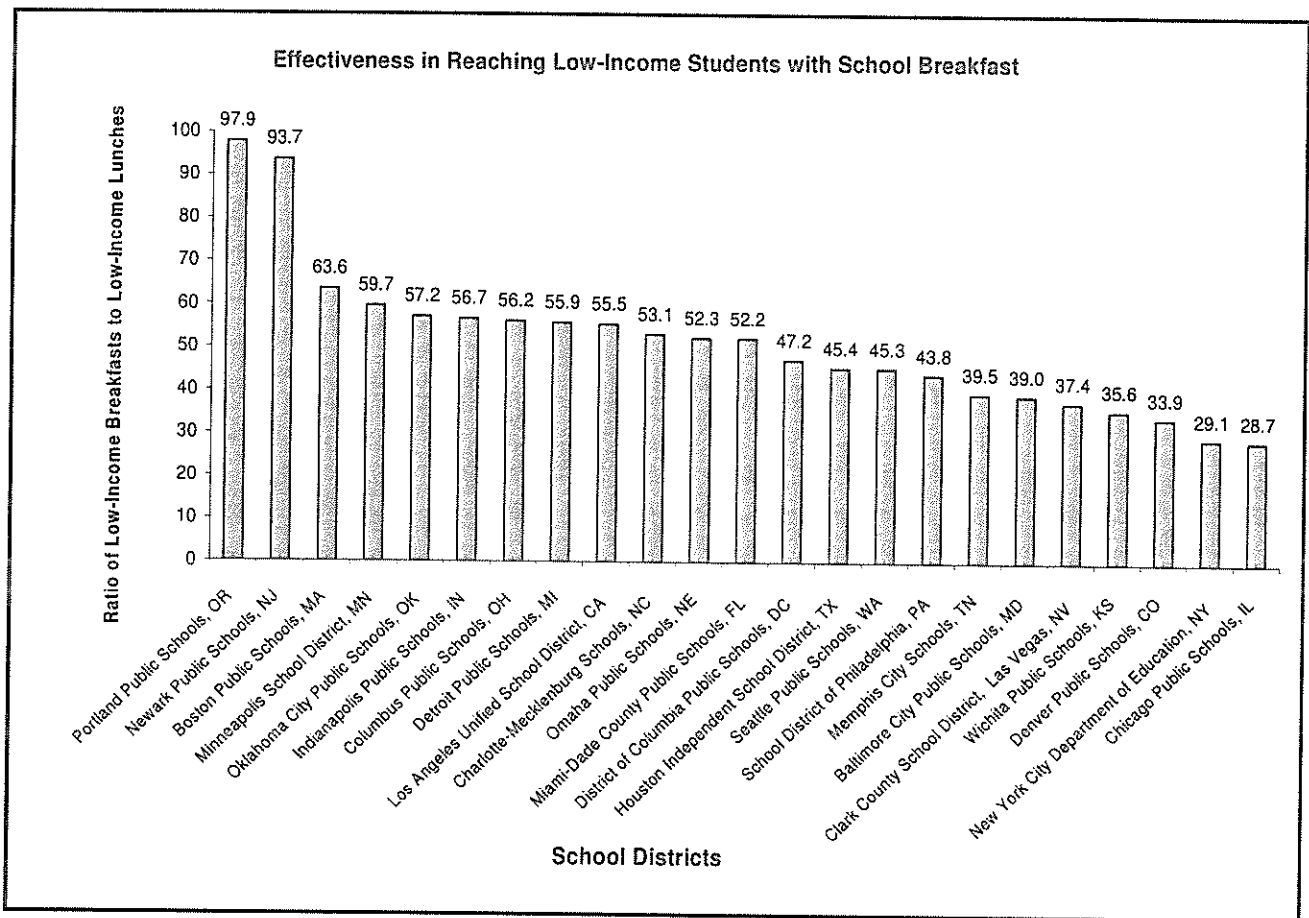
Because there is very broad participation in the lunch program by low-income students in districts around the country, it is a fair measurement of how many students could be benefiting from school breakfast each day. FRAC therefore uses free and reduced-price participation in the school lunch program by low-income students as a benchmark against which to measure low-income student participation in school breakfast. Nationally, for every 100 low-income children who ate free and reduced-price lunch, 44.6 low-income children ate free and reduced-price breakfast in school year 2005-2006. While this figure has continued to rise each year, from 43.9 to 100 the previous school year and 43.1 to 100 the year before that, it should be considerably higher.

A challenging, yet achievable goal for large urban districts would be to serve breakfast to at least 70 out of 100 low-income students who eat school lunch. Their large student populations allow them to benefit from economies of scale, and the concentration of free and reduced-price eligible students translates into large federal reimbursements for the meals served. Further, these districts have the ability to put effective administrative systems into place to insure that breakfast becomes a part of the school day so that all students have the opportunity to take advantage of this critical meal. Most

importantly, the large concentrations of poor children in these urban areas present districts with the imperative to insure that children have access to adequate nutrition in order to learn, grow, and thrive.

Other than two districts that serve breakfast to more than 90 percent of low-income students, the urban districts surveyed serve less than two of three low-income students that eat school lunch, with three of them serving only one in three low-income students. These districts can clearly do better, as Portland, Oregon, and Newark, New Jersey demonstrate through their programs where breakfast is served at no charge and eaten in the classroom. (See the Promising Practices Section on pages 20-21 for more details about these programs.)

Below is a graphic representation of the range of effectiveness in reaching low-income children with school breakfast across the 23 school districts surveyed.



Reaching 70 out of 100: The Nutritional and Financial Benefits

For each day a low-income child was not being served breakfast in 2005-2006, the school lost \$1.27 in federal nutrition funding for every child who would have received a free breakfast, and \$0.97 for every child who would have received a reduced-price breakfast. If those children attended a "severe need" school – one of the thousands of schools in which at least 40 percent of lunches served were free or reduced-price – an additional \$0.24 per meal was forfeited. Those uneaten meals not only represent potential harm to children's health and development; they also add up to tens of millions of dollars in federal child nutrition funding going unclaimed by districts every year.

While many of the districts were making efforts to expand their breakfast participation, most fall short of their full potential to serve low-income children. If each district in this survey had provided at least 70 low-income children with breakfast through the School Breakfast Program (SBP) for every 100 low-income children that received lunch through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) in the 2005-2006 school year, more than 578,785 additional students would have eaten a healthy school breakfast every day, and districts would have received an additional \$129.4 million in child nutrition funding. **Table 4** provides these data for each district in the report from the highest to the lowest participation level. Most of the lost revenue and unserved low-income students are clustered in the largest districts, with nearly a third in New York City alone. The New York City district would have collected over \$49 million in additional federal funds, and served an additional 216,673 low-income students.

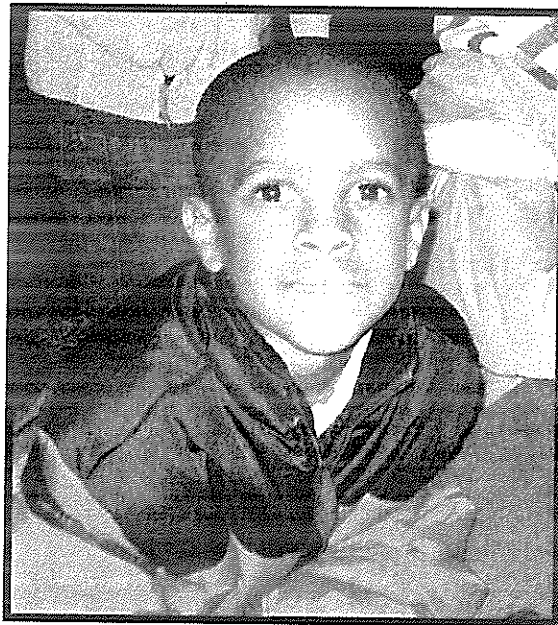


Table 4: School Districts' Additional Funding and Participation if 70 Low-Income Students Were Served School Breakfast (SBP) Per 100 Served School Lunch (NSLP)

School District	Ratio of Low-Income SBP to Low-Income NSLP	Additional Low-Income Students Served if 70 SBP per 100 NSLP	Additional Annual Funding if 70 Low-Income Students Served SBP per 100 NSLP
Portland Public Schools, OR	97.9	*NA	*NA
Newark Public Schools, NJ	93.7	*NA	*NA
Boston Public Schools, MA	63.6	2,007	\$448,000
Minneapolis School District, MN	59.7	1,875	\$399,200
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	57.2	3,031	\$660,700
Indianapolis Public Schools, IN	56.7	3,182	\$709,100
Columbus Public Schools, OH	56.2	4,490	\$957,800
Detroit Public Schools, MI	55.9	7,300	\$1,699,500
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	55.5	49,067	\$10,952,200
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	53.1	7,377	\$1,656,000
Omaha Public Schools, NE	52.3	3,861	\$812,800
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	52.2	26,990	\$5,867,800
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC	47.2	5,740	\$1,296,100
Houston Independent School District, TX	45.4	24,211	\$5,233,800
Seattle Public Schools, WA	45.3	3,133	\$689,100
School District of Philadelphia, PA	43.8	25,824	\$5,752,600
Memphis City Schools, TN	39.5	22,579	\$5,040,700
Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	39.0	13,185	\$2,949,100
Clark County School District, Las Vegas, NV	37.4	26,417	\$5,873,500
Wichita Public Schools, KS	35.6	6,712	\$1,616,800
Denver Public Schools, CO	33.9	10,926	\$2,434,000
New York City Department of Education, NY	29.1	216,673	\$49,050,300
Chicago Public Schools, IL	28.7	116,080	\$25,294,500
TOTAL		578,785	\$129,393,600

* Already exceed 70 free and reduced-price school breakfasts per 100 free and reduced-price school lunches

Barriers to Participation

The school districts experienced a number of barriers to student participation in breakfast. The FRAC survey asked districts to identify barriers by responding to a list of common factors known to have a negative impact on students' ability to take advantage of school breakfast. Sixteen of the 23 districts indicated that they experienced four or more barriers to student participation in school breakfast in their districts. The districts indicated if they had experienced the following seven barriers:

- Lack of sufficient time allowed for eating breakfast, either before school or in class (22 districts);
- Tight bus schedules that eliminate or limit time that students have to eat breakfast when they arrive at school (18 districts);
- Lack of adequate personnel to supervise students during school breakfast, either in the cafeteria or classroom (18 districts);
- Students prefer to be outside of the building with friends instead of inside eating breakfast before the start of the school day (15 districts);
- Lack of administrative support for implementing alternative service methods (14 districts);
- Custodial issues, such as arrangements for removing additional trash from classrooms after children eat (10 districts); and
- Stigma felt by students, especially when school breakfast is offered only before school in the cafeteria (8 districts).

In addition, the survey asked districts to describe other barriers that were not on this list. Several replies were received. Most notably, the Detroit Public Schools Food Service Director reported that security costs (for security personnel to screen entering students through metal detectors) were a barrier because budgets had not allowed for the high schools to open before first period for breakfast. During the 2006-2007 school year, the Food Services Department, which is operated by Aramark School Support Services, initiated a pilot project in two high schools where the Food Services Department budget would cover the cost for security in order to open for breakfast service a half hour before first period.

Providing Universal Breakfast and Breakfast as Part of the School Day

This section provides information about, and examines the effectiveness of, urban school districts' efforts to increase breakfast participation through the provision of breakfast at no charge (sometimes called "universal"), and the implementation of programs that make breakfast part of the school day (such as breakfast in the classroom.)

"Universal" Breakfast

Programs that offer meals at no charge to all students, regardless of income, often are called "universal." Universal breakfast results in the expansion of student participation because it reduces stigma and eliminates fee barriers for many low-income children. The reduction of stigma makes school breakfast more attractive to children who need it, and providing breakfast for free gives all children the opportunity to start the school day ready to learn.

Serving breakfast free to everyone can be done in the cafeteria, but adopting universal breakfast also helps schools to integrate breakfast into the school day. When breakfast becomes a part of the school day, instead of a before-school activity, it is much easier for students to take advantage of the meal, and they are less likely to be labeled as "poor kids" by their peers.

Of the 23 large urban school districts surveyed in this report, only five did not provide free breakfast to all students, regardless of income, at many or all of their schools. One of those five districts, Memphis City Public Schools, reported that it was implementing a universal program for kindergarten through eighth grades during the 2006-2007 school year. Also, three districts (Baltimore City Public

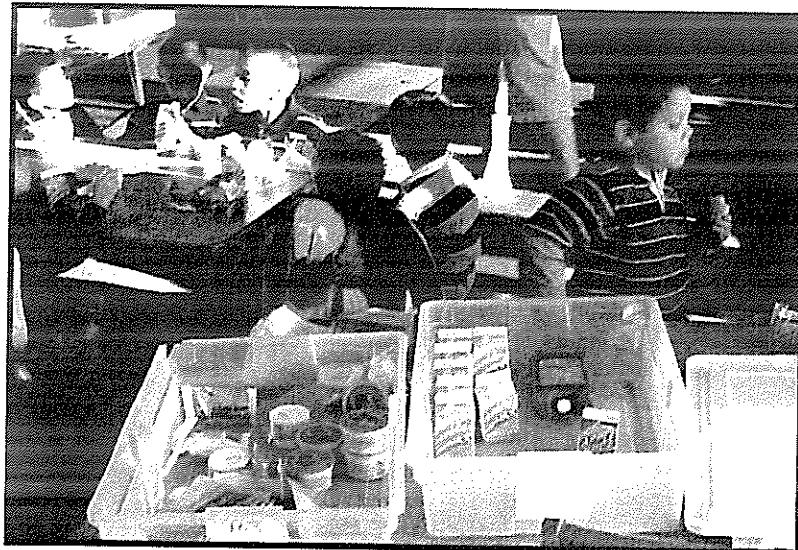
Schools, Denver Public Schools, and Houston Independent School District) that had limited universal programs offered at only some schools during school year 2005-2006, reported that they were implementing a universal program district-wide during the 2006-2007 school year.

Provision 2

Of the 19 districts that do have a universal program, ten use "Provision 2" of the National School Lunch Act as a funding mechanism, and nine do not. Provision 2 enables schools to provide meals (breakfast and lunch, or either one) at no charge to all of their students while reducing paperwork and administrative costs. Under Provision 2, all students receive free meals, regardless of income, and schools collect applications for free and reduced-price meals only once every four years. The reimbursement rate for meals for all four years is based on the percentage of meals in the school as a whole that are served in each category (free, reduced and paid) during the "base year." Provision 2 schools pay the difference between the cost of serving meals at no charge to all students and the federal reimbursement for the meals. The increased participation, resulting in increased federal reimbursement, and the significant administrative savings (e.g., less applications to process) associated with Provision 2 help offset all or much of the cost differential.

Districts that utilize Provision 2 for both breakfast and lunch programs realize larger administrative savings than those that use it just for breakfast. If a district uses Provision 2 for breakfast only, it must continue to collect applications from students for lunch purposes, and verify those applications, each year. For districts that only want to provide breakfast at no charge, and continue to collect fees from higher income students for lunch, it may not make sense to use Provision 2. As an alternative, some districts just are offering breakfast free to all students and using lunch applications to determine reimbursement.

The result is the same for students – free breakfast – but the accounting and paperwork procedures differ for the food service staff. Districts (such as Columbus, Ohio, and Minneapolis, Minnesota) continue to count meals served by category when they submit their claims for reimbursement. Even in these districts, the rise in participation, and resulting increases in federal reimbursement, help achieve economies of scale for food and labor that can decrease the overall cost per meal and offset the lack of reimbursement for the full-price or "paid" category. Districts which have increased their participation significantly report that they have done so without adverse financial effects, or even that they improved their "bottom line" (e.g. Newark, New Jersey, and Portland, Oregon).



Making Breakfast Part of the School Day

Fifteen of the districts in this study made breakfast part of the school day in at least some of their schools during the school year 2005-2006. These methods include breakfast in the classroom, "grab and go" breakfast service from carts or kiosks set up in school hallways or cafeterias, and breakfast after first period for middle and high school students. Making breakfast a part of the school day dramatically increases participation by making it convenient and accessible to all, no matter how students arrive at school. For instance, it eliminates the barrier often caused by tight bus schedules, when students don't always arrive at school in time for breakfast before the first bell rings.

Alternative Service Methods

Breakfast in the Classroom – Students eat breakfast in their classroom either at the beginning of the school day or early during the day. Often breakfast is brought to classrooms from the cafeteria by students, or served from carts in the hallways by food service staff.

"Grab and Go" – All the components of school breakfast are conveniently packaged so students can easily grab a reimbursable meal quickly, either from the cafeteria line or from carts elsewhere on school grounds. Students can eat in the cafeteria, the classroom or elsewhere on school grounds

Breakfast after First Period, or "Second Chance Breakfast" – Usually implemented in middle and high schools, students are allowed time after their first period to obtain breakfast, either in the cafeteria or from carts in the hallway, to then eat in the classroom or cafeteria. Computerized systems insure that children receive only one breakfast each day.

Table 5 on the next page summarizes survey results on universal programs and alternative service methods. School districts that use these methods had higher participation levels of low-income students than those that did not. The five districts that make breakfast a part of the school day in most of their schools served an average of 72.5 low-income students breakfast for every 100 low-income students that ate school lunch. Those using these methods in only some schools averaged only 46.1 low-income students eating school breakfast for every 100 low-income students that ate lunch. The seven districts that did not use these methods in 2005-2006 had an average of only 44.2 low-income students eating breakfast for every 100 that ate lunch – lower than the national average.

Several of the districts that were not using alternative service methods during the 2005-2006 school year indicated that they plan to implement them during school year 2006-2007 or thereafter. For instance, Oklahoma City Public Schools indicated that it is implementing breakfast in the classroom and "grab and go" service during the 2006-2007 school year.



Table 5: Universal Breakfast and Alternative Service Methods

School Districts	Universal Breakfast	Provision 2	Alternative Service Methods	Ratio of low-income breakfasts to low-income lunches
Portland Public Schools, OR	Partial	Yes	Most	97.9
Newark Public Schools, NJ	All	Yes	Most	93.7
Boston Public Schools, MA	Partial	Yes	Some	63.6
Minneapolis School District, MN	All	No	Most	59.7
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	None	No	Some	57.2
Indianapolis Public Schools, IN	Partial	Yes	None	56.7
Columbus Public Schools, OH	All	No	None	56.2
Detroit Public Schools, MI	All	No	Most	55.9
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	Partial	Yes	Most	55.5
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	Partial	No	Some	53.1
Omaha Public Schools, NE	All	Yes	Some	52.3
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	All	Yes	Some	52.2
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC	All	No	None	47.2
Houston Independent School District, TX	All	No	Some	45.4
Seattle Public Schools, WA	Partial	No	None	45.3
School District of Philadelphia, PA	Partial	No	Some	43.8
Memphis City Schools, TN	None	No	None	39.5
Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	Partial	No	Some	39.0
Clark County School District, Las Vegas, NV	None	No	Some	37.4
Wichita Public Schools, KS	None	No	None	35.6
Denver Public Schools, CO	Partial	Yes	Some	33.9
New York City Department of Education, NY	All	Yes	Some	29.1
Chicago Public Schools, IL	None	No	None	28.7

Promising Practices for Expanding School Breakfast Participation

These examples of promising practices reflect the hard work and innovation that is taking place in many of the districts that participated in the survey. The examples chosen are intended to highlight the following important practices:

1. Administrative support and leadership in implementing programs;
2. Effective promotion of district-wide universal breakfast programs;
3. Making breakfast a part of the school day through breakfast in the classroom and “grab and go” programs; and
4. Partnerships with anti-hunger organizations and state agencies

FRAC encourages readers to contact the individual districts (see Appendix 2 for contact information) for additional details on the programs.

Boston Public Schools: Partnerships that Work

The Boston Public Schools (BPS) have continuously expanded the breakfast program since 1998 when they started implementing Provision 2 universal breakfast, eventually implementing it in 113 out of 132 schools. Partnerships with the Massachusetts Department of Education, which administers the School Breakfast Program in the state, and Project Bread, the leading anti-hunger organization in Massachusetts, have provided key financial and staff support to their expansion efforts.

The Massachusetts Department of Education provided funds to support Breakfast Coordinators, who, under the oversight of the BPS Nutrition Education Coordinator and with assistance from Project Bread staff, worked with each individual school to implement a universal program tailored to its individual needs. “You can’t just send something out in a memo and expect it to happen,” says Helen Mont-Ferguson, BPS Director of Food and Nutrition Services. “You have to go out and work with parents, teachers and administrators.” The Breakfast Coordinators were important catalysts for change, providing individualized technical assistance to each school to overcome barriers to breakfast participation. They also provided additional supervision of cafeterias which was needed to extend meal periods to accommodate the increased number of children eating breakfast. In addition to these key staff, State funds also supported an initial investment of equipment or supplies to support the changes in service models, such as supplies needed for classroom breakfast service.

Another key element to the program’s success has been Project Bread’s School Breakfast Excellence Awards, which have been issued to 22 BPS elementary schools since its inception in 2000. The goal of this initiative is to increase student participation in an elementary school’s breakfast program to 80 percent. Schools are strongly encouraged to implement a systems change that makes school breakfast a regular part of the school day, and one that offers breakfast as close as possible to the start of the first teaching period. Different strategies for success may include classroom feeding, cafeteria feeding, or a combination of the two. The award winners receive a \$1,000 check after two consecutive months of reaching the 80 percent student participation goal. These awards can be used at the principal’s discretion for any school-related expense.

BPS implemented breakfast at no charge in all 22 of the schools that eventually won the Project Bread School Breakfast Excellence awards. Many of these schools also implemented classroom breakfast. Project Bread provided technical assistance to bring about changes, such as helping to plan and conduct outreach and promotion activities. “Project Bread’s support was extremely instrumental. Principals were delighted to receive the monetary award,” according to Mont-Ferguson. “This incentive really made a difference to principals who operate on very tight budgets.”

Denver Public Schools: Start Smart Initiative

Denver Public Schools (DPS) launched a universal breakfast program, offering breakfast at no charge to all students, in September 2006. In developing Start Smart, DPS tapped the expertise of on-staff nutritionists and dieticians to revise breakfast menu offerings. The revised menu includes items such as a breakfast wrap with eggs and salsa, waffles with peaches and vanilla yogurt, reduced-sugar cereals, and homemade toast. DPS also is testing a variety of delivery strategies, such as breakfast in the classroom and "grab and go" options, where bagged food is served from several different locations throughout the morning.

This initiative includes a major public information campaign to alert school administrators, families, students and staff to the importance and increased availability of breakfast in the schools. In addition, the district is implementing a pilot program of nutrition education in both English and Spanish in selected school cafeterias and classrooms. Outreach and education efforts include newsletters to staff and families, information on the Food and Nutrition Services' web site, parent-teacher meetings, and community forums. To launch the program, the district hosted a breakfast carnival at an elementary school, which included breakfast-themed games, such as milk-bottle bowling, egg races, a milk-mustache booth, and breakfast sandwich assembly relays. Participants also sampled foods from the new breakfast menu.

"Here at DPS, we recognize that a nutritious breakfast helps students pay attention and concentrate on learning new skills," said Leo Lesh, executive director of Food and Nutrition Services. "With Start Smart we hope to increase student participation in school breakfast and continue improving student, classroom and school performance throughout the district, supporting the district's overall goals to improve student achievement."

Houston Independent School District: "First Class" Breakfast

Students at 20 Houston Independent School District (HISD) schools began getting "first-class" treatment in their classrooms in the fall of 2006, thanks to a new board-approved program offered by the district's Food Services Department. The "First Class Breakfast" program, designed specifically to improve student achievement, went into effect in September 2006, and gives students the option of having their morning meals brought to them at their desks every day rather than requiring them to go to the cafeteria to get it. The meals are free to all students, and the program was expanded to 35 schools in the spring of 2007.

The district designed the program to offer students a convenient option for obtaining a nutritious breakfast to start their day. "We know that for some of these children, the only time they eat is at school," said Horace Elrod Elementary School Principal Carolyn Matthews. "We take that very seriously, and with First Class Breakfast it's easier for schools to rise to the challenge and give all students the nutritious breakfast they need and deserve." Breakfast participation increased from 170 students per day to 450 a day at Elrod, when it began serving First Class Breakfasts during the third week of the 2006-2007 school year. This represented a more than 150 percent increase in the number of breakfasts served.

Because the program is run so efficiently, Matthews says, valuable learning time isn't sidelined: "It doesn't inconvenience the students, since they can eat right at their desks during morning announcements. Plus, it motivates them to get to class on time." Generally, the food is in the classroom by 7:45 a.m., and by 8 a.m. the classrooms are cleaned up and ready for learning. "The idea is to make it as easy as possible for both the students and the teachers," said HISD Food Services Communications Director, Julie Spreckelmeyer. "This program is different from the Breakfast in the Classroom program, where teachers had to maintain a roster of the students and monitor who ate breakfast and who didn't. In First Class Breakfast, teachers don't have to do anything. Food

Service attendants take care of it all. They bring in the food and set it up, then clean up all the trash afterwards."

Los Angeles Unified School District: Second Chance Breakfast

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) implemented the "Second Chance Breakfast" program in all of its school sites to address barriers to student participation in the school breakfast program, such as before-school activities and late bus schedules. This program allows for a second breakfast service during morning recess or snack break, usually sometime between 9 and 10 a.m. Students who are not able to participate in the breakfast service before school starts are able to obtain a healthy morning meal during this period.

There are no changes to the usual before-school breakfast program, but some planning is required to ensure that an adequate number of meals are prepared and available for both service times. The second breakfast service is generally the same meal served during the earlier cafeteria breakfast. This program has proven to be an excellent strategy for making sure that every student has an opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast at school, and is particularly effective with adolescents, who are less likely to eat breakfast before school.

LAUSD phased this program into schools starting in the 2002-2003 school year and realized an immediate increase in breakfast participation of 11 percent from the previous year. According to the LAUSD Nutrition Services staff, this program has been particularly successful because "it serves the nutritional needs of our students by meeting the demands of their schedules."

Miami-Dade County Public Schools: The Power of Administrative Support

When Miami-Dade Food and Nutrition Services implemented a district-wide universal breakfast program in 2004, it had the full support of Superintendent, Dr. Rudy Crew. The program produced a 24 percent increase in participation – one of the highest among the districts included in this report that implemented universal programs.

A key to this success was the Superintendent's decision to add breakfast expansion results to the annual performance measures for principals. Penny Parham, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, recalls that principals were calling in to check on their participation numbers as the program was put in place. The superintendent also sent an automated phone message to every household in the district encouraging students to eat breakfast at school.

The district also has utilized creative service delivery models, including breakfast in the classroom in six elementary schools, and "grab and go" (where all required components of the breakfast are pre-packaged in a bag) in all of its cafeterias. School breakfast promotion occurs year-round but has been especially successful during standardized testing, with significant participation increases during that period.

Newark Public Schools: Breakfast in the Classroom

After 15 years of lackluster participation in school breakfast, despite serving breakfast at no charge to all students, the Director of Newark's Food Services, Tonya Riggins, decided to take action. She wanted to try serving breakfast in the classroom and found one school principal willing to do so. Implementation was very successful, and the principal became convinced that increased participation in breakfast had helped increase student achievement. Soon, other principals were asking for the program and the superintendent also came on board. Riggins credits the strong leadership of the superintendent with the achievement of district-wide implementation. As a result, the district served breakfast in the classroom in all 75 elementary and middle schools during the 2004-2005 school year, producing more than a 150 percent increase in participation. Instead of serving 8,500 to 9,500

students breakfast each day, Newark Public Schools served 26,000 children breakfast daily in the 2004-2005 school year. This success continued in the 2005-2006 school year, with an average daily participation of more than 27,000.

The district's breakfast menus include both hot and cold breakfast items. Children eat breakfast during the first 10 minutes of class, while teachers take care of attendance and other classroom administrative tasks. In elementary schools, older students help distribute the breakfast to younger students by delivering classroom bins from the cafeteria to the classrooms. These students also help by returning the meal count daily attendance sheet to the cafeteria, earning service credit as classroom monitors. Teachers have not had to adjust schedules and have found that the program does not interfere with their instruction time.

The school district uses Provision 2 of the National School Lunch Act to help cover costs in 36 out of 82 schools. In these schools, the district serves both breakfast and lunch at no cost to all children. The Food Services staff has made multiple efforts to keep costs low, and even during the implementation of this program has been able to continue cutting total expenditures. The Food Services Director credits economies of scale with helping the bottom line. Riggins estimates that a \$12,500 initial investment was required for the purchase of additional plastic bins and lids needed for classroom service district-wide. (See Appendix 4 for how to access the video "Newark's Got Breakfast," which describes how the district created its program.)

Portland Public Schools: "Grab and Go" Classroom Breakfast Program

Portland has achieved an impressive success through its "Grab and Go" breakfast program. Students take their breakfast (milk, juice and hot breakfast sandwich) from a portable cart in the hallway. Food service personnel count the meals served. The program takes place in 45 schools that provide breakfast at no charge, through Provision 2 of the National School Lunch Act.

According to Kristine Obbink, Director of School Food and Nutrition Services, the "grab and go" program has been a win-win situation for students and the school district. It has achieved two major goals: 1) increased breakfast participation, far beyond levels achieved by universal breakfast alone, and 2) increased revenue from breakfast while maintaining labor costs, thereby improving the bottom line of Food Services and the District as a whole. She notes that the leadership of the superintendent's office has been key in implementing and maintaining this innovative program.

Schools offer "grab and go" breakfasts to students in grades K – 8 as they enter the building. They take breakfast into the classroom and eat it during the first ten minutes of the day. Breakfast is distributed in high schools from carts in hallways after first period; time between first and second periods is extended by five minutes to allow for the time needed to grab the breakfast. Students eat during the first ten minutes of their second period class. Classrooms have a supply of napkins, straws and paper placemats. Students use the regular classroom trash cans to dispose of the wrappings, and they are placed in the hallway for pickup – a process that has proven very manageable.

The district is very pleased with the results of the program – dramatically higher student participation rates with very few complaints or problems. There were no startup costs for the program because the district already owned the mobile carts and equipment for serving. The district needs very little additional staff time to implement the program. There has been no change in pest management issues since implementation of the program. In fact, the program has reduced the amount of food teachers store in their classrooms.

Some teachers were concerned about loss of class time, but most have adapted classroom routines to effectively utilize this time. Test scores are going up in the district, and there have been anecdotal reports of fewer nurse visits, and improved student behavior.

Conclusion: Moving Toward Higher School Breakfast Participation

Schools should make increased availability and participation in school breakfast one of their highest priorities, in order to reduce hunger and support the health and educational potential of their students, particularly low-income students. Adequate nutrition and freedom from hunger are absolutely essential for good health and academic achievement, and yet these goals are not always achievable for families which are struggling to make ends meet. Federally-funded school breakfast programs make critical nutritional contributions to children's health and education.

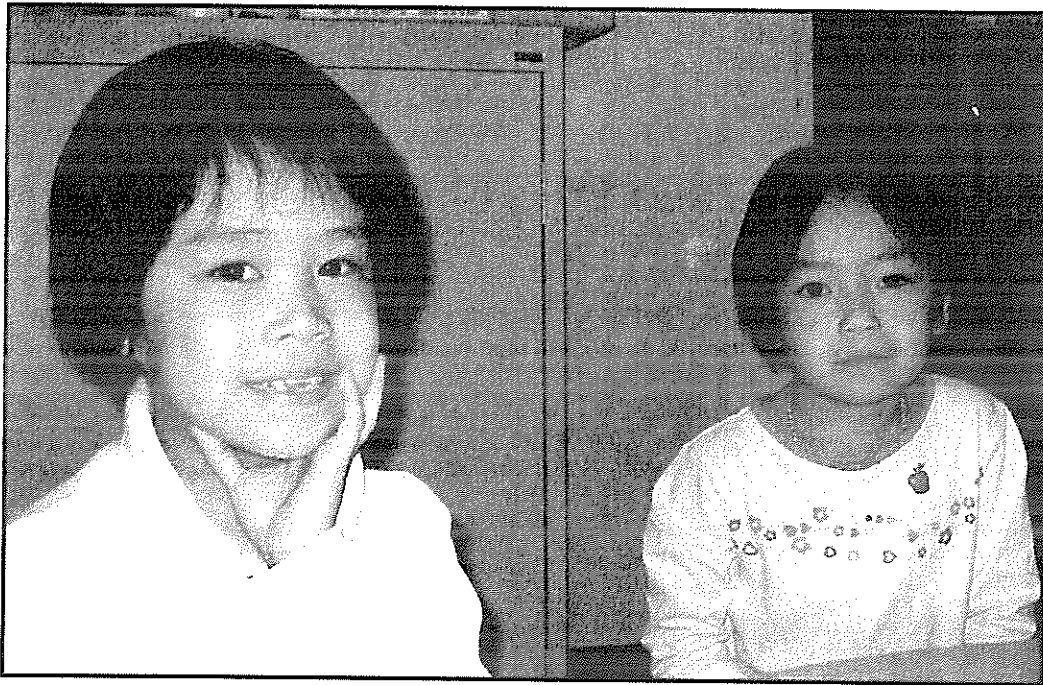
In addition, increasing participation in school breakfast can result in a better financial bottom line for schools with many low-income students. School food service managers are able to realize economies of scale when they increase the number of breakfasts served, and schools receive financial support from the federal government for every meal served through the School Breakfast Program. Schools that serve at least 40 percent free and reduced-price lunches also receive an extra "severe need" reimbursement for every breakfast served. Some states offer additional financial support above the federal reimbursements. This assistance translates into more funds for schools to spend on improving the nutritional quality and attractiveness of the meals, and upgrading the overall operation of the school food service, which can extend into improvements in other school meals programs (i.e. lunch, afterschool snacks and suppers, and the summer nutrition program.)

This study of 23 large urban school districts identifies successful strategies and innovative programs that all urban districts – and indeed most districts in the country – can put in place to expand school breakfast participation. Based on our findings, these key strategies to expand breakfast participation among low-income students are:

- **Universal breakfast programs (i.e. breakfast at no charge) with effective district-wide promotion**
Whether districts choose to utilize Provision 2 of the National School Lunch Act or not, providing breakfast at no charge to all students is essential in order to increase participation and reduce the stigma children may feel about participating in a program otherwise identified as being "for poor kids." Universal breakfast is most effective in increasing participation when it is accompanied by effective promotion efforts to students and families.
- **Service methods that make breakfast part of the school day**
Making breakfast a part of the school day dramatically increases participation by making it convenient and accessible to all, no matter how students arrive at school. This can be achieved in a number of ways, and, as demonstrated by the Los Angeles Unified School District, a program tailored to the unique needs of individual schools is possible in even the largest districts. Whether breakfast is served in the classroom, the hallways, second period or on the playground, the flexibility to eat during the morning in school is essential to insure optimum participation.
- **Administrative support and leadership in implementing programs**
The power of administrative leadership is strongly demonstrated in many of the districts in this study. When superintendents put their full support behind a universal breakfast program with alternative service strategies, participation reaches the fullest potential. This is shown most clearly by the Portland, Oregon, and Newark, New Jersey, examples. Efforts to educate principals, superintendents and other administrators about the health, educational and financial gains from school breakfast are essential to the continued expansion of the program.

- **Partnerships with anti-hunger organizations and State agencies**

A key ingredient to moving forward with breakfast expansion is the support of program and outreach specialists who can assist a school district in analyzing barriers and creating effective solutions. Partnerships with anti-hunger organizations and the agencies that administer the School Breakfast Program at the state level are crucial to providing the technical assistance and support that is needed. In particular, anti-hunger organizations can play a crucial role in advocating strongly for improvements in the school breakfast program, bringing successful strategies to the attention of community groups and district-level and state-level stakeholders who want to improve children's health and educational achievement, and building coalitions to work for school breakfast expansion.



Methodology

The data in this report were collected directly from the school districts' food and nutrition department personnel through an email survey with follow-up interviews by phone, and in some cases on-site visits.

Student Participation

Student participation data is based on daily averages of the number of breakfasts and lunches served during the school year, using the number of serving days provided by each district.

The Cost of Low Participation Rates

The cost estimate is based on a calculation of the average daily number of children receiving free or reduced-price breakfasts for every 100 children receiving free or reduced-price lunches during the same school year. FRAC calculated the number of additional children who would be reached if each district reached a ratio of 70 to 100. FRAC then multiplied this "unserved" population by the reimbursement rate for 169 school days of breakfast. (While some districts serve breakfast for more or fewer days during the 2005-2006 school year, 169 was the national average.) FRAC assumed each district's mix of free and reduced-price students would apply to any new participants, and conservatively assumed that no additional student's meal is reimbursed at the higher rate that "severe need" schools receive.

School District Contacts

School District	Name	Title	Phone Number	E-mail Address
Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	Darren Frymoyer	Staff Specialist	410-396-4909	dfrymoyer@bcps.k12.md.us
Boston Public Schools, MA	Helen Mont-Ferguson	Director	617-635-9143	hmontfersuson@boston.k12.ma.us
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	Cindy Hobbs	Director of Child Nutrition	980-343-6041	c.hobbs@cms.k12.nc.us
Chicago Public Schools, IL	Sue Susanke	Director of Logistics	773-553-2833	ssusanke@cps.k12.il.us
Clark County School District, Las Vegas, NV	Karen Vogel	Director I, Food Services	702-799-8123, ext. 212	klvogel@interact.ccsd.net
Columbus Public Schools, OH	Dudley Hawkey	Director, Food Service	614-365-5671	dhawkey@columbus.k12.oh.us
Denver Public Schools, CO	Leo Lesh	Executive Director Enterprise MGT	720-423-5609	leo_lesh@dpsk12.org
Detroit Public Schools, MI	David Palmer	Director, Nutrition Services	313-779-0371	palmer-david@aramark.com
District of Columbia Public Schools	Mark Truax	Director, Food & Nutrition Services	202-576-7400	mark.truax@k12.dc.us
Houston Independent School District, TX	Robyn Hughes	Manager of Nutrition Services	713- 924-2438	rhughes3@houstonisd.org
Indianapolis Public Schools, IN	Velda T. Hamman	Director of Food Services	317-226-4772	hammanv@ips.k12.in.us
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	Ritamarie Knizewski	Senior Nutrition Specialist	213-241-2982	ritamarie.knizewski@lausd.net
Memphis City Schools, TN	James A. Jordan	Director of Nutrition Services	901-416-5561	jordanj@mcsk12.net
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	Penny Parham	Administrative Director	786-275-0400	penny@dadeschools.net
Minneapolis School District, MN	Rosemary Dederichs	Food Service Director	612-668-2821	rosemary.dederichs@mpls.k12.mn.us
Newark Public Schools, NJ	Tonya Riggins	Director of Food Services	973-733-7172	triggins@nps.k12.nj.us
New York City Dept. of Education, NY	David Berkowitz	Executive Director, SchoolFood	718- 707-4300	dberkowitz@schools.nyc.gov
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	Steve Gallagher	Food Service Director	405- 587-1032	stgallagher@okcps.org
Omaha Public Schools, NE	Tammy Yarmon	Director	402-557-2225	Tammy.Yarmon@ops.org
Philadelphia School District, PA	Wayne Grasela	Director	215-400-5528	wgrasela@phila.k12.pa.us
Portland Public Schools, OR	Kristine G. Obbink	Nutrition Services Director	503-916-3393	kobbink@pps.k12.or.us
Seattle Public Schools, WA	Anita Finch	Director	206-252-0685	ajfinch@seattleschools.org
Wichita Public Schools, KS	Vicki Hoffman	Food Services Director	316-973-2160	vkhoffman@usd259.net

URBAN SCHOOL BREAKFAST SURVEY

Please return this survey to Madeleine Levin (mlevin@frac.org) or fax it to (202) 986-2525.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____ School District: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Please describe your breakfast program:

1. Do you serve breakfast in every school in the district? ____ Yes ____ No If no, how many schools do serve breakfast? _____
2. Please check all of the program delivery models that apply to your district and list the grade levels that utilize the model:
 - cafeteria before school # schools: _____ - elementary: _____
middle: _____
high: _____
 - in classroom # schools: _____ - elementary: _____
middle: _____
high: _____
 - "grab and go" # schools: _____ - elementary: _____
middle: _____
high: _____
 - universal (free to all) # schools: _____ - elementary: _____
middle: _____
high: _____
 - other: _____ # schools: _____ - elementary: _____
middle: _____
high: _____

If you have universal breakfast programs, please answer the following:
In what school year was it implemented?

In its first year of implementation, did participation:
 increase decrease or stay the same?

If there was an increase, by what percent did participation increase?

The following are barriers to school breakfast participation. Which of these have you experienced in your district (check all that apply)?

- Bus schedules
- Lack of administrative support
- Custodial issues (e.g. trash disposal)

- Stigma
- Time allowed for eating
- Supervision of students
- Students prefer to be outside with friends
- Other:

Please describe any special breakfast initiatives or programs that have been particularly successful in the past 3 years:

3. Participation

- o What was the total number of *breakfasts* served for the 2005-2006 school year (excluding summer programs) by eligibility category?
 - Free: Reduced-price: Paid:
- o What was the total number of *lunches* served for the 2005-2006 school year (excluding summer programs) by eligibility category?
 - Free: Reduced-price: Paid:
- o What was the total number of serving days for the 2005-2006 school year (excluding summer programs)?
- o What was the total number of students certified eligible for free and reduced-price meals for the 2005-06 school year (as of October 30, 2005)?
 # eligible for free meals: ____ # eligible for reduced-price meals: ____
- o In your district as a whole, is there a trend toward increased participation or decreased participation in school breakfast over the past 3 years?
 ____ increased ____ decreased ____ no change

4. Do you anticipate changes in participation level in the current school year due to new policies, programs or initiatives? ____ Yes ____ No If yes, please describe the new initiatives:

5. Financing

Do you use Provision 2 for breakfast or lunch in any schools in your district? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please give the following information:

Number of schools using Provision 2 _____

In the past two years, have you had additional funds to support the breakfast program, besides revenue from student purchases (of meals, a la carte, other competitive foods) and federal (USDA) reimbursements? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, check all that apply:

-
- State funds
 - General school district funds
 - Foundation grants
 - Dairy Council funds
 - Corporate grants
 - Catering sales
 - Other: _____

6. District characteristics

a. Do you contract with a Food Service Management Company to operate your school food service program?

Yes no

b. Do you purchase any pre-packaged breakfast meals from a company or companies? Yes ___No_

c. Does your district have additional nutrition guidelines beyond USDA requirements for breakfast (for example, number of servings of whole grain per week)? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes, please include a copy of the guidelines.

d. Has your district completed a School Wellness Policy? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes, please provide us with a copy of the policy.

e. Total student enrollment for 2005-2006 school year : _____

f. Number of Schools:

#elementary schools: _____ #middle schools: _____ # high schools: _____
charter schools: _____ #other schools: _____

g. Do you provide after school snacks through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program? _____ yes _____ no

h. Do you provide after school suppers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program? _____
yes _____ no

i. Do you participate in summer food service through the NSLP or the Summer Food Service Program? ___ yes ___ no

Resources

- o FRAC Breakfast Resources
www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sbp.htm
- o California Food Policy Advocates – Breakfast First
www.breakfastfirst.org/
- o National Dairy Council Materials and Contact Information
www.nutritionexplorations.org/sfs/programs_breakfast.asp
- o Newark’s Got Breakfast
www.gotbreakfast.org/recentnews.php
- o Massachusetts Dept. of Ed. Child Nutrition Outreach Program
www.meals4kids.org/sb/breakfast.html
- o USDA Breakfast Toolkit
www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm

Breakfast in the Classroom

Current School Participation

Borough	District	MIE #	School	Breakfast in Class
Manhattan	01	142	PS 142	100
	01	585	LES Prep	28
	02	809	PS 721	50
	03	076	PS 76	50
	03	180	PS 180	75
	03	185	PS 185	200
	03	207	PS 149	185
	03	301	PS 242	125
	04	146	PS 146	75
	04	171	PS 171	30
	05	030	PS 30	75
	05	894	Dem. Prep	50
	05	129	PS 129	180
	05	154	PS 154	65
	Bronx	07	522	HOPS
07		161	PS 161	150
08		120	MS 301	240
08		192	JH 366	80
09		232	CES 232	50
09		339	CIS 339	40
09		552	Mott Hall HS	50
09		563	Validus Prep.	150
09		526	JFK HS	100
10		537	Marie Curie HS	75
10		607	PS 207	250
11		068	PS 68	700
12		077	PS 197	225
12		102	BX little school	155
12		129	CS 129	400
12	134	CS134	75	
Brooklyn I	-	-	-	-
	13	571	International HS	75
	13	117	JH 117	25
	23	518	Met. Dip + HS	25
	23	518	BK Dem. Ac.	50
Brooklyn II	15	371	PS 371	35
	15	827	Pave Academy	44
	17	547	B.A.S.E	50
	17	524	Int. HS	75
	20	535	New Utrecht HS	40
	21	559	Grady HS	22

Full Schools
PS 68 BR 100%
MS 800 100%
PS 185

	22	278	IS 278	125
	31	007	IS 7	35
	31	014	PS 14	30
Queens	28	008	IS 8	800
	28	517	Jamaica HS	15
	28	522	Hillcrest HS	260
	30	524	Newcomers HS	165
	30	070	PS 70	150
TOTAL			48	6074

**New York City Council
Education Committee
&
Health Committee**

**United Federation of Teachers
Testimony**

**Karen Alford
UFT Vice President, Elementary Schools
November 20, 2008**

Good afternoon. My name is Karen Alford and I am the United Federation of Teachers vice president for elementary schools. I thank both Chairman Jackson and Chairman Rivera and the members of both committees for the opportunity to share our views on the breakfast in the classroom initiative.

Today we want to express our support for the expansion of this important pilot program. We are pleased that the Department of Education (DOE) plans to extend the pilot from 48 to 300 schools this academic year. This program, designed to address our student's critical need for a well balanced diet and a healthy start to their learning day, is addressing a critical need. And, it is the right thing to do.

The UFT firmly believes we need flexibility in school breakfast solutions with protocols that enable educators, administrators, kitchen and custodial staff to seamlessly offer breakfast in a clean, safe and healthy environment.

Everyone can agree that all children need a healthy and nutritious breakfast. We know not enough children receive a nutritious meal at home. Breakfast improves student performance. Overall, schools with in-classroom breakfast programs reported reduced tardiness, improved attendance and increased student attentiveness throughout the school day.

According to the Food and Research Action Center's Child Nutrition Fact Sheet, children who arrive at school without a proper breakfast exhibit

impaired learning ability; they are “less able to distinguish among similar images, show increased errors and have slower recall.” Alternatively, children receiving nutritious breakfasts before starting class demonstrate increased performance; they perform better on standardized tests, improve speed and memory in cognitive tests and do a better job handling demanding mental tasks and “reaction to frustration.” Additionally, well rounded meals served in class can improve children’s eating habits overall by introducing recommended vitamins and minerals often missing from lower-income children’s diets and potentially reducing their risk for obesity.

Full participation should be the goal of the program, especially for the neediest students. We are concerned that low-income students often shy away from in-school meals and feel stigmatized. Our research indicates that students associate “free” school meals, especially breakfast, with being poor. In their estimation, only poor students come in early to eat breakfast otherwise not provided in their homes.

A significant value of the all-inclusive in-classroom breakfast model is there is no delineation between students and their family’s ability to pay. The same holds true for those schools with all-inclusive breakfast programs served in the cafeteria. Expanding the program to include all income groups removes the stigma, so low-income students will not feel isolated and inferior to their peers. Ultimately, the result is a classroom filled with nourished students who are fueled, more mentally focused and poised for learning.

We applaud the mayor’s and the DOE’s decision to expand this initiative in part as a response to the worsening economy. According to the

New York Food Bank, *the number of New York City residents who "experience difficulty" buying food for themselves and their families throughout the year has increased from 2 million in 2003 to 3.1 million in 2007. That represents a 55 percent increase, and that was well before current economic downturn.*

Increasing the classroom breakfast program participation from the 48 pilot schools to 300 schools is a commendable goal. In fact, The New York City Coalition Against Hunger lauds DOE's program. We, too, endorse this expansion and would recommend the following approach to best position the breakfast in the classroom program for success citywide:

1. Initially expand the breakfast program to schools in some of the lowest income districts, then broaden the offering for breakfast to all students regardless of ability to pay.
2. Determine the best practices among the schools participating in the pilot – expressly well supervised, hygienic and punctual – and replicate them citywide.
3. Parents, teachers and the Department of Education should collaborate on breakfast initiatives to ensure wide student participation, parental engagement and program excellence.

We recognize that every school environment is different and some procedures at specific schools are unique to their situation. Determining the best practices among the pilot schools – particularly those schools distinguished as well supervised and hygienic and where the school day

proceeds orderly and on time – should be a high priority for the program’s expansion. In our view, we should replicate best practices citywide.

As your committee well knows, the UFT champions collaboration between the DOE, parents, teachers and the community. All programs in schools have higher efficacy when collaboration and transparency co-exist. Over this past summer, DOE, with the SchoolFood citywide staff, engaged in a couple of breakfast distribution collaborations geared to improve nutrition among the city’s children. Success for these programs was due in large part to a coordinated “Feed the Mind” marketing campaign targeted to parents and the community. This effort reinforced communications with parents and the community around the schools. Parents became engaged and child participation increased.

I want to close by again expressing my appreciation for the opportunity to weigh in on this innovative breakfast initiative. New York City’s school children deserve a quality education, and their teachers need to commence the school day with a class filled with well-fed students ready to meet the challenges of the day. Thank you.

TESTIMONY

VERONICA MONTGOMERY-COSTA

PRESIDENT, LOCAL 372

NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

AND

DISTRICT COUNCIL 37

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE,

COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

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JOINT HEARING

CITY COUNCIL HEALTH COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

BREAKFAST IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NOVEMBER 20, 2008

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY

VERONICA MONTGOMERY-COSTA

PRESIDENT - LOCAL 372 AND DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

November 20, 2008

Chairman Rivera, Chairman Jackson and Committee Members:

Local 372 thanks you for this opportunity to comment upon the Breakfast program in New York City's Public Schools.

Local 372 supports the Universal Breakfast program which provides nutritious and healthful breakfasts to all New York City students free of charge, without the stigma of being singled out as "free lunch" students.

It is essential that as this program expands with a Breakfast in the Classroom model, and logistics become more complex, we do not sacrifice quality of service and oversight for expediency.

Remembering the Mayor's famous deal to place Snapple in the schools, we can see the DOE's temptation to simplify its commitment to Universal Breakfast by contracting out for one-choice-fits-all pre-packaged meals loaded with sugar, salt and preservatives.

We have a responsibility to make sure that the meals we serve our students contain the best possible ingredients to give them the nourishment and stamina to remain alert and ready to learn throughout the school day.

No one cares more about the health and nutrition of our City's students than the Local 372 School Lunch Workers and School Aides, whose mission is to serve them fresh, good tasting and nutritious meals.

For many of our students, their school's Local 372 School Lunch Team are neighbors and parents or guardians of classmates and friends in the community.

In the DOE's current Universal Breakfast program, Local 372 School Lunch employees plan and package and distribute the meals. Local 372 School Aides continue to maintain required forms to record the distribution of meals to facilitate essential federal reimbursement dollars. Together, they form an invaluable School Lunch Team.

It is critical that our School Lunch Teams continue to plan and monitor the Universal Breakfast, whether served in the cafeterias or in the classrooms. Their full participation at each school site will ensure freshness and safety of all menu items as well as protect students with potentially life-threatening allergies to ingredients such as nuts or gluten.

Given the fact that so many of New York City's school buildings are over 100 years old and are five-story walk-ups, implementation of breakfast in-the-classroom programs presents numerous logistical challenges. At each school site, the input of our Local 372 School Lunch Team is essential to the success of these efforts.

We have consistently taken the position that School Lunch personnel must be represented on every school planning team. Likewise, Local 372 input would be practical and helpful to the DOE in the planning of the expanded Universal Breakfast program.

As was the case in other cities which piloted the Universal Breakfast program, we can expect lateness to be reduced and attendance to improve in our schools, particularly in the early grades.

The Local 372 School Lunch Team, like their brothers and sisters who provide critical school life support services in the schools, live by the credo “Children are our life’s work.”

As a union we strive to help make our job sites, a home away from home for the City’s 1.1 million school children.

Local 372 recognizes that the efforts of our School Lunch Teams will ensure that Breakfast in the Classroom will have a positive impact on attendance by offering the kind of welcoming nourishment, and comfort that will help attract our children to come to school.

In the current economic crisis, parents who are paying more for less in breakfast and lunch items, will be more motivated to have their children participate in their school’s feeding programs.

Incidentally, those parents who no longer feel the stigma of the “free breakfast” designation may be more interested in staying for parent meetings or workshops after escorting their children to school.

Thus, an expanded breakfast program has the potential of having a positive impact on pupil attendance as well as parent involvement.

In Conclusion:

Local 372 looks forward to an expanded Universal Breakfast program including Breakfast in the Classroom. With continued participation and input from our School Lunch teams at each school site, the DOE can implement a self-sustaining, quality feeding program that will benefit all of the children in New York City’s Public Schools.



City Harvest, Inc.
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New York, NY 10018
tel 917.351.8700 fax 917.351.8720
www.cityharvest.org

**Testimony of Kristen Mancinelli
Manager of Program Development and Policy, City Harvest**

**Before Hearing of the New York City Council
Committees on Education and Health
Regarding Breakfast in New York City Public Schools
November 20, 2008**

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Good afternoon Chairman Rivera, Chairman Jackson, and Members of the Committee. My name is Kristen Mancinelli and I am the Manager of Program Development and Policy for City Harvest. City Harvest exists to end hunger in NYC by rescuing food to feed those in need, and by supporting programs that enable New Yorkers to be more food secure. Thank you for convening this hearing to discuss the School Breakfast Program and for the opportunity to offer recommendations to further improve and expand the program.

It's hard to comprehend that 1 in 5 children in this City are hungry right now. Even when breakfasts in schools are free, close to 80% of kids don't participate. When hungry children fail to eat meals offered to them as part of their normal school day, we must ask ourselves what is wrong, and how we can fix it.

Wouldn't it be great if we all walked into our jobs each morning to find a healthy breakfast awaiting us? That's the experience some New York City school students have, and it's the experience that all students should have.

We commend the City for expanding Breakfast in the Classroom to 300 schools. While the City figures out how to scale the program to all 1200 schools, I would like to encourage other measures that can stimulate greater school meal participation. For example, currently school principals are evaluated based on a number of indicators within their school, from test scores, to attendance – and awarded “performance bonuses” of up to \$25,000 based on the success of their students. If principals were also evaluated on student participation in the school meal program, schools would likely do much more around promoting the programs and encouraging participation.

We also encourage the Department of Education to do as much information sharing as possible about those schools that do offer Breakfast in the Classroom. The initiative was mentioned in a recent press release, and I called the press office to get the names of the schools to distribute to our network of emergency food providers. My calls were not returned. Whether via 311, in local newspapers or community centers, the schools involved in the pilot should be spotlighted to encourage the maximum participation.

Kristen Mancinelli, City Harvest
School Breakfast testimony, 11/20/08

Not only does the city face a significant childhood hunger problem, we are in the midst of severe financial woes, and the Dept of Ed is among the hardest hit. However, increasing participation in the school meal program is actually a revenue generator. SchoolFood functions like a business. It gets revenue from providing meals. For each meal served, the Federal and State governments provide a reimbursement. In the current school year, schools are reimbursed \$1.40 per breakfast served to a child eligible for free meals, \$1.10 per reduced priced breakfast, and \$0.25 per paid breakfast. If participation in breakfast were to increase by even 10% across the city, that would bring an additional \$22 million of revenue to the City. And, if of the 200,000 children who currently rely on emergency food and do not eat breakfast participated in the program, this would bring an extra \$50 million to the city each year.

Finally, the school meal programs are scheduled to be reauthorized by Congress in FY 09. We strongly urge the Department of Education to take an active role in the process by participating. As the nation's largest, and one of the most progressive school districts, our experiences and recommendations for needed change carry a lot of weight. Perhaps the Department of Education can convene a working group of members of the advocacy community, its legislative affairs body, and other appropriate persons to collaboratively develop the needs statement for NYC school meal programs.

Thank you again. I can be reached for questions at:

Kristen Mancinelli
P: 917-351-8706
E: kmancinelli@cityharvest.org

working parents have grown, and parents face longer commutes to distant jobs or jobs with non-traditional work hours, getting children to school in time for breakfast can be as unattainable as sitting down to a healthy breakfast at home. Nationally, only 35 percent of parents of children ages 6 to 11 report eating breakfast each day with their children according to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau.

We applaud the Mayor for expanding breakfast in the classroom to 300 schools, and hope that it will eventually be expanded to all New York City's schools. Based on our research of large urban school districts across the country, FRAC has found that serving breakfast at the beginning of the school day, with students eating in their classrooms, is the most effective way to increase participation.

Not only will children benefit, but SchoolFood will be able to significantly increase its revenue. If the program doubles the number of students eating school breakfast each day, they will receive over \$50 million in additional federal funding, along with additional State funding of over \$25, 000.

You have almost all the elements needed for success here – universal breakfast, strong partnerships, a willing School Food program, and a mandate from the Mayor. The only piece that is lacking is strong administrative support and leadership in implementing classroom breakfast programs at the individual school level. Even with the help of the Health Department, anti-hunger advocates, the Dairy Council and others, SchoolFood cannot always convince Principals to focus on making changes to their school's daily routine. But we will not succeed in expanding classroom breakfast without them.

Our research shows that when superintendents put their full support behind a universal (free for all) program where students eat breakfast in the classroom, participation reaches the fullest potential. More and more school districts are moving toward this model. The best example nearby is Newark, New Jersey where the superintendent has made classroom breakfast mandatory. The result: 90 percent of all students that eat lunch at school also eat school breakfast every day in Newark.

We urge you to ask the New York City Schools Chancellor Klein to provide this same kind of leadership with principals in schools across the Burroughs to require participation in this important program. With this final piece in place, New York will be able to insure that all children start the school day with a healthy meal, ready to learn.

Thank You.

Madeleine Levin, MPH
Senior Policy Analyst
Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 540
Washington, DC 20009
mlevin@frac.org
202-986-2200 x3004

Good afternoon Chairman Rivera and Members of the Committee. My name is Madeleine Levin and I am a Senior Policy Analyst at the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) in Washington, DC. FRAC is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. Thank you for convening this hearing and inviting me to participate.

The link between learning and nutrition has long been known. As early as 1917 the U.S. Surgeon General said, "This is expensive stupidity...trying to educate children with half-starved bodies." Experts agree that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Yet, many children skip breakfast because their families struggle to put a meal on the table. In 2007 approximately 12.4 million American children, or one in six, lived in food insecure households, meaning they faced a constant struggle against hunger.

The lack of a healthy breakfast puts children at risk. Missing a morning meal has been shown to have serious academic, behavioral and dietary consequences. The benefits of the School Breakfast Program go beyond reducing hunger; it also improves nutrition, curbs obesity, improves students' attendance, attentiveness and achievement, and reduces discipline problems in school. A sample of key research findings include:

- Children from low-income households who participate in school breakfast score higher on the Healthy Eating Index (a U.S. Department of Agriculture measure of people's overall diet quality) than those who did not eat breakfast at school. In particular, these children eat more fruits, drink more milk, and eat a wider variety of foods.
- Children who eat breakfast at school, meaning they eat closer to class and test-taking time, perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home.
- Children who eat school breakfast have fewer discipline problems and fewer visits to the school nurse.

Recognition of the importance of the School Breakfast Program is growing, and as a result participation in the program continues to increase. Despite this growth, it is still not serving anywhere near the number of children that need it. Nationally, the School Breakfast Program reaches only 45 low-income children for every 100 reached by the National School Lunch Program. And in New York State as a whole, school breakfast reaches only 38 low-income students for every 100 that eat lunch. In New York City, that number is even lower, with barely 30% of low-income students that eat lunch eating breakfast at school each day.

Here in NYC, where breakfast is offered free for all students, missing school breakfast is more a matter of time than money for thousands of children. As the demands on



**Testimony of Joel Berg, Executive Director
New York City Coalition Against Hunger**

**Before Hearing of the New York City Council
Committees on Education and Health**

Regarding Breakfast in New York City Public Schools

November 20, 2008

Introduction

Good afternoon. I am Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH), which represents the more than 1,200 food pantries and soup kitchens in New York City and the 1.3 million low-income New Yorkers forced to obtain food from these charities. This testimony is submitted on their behalf.

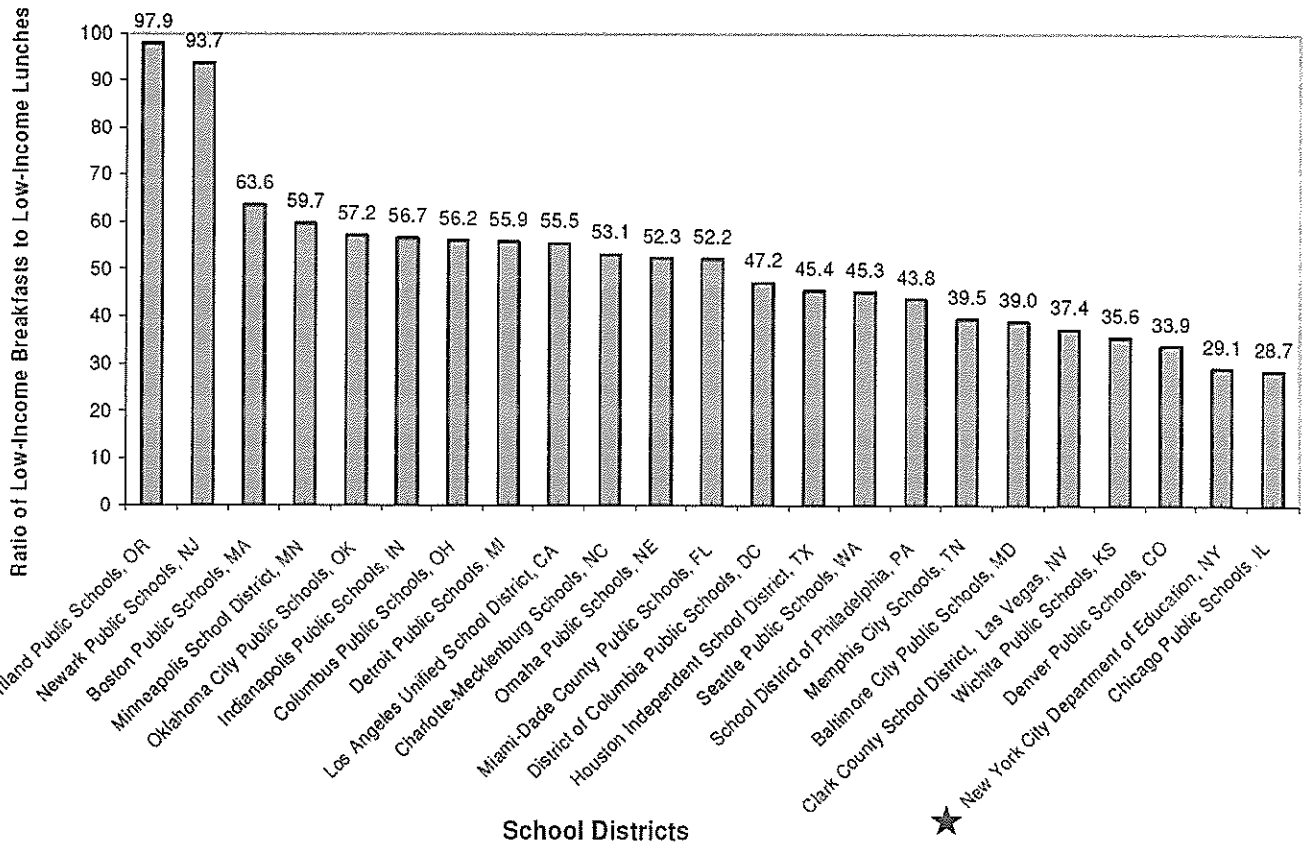
First, I want to thank chairs and all the committee members for having this vital hearing and continuing to focus on this issue. Given that one in five New York City children lived in homes that couldn't afford enough food in 2006, and that the situation is clearly worsening, this is perfect timing for such a hearing.

Second, I want to say how happy I am to be able to come here today and enthusiastically praise the Bloomberg Administration and the Department of Education. It's no secret that, on a rare occasion, I have been constructively critical of the Administration on other matters, so it is nice to be able to offer heartfelt and effusive praise to the City, which is so richly deserved in the area of school meals.

Low NYC School Breakfast Participation in the Past

In August of 2007, the national anti-hunger group, the Food Research Action Center (FRAC) released a report indicating that, despite the significant progress that New York City public schools had already achieved by making school breakfast available universally to all students regardless of family income, New York had the second lowest participation rate out of 23 large American cities.

Effectiveness in Reaching Low-Income Students with School Breakfast



Because the Bloomberg Administration had adopted universal school breakfast and started a few small experiments to allow some children to eat breakfast in their classrooms, breakfast participation in New York had increased by six million meals over the previous three and a half years. Still, 80% of low-income public school students in New York failed to receive them. Only 29% of the city’s children who obtained school lunches obtained school breakfasts, compared to 98% in Portland, 94% in Newark, 64% in Boston, and 55% in Los Angeles. The report indicated that the districts with higher participation rates were those that tended to more fully make breakfast available in classrooms than did New York City, where most children still had to face the stigma of going to a separate lunchroom to eat breakfast.

In response to the report, we held a well-publicized press conference at which we indicated that we were grateful that the Bloomberg Administration and the Department of Education (DOE) Office of SchoolFood had taken proactive steps that increased school breakfast participation in the city. We said that the City’s move to universal breakfast was truly visionary, and a six million-meal increase was certainly an impressive beginning. However, we pointed out that the FRAC report made it clear that we all had our work cut out for us in catching up with other cities on breakfast participation. We said that while it is always a sad day when we lose to Boston in baseball, it is truly heartbreaking when we lose to them and 20 other cities in feeding our children. That is why we called on the DOE to move towards providing breakfasts in every classroom in the system, as did neighboring Newark, which had a far higher breakfast participation rate.

The In-Classroom Breakfast Pilot is Working

In response to the news that New York City was lagging in school breakfasts, the best possible thing happened: all the key players – the City, DOE, the teachers union, and advocates – all worked together to find common ground to address the problem.

We jointly visited Newark, New Jersey—where both universal and in-classroom breakfast are utilized—and found that the school district has a 94 percent breakfast participation rate. During our visit, we were thrilled to find elementary school student breakfast monitors cheerfully delivering breakfasts to all their peers. We also learned of a local high school in which the number of breakfasts served increased literally tenfold after the meals were provided in classrooms.

Having learned first-hand of Newark’s success, in 2008, New York City launched a pilot project to try out in-classroom breakfasts in a number of schools. I must again point out that, on school meals issues, the Bloomberg Administration has been excellent. They’ve improved the nutritional quality of school meals and greatly expanded participation through some innovative initiatives. At one pilot site I visited, Public School 68 in the Bronx, every student ate breakfast together during their first-period class. The pilot is working better than anyone could have anticipated. The school’s principal told me that, before the pilot, an average of 50 kids came to school late everyday, so many that she had to assign extra staff to writing out late slips. When they started serving breakfast in their classrooms, kids came in early just for the meals, and now only about five kids a day are late—a 900 percent decrease in tardiness. The principal also told me that absenteeism and visits to school nurses also dropped, and in the afternoons, kids fell asleep in the classrooms less frequently. This is obviously not only good nutrition policy but also good education policy.

Given that most school districts must now have a complex system in place to collect forms and data on the income of each student’s parents to determine the eligibility of each child for either free, reduced-price, or full-cost meals, when a district adopts a universal breakfast or lunch policy, not only does it reduce the stigma faced by children and thereby increases participation, it also reduces the paperwork and bureaucracy, saving the school district time and money. When kids eat breakfast in a classroom instead of a lunchroom that is a hallway or two away, they have more time to focus on their studies and are protected from the stigma of having to leave their friends to go to a special breakfast room “for the poor kids.” Given that textbooks are widely understood to be a critical educational tool, public school districts typically lend them out free of charge to all students. The time is ripe for the nation to view school meals in the same way. Free breakfast and lunch should be universal in all classrooms around the country.

The pilot in-classroom project in New York worked so well that Mayor Michael Bloomberg recently announced its expansion from 50 to 350 schools. The Federal government should provide technical assistance and funding to aid such in-classroom breakfast programs in New York and nationwide as part of the upcoming Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Bill. With more federal support, the City could – and should – expand breakfast to every classroom in the City.

New York City Council Hearing on School Breakfast

November 20, 2008

City Hall Council Chambers

Casey Dinkin, Manager of Communications and Advocacy
Nutrition Consortium of NYS

Thank you to the New York City Council for holding this hearing and affording me the opportunity to present this testimony. My name is Casey Dinkin and I am here on behalf of the Nutrition Consortium of NYS. The Nutrition Consortium of NYS is a statewide anti-hunger organization whose mission is alleviating hunger in our state through increasing access to and participation in federally funded nutrition assistance programs. The three programs we focus the majority of our efforts on are the Food Stamp Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the School Breakfast Program.

The School Breakfast Program is an underutilized federally-funded nutrition assistance program. It is underutilized across NYS and throughout the country. While the School Lunch Program reaches about 70% of the low-income students who are eligible to participate, school breakfast reaches a much smaller percentage of those students. Nationally, only 45% of students who eat a free or reduced price school lunch also receive a free or reduced price school breakfast. According to data from the New York State Education Department, in New York State, only 37% of students who receive a free or reduced price school lunch eat school breakfast. Here in New York City, only 31% of students who eat a free or reduced price school lunch are receiving school breakfast.

Why is this? Research shows that students don't eat school breakfast because there are persistent access barriers which prevent them from participating. These include: short breakfast periods, buses that arrive at school late, pressure to go directly to class, and stigma. All these barriers are present in the traditional model of school breakfast service, where breakfast is available only in the cafeteria, before the school day begins.

Schools across the nation are finding that the only successful way to eliminate these access barriers to school breakfast in a substantial way is to change from the traditional method of breakfast service in the cafeteria, to a breakfast in the classroom model. We applaud New York City for implementing this approach.

The Nutrition Consortium administered a project where breakfast in the classroom programs were piloted in 20 upstate NY schools. This was done through a grant from the NYS Attorney General. These schools were urban, suburban, and rural. They were of varying sizes, and included high-poverty and low-poverty schools. Data was collected from these schools on School Breakfast Program participation and a variety of academic indicators. The results were analyzed by researchers at Harvard Medical School, a final report was published. The findings were tremendously positive.

In all schools, School Breakfast participation more than doubled. Participation by low-income students increased from 34% to 58%. There was also great improvement on other academic indicators: Tardiness and absenteeism decreased, and there were fewer disciplinary office referrals and visits to the school nurse. An overwhelming majority of teachers and principals who were surveyed agreed that classroom breakfast made an important contribution to the educational process.

Also noteworthy was the change in school faculty and staff attitudes toward classroom breakfast from the beginning of the program to the end. Initially, teachers were concerned about the time and clean up involved with classroom breakfast. 58% of teachers were hesitant about the program at the beginning of the year. By the end of the year, 85% of the teachers surveyed felt that classroom breakfast made a positive impact. Custodial staff were also reluctant about switching to classroom breakfast. 50% of custodial staff were hesitant about the program at the beginning of the year, but by the end of the year, 77% of custodial staff were supporters of the classroom breakfast program.

The findings of the NYS classroom breakfast pilot study are consistent with numerous studies that have been done over the past two decades on school breakfast. In fact, a report was released this Tuesday from the Sodexo Foundation that summarizes current scientific literature about the benefits of school breakfast. It includes only studies which are peer reviewed or are published in refereed journals. The report categorized the benefits of school breakfast participation into three major areas: cognitive and educational benefits, health benefits, and behavioral and psychosocial benefits.

Here are some of the highlights: In terms of cognitive and educational benefits, school breakfast participation results in improved concentration, alertness, and energy. It is associated with improved overall academic performance, and higher math, reading, and standardized test scores.

For health benefits, school breakfast participation results in a better overall diet and eating habits, improved nutritional status, and reduced illnesses.

The behavioral and psychosocial benefits of school breakfast participation include improved psychosocial well-being, better discipline and social behavior, and reduced aggression and incidence of suspensions.

Increasing school breakfast participation will have an extremely positive impact on New York City's educational system. However, it also has positive financial implications for the City, and for the New York State. We know that the New York State government is currently focused on trying to bring more federal dollars into the state. The School Breakfast Program is more than 90% federally funded. For every school breakfast served in New York City, \$1.68 is reimbursed to the school by the federal government, with the state kicking in about 10 cents. So the more children who eat breakfast at school, the more federal dollars that will come into the state.

According to projections from the Food Research and Action Center, a national anti-hunger advocacy organization, if 60% of New York's low-income students participated in the School Breakfast Program, rather than the current 37%, New York would receive an additional \$54 million in federal funding every year.

We know that the academic impact of classroom breakfast is positive, and we also know that the economic impact is significant, especially considering our state's current fiscal crisis. However, the most compelling thing I can tell you about today comes from a food service director in upstate New York. She began a classroom breakfast program last year in three schools in her district.

Initially, there was some resistance from the teachers about switching breakfast from the cafeteria to the classroom. Then, one day, she received a note from one of these initially resistant teachers. It said, and I am paraphrasing, "Thank you for this program. At first, I didn't think it was necessary. I was concerned about the time it would take away from teaching. This Monday, I had a student come up to me after breakfast and say, 'I'm so glad I got to eat breakfast today! I didn't have anything to eat all weekend.' I now understand how very crucial the classroom breakfast program is to my students. I never would have realized this student was hungry and not getting fed at home, and I am sure there are so many others out there just like him."

We know that there are many students who are not receiving adequate nutrition at home, and we need to make sure that these students are receiving all the nutrition available to them through the federally-funded school meals programs. Moving breakfast to the classroom is absolutely the best way to accomplish this. The Nutrition Consortium of NYS commends New York City for taking the lead on implementing and expanding classroom breakfast programs throughout the City. We encourage the City to continue to expand this program with the goal of making breakfast in the classroom available to every child.



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Testimony submitted by:

Áine Duggan
on behalf of
Food Bank For New York City
for the

New York City Council Oversight Hearing
“Breakfast in New York City Public Schools”
November 20, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon. I am Áine Duggan, Vice President for Research, Policy & Education with the Food Bank For New York City. The Food Bank appreciates the opportunity to present testimony this afternoon to the City Council regarding breakfast in New York City public schools.

First, I would like to thank the City Council and the Committee on Education on your ongoing efforts to address child nutrition issues, and the Food Bank commends the City's ongoing efforts to ensure children have access to nutritious food in the public school system, including introduction of the Universal Breakfast Program in FY04 and the recent announcement to target more schools to take advantage of the in-classroom breakfast option.

Food Bank For New York City, which recently merged with FoodChange, works to end hunger and food poverty through a range of programs that increase access to nutrition, education and financial empowerment. The organization distributes food and provides support services to approximately 1,000 emergency and community food programs citywide; manages nutrition education programs for schools and CBOs; operates benefits access programs including food stamp outreach & enrollment assistance and the largest Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program in the country; and, conducts research to inform community and government efforts to end hunger in New York City.

Throughout New York City, food poverty among children has escalated in recent years and the expectation is that it will worsen as a result of the current financial crisis. Research shows that food poverty has significant health and educational implications for children. In my testimony today, I will briefly outline the role of the School Breakfast Program as part of a broader strategy to alleviate the problem of child hunger.

The mission of the Food Bank For New York City
is to end hunger by organizing food, information and support for community survival and dignity.



FOOD POVERTY AMONG NYC CHILDREN

In the midst of an economic downturn or recession, low-income households with children are often the hardest hit. Even in the best of circumstances, children and the households in which they live are particularly susceptible to poverty. Census data shows that while 19 percent of the New York City population lives below the poverty level, more than one-quarter (27 percent) of children live in poverty.¹ This means that more than half a million city children (540,000) live below the federal poverty level, 50 percent higher than the national average and 19 percent higher than the NYS average.

It is likely that this number under-represents need among children in New York City. There is broad agreement that the current poverty measure is antiquated.² The current poverty measure, established in 1960, was developed based upon research showing that households spent an average of one-third of their incomes on food. Current research shows that households generally spend one-seventh of their income on food.³ The measure also fails to account for factors such as geographical differences in the cost of living (including high housing costs) and debt.

Research on basic living expenses has shown that households throughout the U.S. need an income of 200 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$34,000 for a family of three) to meet basic needs.⁴ In New York City, households need an income of at least 250 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$40,000 annually for a family of three) or more to afford necessities.⁵ In New York City, 41 percent of families with children live below 185 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$31,500 for a family of three), and one-half (50 percent) of New York City children (under age 18) live below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.⁶

Therefore, it is not surprising that the escalating cost of living in recent years has been particularly hard on households with children in New York City. In the period from 2003 to 2007 basic living costs in the metro area increased as follows: food at home by 15 percent, fuel and utility by 37 percent, housing by 18 percent, medical care by 17 percent and transportation by 14 percent.⁷

During the same time period there was a 41 percent increase, from almost one-third (32 percent) to almost one-half (45 percent), of New York City households with children experiencing difficulty affording needed food.⁸

Insufficient household income is an obvious contributing factor to poverty among children. For example, even though New York's minimum wage (currently \$7.15 and scheduled to increase to \$7.25 in July 2009⁹) is set at a higher level than the federal minimum wage (\$6.55) many New

¹ American Community Survey 2007. United States Census Bureau. (The Federal Poverty Level is approximately \$17,000 annually for a family of three.)

² (1) *Increasing Opportunity and Reducing Poverty in New York City*. (2006). Commission for Economic Opportunity. (2) *An Alternative to the Federal Poverty Measure*. (2008). Center for Economic Opportunity (3) *What is the Nature of Poverty and Economic Hardship in the United States?* (2008). National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University

³ *What is the Nature of Poverty and Economic Hardship in the United States?* (2008). National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University

⁴ *Measuring Income and Poverty in the United States*. National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University. (2007). (Living expenses taken into account include rent and utilities, food, child care, health insurance, transportation, other necessities, payroll and income taxes.)

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ American Community Survey 2007. United States Census Bureau.

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index.

⁸ *NYC Hunger Experience 2008*. (2008). Food Bank For New York City / Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.

⁹ United States Department of Labor.

York families still struggle to meet basic needs. The annual gross earnings for a minimum wage full-time worker in New York City (working 40 hours per week for 52 weeks) is only \$14,872, well below the federal poverty level for a family of three (approximately \$17,000 annually).

In addition, families that are struggling to get by on insufficient incomes are unlikely to have savings to fall back on in the event of layoffs and/or escalating living costs. More than one out of every five (22 percent) New York City households with children would not be able to afford needed food immediately after the loss of their household income.¹⁰

Poverty and lack of access to nutritious food has been shown to result in poor health and low academic achievement among children.

Research shows that food-poor children are 90 percent more likely to have fair/poor health than excellent/good health.¹¹ In New York City, more than one-half (53 percent) of elementary school children are overweight or obese. Inconsistent access to nutritious food has been shown to be a main cause of the epidemic of overweight children among those living below the poverty level.¹² Studies show that in response to inconsistent access to food, children tend to consume calorie-dense food when it is available, often leading to obesity.¹³ Poverty is also linked to high asthma and diabetes rates in New York City. For example, approximately one out of every ten (10 percent) New York City children has asthma, higher than the 7 percent throughout New York State.

Not surprisingly, numerous studies over the years have also shown that food-poor children are more likely to have lower achievement in math and reading, more likely to repeat a grade, have behavioral problems and have higher rates of tardiness and absenteeism.¹⁴ Hunger not only jeopardizes children's education, but also their future workforce participation; children starting out at a disadvantage are more likely to remain at a disadvantage into adulthood.¹⁵

Nowhere is the increasing number of households with children falling into food poverty more evident than at the doors of the city's approximately 1,000 emergency food organizations. As of 2007 more than one out of every five children (397,000) in New York City is relying on soup kitchens and food pantries, up 48 percent from 269,000 in 2004. Notably, children account for 43 percent of the overall increase in city residents, from one million to 1.3 million, relying on emergency food during this time period.¹⁶

Recognizing that the supply of emergency food is not a permanent solution to the food poverty problem, the network of soup kitchens and food pantries that webs the five boroughs is intended to create a safety net, a resource of last resort, when other interventions are not sufficient to ensure people have access to basic food every day. In recent times, this net has not been sufficiently reinforced to bear the extra weight of increased demand and the number of families being turned away at emergency food organizations across the city is on the rise.

¹⁰ *NYC Hunger Experience 2008*. (2008). Food Bank For New York City / Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.

¹¹ Cook, John, Frank, Deborah, Department of Pediatrics, Boston, University School of Medicine. *Food Security, Poverty and Human Development in the United States*. (2008). New York Academy of Sciences.

¹² (1) Gibson, D. *Poverty, Food Stamp Program Participation and Health: Estimates from the NLSY97*. (2000). City University of New York, Baruch College. (2) Wang, Y., C. Monteiro, and B. Popkin. *Trends of Obesity and Underweight in Older Children and Adolescents in the United States, Brazil, China, and Russia..* (2002). American Journal of Clinical Nutrition Vol.75.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Cook, John, Frank, Deborah, Department of Pediatrics, Boston, University School of Medicine. *Food Security, Poverty and Human Development in the United States*. (2008). New York Academy of Sciences.

¹⁵ *Food Stamps as Medicine: A New Perspective on Children's Health*. (2007). Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program (C-SNAP).

¹⁶ *NYC Hunger Safety Net 2007: A Food Poverty Focus*. (2007). Food Bank For New York City.

While work to increase support for the emergency food system is ongoing, the anti-hunger community is also playing a leadership role and collaborating with government and community partners to connect families to other services and programs for which they are eligible, and create awareness that increasing participation in programs, such as the range of school meals options, will not only help to alleviate the pressure on the emergency food system, but will help to provide families with better options for providing children with consistent access to nutritious food.

The Role of School Breakfast to Reduce Food Poverty

Introduction of the Universal Breakfast Program in FY04 resulted in a 35 percent increase (from 146,000 to 199,000) in the average daily participation rate in the program. While the overall participation of 26 percent of eligible children remains lower than optimal, the recent announcement by the City to increase outreach to more than 300 schools to encourage their implementation of the in-classroom breakfast option will increase access for many students. For example, the in-classroom option, which allows schools to incorporate breakfast into the school day schedule, is an excellent means of overcoming the logistical barrier presented by the standard provision of breakfast prior to the start of the school day.

It should be noted that there are a range of other options and means of implementing those options that schools should also be encouraged to consider as they determine what models work best for their respective sites and age-groups:

- Breakfast in the classroom during the first class – this is an ideal option for younger grades as it facilitates the distribution of meals to children at their desks and eliminates the need for young children to come to school early;
- Grab and go bagged meals – can be a popular option among older elementary, middle and high school students as it gives them the independence to grab breakfast when they enter the school and take it to their classroom or home room;
- Traditional hot breakfast in the cafeteria – should remain an option and where feasible, students should be encouraged to alternate between classroom and cafeteria options;
- Class breakfast trips to the cafeteria – this is a particularly beneficial option for schools with large cafeterias that can accommodate classes eating in the lunchroom together, as it provides a unique way to eliminate any sense of stigma that may cause children not to eat breakfast in school. Incorporating class breakfast trips into the schools schedule presents an ideal opportunity to lay the foundation for normalizing breakfast participation and for introducing or augmenting nutrition education initiatives in the school setting.

In addition, the City has achieved significant results in ongoing efforts to improve the nutritional quality of the food provided in school settings. The Office of SchoolFood has set very high standards for food procurement and preparation that ensure meals are nutritious and appealing to students and support the local economy, including a focus on:

- Healthy options - their standards always meet, and many times exceed, USDA guidelines. In addition to prohibiting the use of trans fats, artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners, palm oil, BHA, BHT, and MSG they have reduced the sodium, fat, and

cholesterol in menu items, are eliminating high fructose corn syrup and increasing the grams of dietary fiber in meals;

- Appearance and taste – regular taste-testing facilitates input from the students. In addition, SchoolFood introduced the apple slices and bagged carrots that students find appealing; and,
- Local economy – local procurement of produce and yogurt are among the examples of how SchoolFood is working with the local NYS farming community. In addition, SchoolFood works to promote the “farm to cafeteria” model.

Much of this work was initiated by collaboration between City Agencies and the Food Bank’s Nutrition & Health Education Department (formerly Community Food Resource Center and FoodChange before FoodChange merged with Food Bank For New York City). For approximately fifteen years, the organization has secured private funding and worked with HRA and SchoolFood to utilize the federally-funded Food Stamp Nutrition Education grant money to provide nutrition education to NYC school-children through the CookShop Program, including classroom and cafeteria components. The program is based on plant-based recipes that were introduced to cafeterias in 144 schools by FY07, reaching approximately 136,000 students and are part of a classroom curriculum that will be active in approximately 500 classrooms this year, reaching more than 10,000 students.

The range of breakfast options as described above will not only help to increase participation in the breakfast program but also presents a unique opportunity to increase nutrition education in schools across the city. For example, the in-classroom breakfast model presents an opportunity to link to short nutrition workshops that help children to understand the importance of eating a healthy breakfast.

Further, the achievements of the Universal Breakfast Program can be expanded to improve participation in all school meals. As part of ongoing work to reduce and eliminate food poverty, the Food Bank is working with the City to explore the possibility of bringing a paperless Universal School Lunch system to NYC public schools. Such a system would end the stigma that prevents many students (particularly high school students) from participating in school meals. Also, it would end the current cumbersome application and accountability process and associated expense. The Food Bank encourages the Council to support the City’s efforts to introduce a Universal Lunch Program when the option becomes available.

Summary

In summary, child food poverty is a significant and, in light of the current financial crisis, growing problem. More than one in four NYC children live below the federal poverty level and one in five relies on emergency food. Food poverty has significant health and educational consequences for children so it is important to seize every opportunity to increase access to nutritious food for children. The City’s improvement of the School Breakfast Program in addition to their support for increased nutrition education activities in schools is achieving this goal. Expanding and augmenting the current initiatives, such as the introduction of a Universal School Lunch Program will further increase the participation of children in school meals. Consequently: children will be exposed to nutrition education and the healthy options that SchoolFood guarantees through procurement and in-house preparation; and, low-income families will benefit from the extra relief to their over-stretched household budgets.

New York City Council Hearing on School Breakfast

November 20, 2008

City Hall Council Chambers

Casey Dinkin, Manager of Communications and Advocacy
Nutrition Consortium of NYS

Thank you to the New York City Council for holding this hearing and affording me the opportunity to present this testimony. My name is Casey Dinkin and I am here on behalf of the Nutrition Consortium of NYS. The Nutrition Consortium of NYS is a statewide anti-hunger organization whose mission is alleviating hunger in our state through increasing access to and participation in federally funded nutrition assistance programs. The three programs we focus the majority of our efforts on are the Food Stamp Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the School Breakfast Program.

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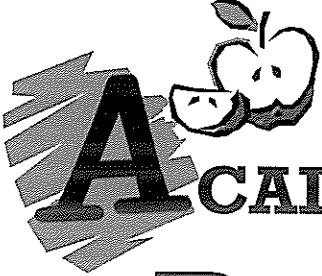
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**ACADEMICS &
BREAKFAST
CONNECTION
PILOT**

Final Report on New York's
Classroom Breakfast Project



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Nutrition Consortium of New York State greatly appreciates the support of the many public agencies, private foundations and individuals who made this publication possible.

In particular, we acknowledge the NYS Attorney General for their support of ABC Pilot implementation and evaluation. Funding for the Academics and Breakfast Connection Pilot was secured by the Nutrition Consortium of NYS from the Indirect Vitamins Purchasers Antitrust Litigation Settlement administered by the New York State Attorney General.

In addition, we acknowledge the financial support for the evaluation of the ABC Pilot and the preparation and publication of this report provided by the *Community Food and Nutrition Program* (a program through which the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services allocates funds to the New York State Department of State), the New York State Department of Health's *Nutrition Outreach and Education Program* (supported in part by funds from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and USDA/FNS), and by our partners in our Campaign to End Hunger, including FRAC; MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation; Share Our Strength; and many individual donors throughout the state.

We also recognize and express our gratitude to the ABC Pilot evaluation team at Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital for their statistical analyses of the ABC Pilot results, assistance in generating a final report, and for the development of a companion publication – the ABC Pilot *Technical Report*. This ABC Pilot evaluation team includes: J. Michael Murphy, Ed.D., Jennifer E. Drake, M.A., and Kristin M. Weineke, M.A.

Finally, we express our appreciation of the support of our dedicated Board of Directors and the Board Vitagrant (ABC Pilot) Committee both in the planning and implementation phases of this endeavor, as well as in our ongoing fight against hunger in New York State.

We also thank the staff at the Nutrition Consortium. In particular, we acknowledge Lisa Allison, Child Nutrition Program Specialist, for her hard work in designing and securing funding for the ABC Pilot, in monitoring implementation and progress, and in issuing multiple Pilot reports, including the preparation, as principal author, of this final report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2003-2004 school year, twenty schools in upstate New York implemented the Academics & Breakfast Connection (ABC) Pilot – a program designed to produce replicable classroom breakfast models that reduce childhood hunger and improve academic performance. Funded by a grant from the Nutrition Consortium of New York State, elementary and secondary students of varying income levels participated in the Pilot in rural, urban and suburban schools throughout the state. Funding for the Academics & Breakfast Connection Pilot was secured from the Indirect Vitamins Purchases Antitrust Litigation Settlement administered by the New York State Attorney General. As ABC Pilot participants, Pilot schools served breakfast to all students at no charge (regardless of income) and students consumed their meals in the classroom setting.

The following are some highlights of ABC Pilot results:

School Breakfast Program participation increased dramatically:

- Program participation more than doubled -- the percentage of enrolled students eating breakfast at school increased from 23% to 58%
- During the ABC Pilot school year, over 5,000 students received breakfast on an average day compared to the 1,883 who ate breakfast during the previous year

School-wide data on student performance showed improvement in all areas studied:

From the year before Pilot implementation to the year of Pilot operation:

- Tardiness declined from 3.0 to 2.6 days per student per year, a statistically significant difference
- Disciplinary office referrals decreased significantly, from 1.3 to 1.1 referrals per student per year
- Absenteeism rates fell from 7.9 to 7.4 days per student per year, though this result did not reach statistical significance
- Visits to the school nurse declined from 9.3 to 8.7 per student per year, though this difference did not reach statistical significance

The ABC Pilot had a positive impact on education:

- 100% of the Principals of ABC Pilot schools believe the Pilot made an important contribution to the education process
- Nearly all Principals (87%) reported that they believed the ABC Pilot classroom breakfast program contributed to improvements in academic performance
- Teachers (nearly 80%) agreed that the Pilot made an important contribution to the education process
- 72% of teachers reported that the Pilot *did not* interfere with teaching
- Most teachers (85%) reported fewer complaints of hunger from students

Teachers and principals expressed strong support for the ABC Pilot:

- 79% of teachers supported continuation of the Pilot
- 75% of principals reported plans to continue the Pilot in the next school year.

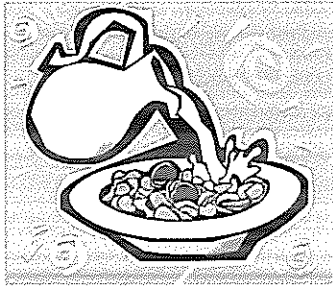
I. School Breakfast Program Overview

The School Breakfast Program is a federal nutrition assistance program administered by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service at the national level and by the State Education Department in New York State. Established by Congress as a permanent program in 1975, the School Breakfast Program provides schools and residential child-care institutions with reimbursement funds for the costs associated with providing children with breakfast.

As a result of state legislation in 1993, New York State requires that all elementary and severe-need schools operate a school breakfast program, unless they apply for a waiver through the State Education Department. (Severe need schools are defined as those in which 40% of school meals had been served to free/reduced price eligible children two years prior to the current year.) Today, nearly 90% of New York State's public schools operate the School Breakfast Program.

Every student can participate in the school breakfast program and some may receive breakfast for free or at a reduced-price. Students from households with income below 130% of poverty (\$24,505 per year for a family of four in 2004) qualify to receive free breakfasts, and those from households with incomes between 130% and 185% of poverty (between \$24,506 and \$34,873 per year for a family of four in 2004) qualify to receive breakfast at a reduced-price, set at 25 cents in New York State schools. All other students must pay full price for breakfast at school – generally between \$0.50 and \$1.00.





Why Breakfast is Important

Nutrition is critical to a child's ability to learn. According to the Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition, the body must use its energy reserves to keep organs functioning whenever the body is unable to obtain energy from food. This means that a hungry child has less energy available for cognition and social activities, resulting in learning difficulties¹.

Recent national surveys indicate that 3% to 7% of children in the United States experience hunger, and another 7% to 16% live in families where food insecurity is a major concern. These studies also show that 10% of families with incomes at or below the poverty level experience hunger and another 30% experience food insecurity. Figures for New York State are similar to the national average.^{2,3} These numbers are important because studies conducted over the past decade show that hunger and food insecurity are related to poorer health and mental health, and poor academic outcomes for children.⁴⁻⁷

Breakfast consumption, in particular, is linked to learning and academic performance. In a 1989 article, researchers documented the impact of breakfast on academic achievement. By tracking changes in school achievement scores before and after the implementation of a free school breakfast program, the researchers documented increases in language, reading and math aptitude test scores among breakfast program participants⁸. Similarly, researchers in Minnesota found that students increased their math and reading test scores when they had access to universal school breakfast programs where breakfast is available to all students free of charge^{9,10}.

Studies also indicate that the School Breakfast Program has a positive impact on behavior, attendance and overall health. An article in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine explored the effects of universal breakfast programs in Baltimore and Philadelphia and found reductions in student absenteeism, tardiness and behavior problems¹¹. In addition, a study of a free breakfast program in Minnesota documented a link between breakfast program participation and improved student attention and declines in discipline problems^{9,10}.

Why Classroom Breakfast?

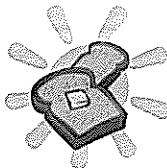
Barely 1 in 5 low-income students participate in the School Breakfast Program in New York State, despite the program's availability in nearly 90% of our public schools¹².



Low participation is primarily due to the fact that very few schools make breakfast part of the official school day. While a student's daily schedule typically includes a lunch period, this is not true of breakfast. Most school districts provide breakfast prior to the start of the school day when bus schedules often make it difficult for students to get to the cafeteria in time to eat and back to classrooms before the bell rings. Furthermore, many school districts only set aside 10-15 minutes for the breakfast program. This makes it impossible for food service staff to serve all of the students that may want and need to participate. And unfortunately, studies show that stigma continues to play a role in preventing students from getting a school breakfast¹³. Unlike lunch, where nearly every student goes to the cafeteria, students have to choose to go to the cafeteria for breakfast in the morning. Many choose not to go in order to avoid being labeled as poor.

By making breakfast part of the school day, classroom breakfast removes these barriers to participation and increases program access for students that need it most. Over the past few years, multiple studies have shown that more students participate in the breakfast program when breakfast is offered at no charge, and that schools allowing students to eat in the classroom experience even greater gains in breakfast program participation. In a large national demonstration project conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, participation more than doubled in schools that provided free breakfast in the classroom, while schools that provided free breakfast in the cafeteria saw more modest gains of about 50%². In addition, demonstration projects in Boston, Baltimore and the state of Maryland have shown a doubling (and even tripling) of participation rates when breakfast is served in the classroom¹⁵⁻¹⁶.

Most importantly, classroom breakfast ensures that children are in classrooms and ready to learn when lessons start.

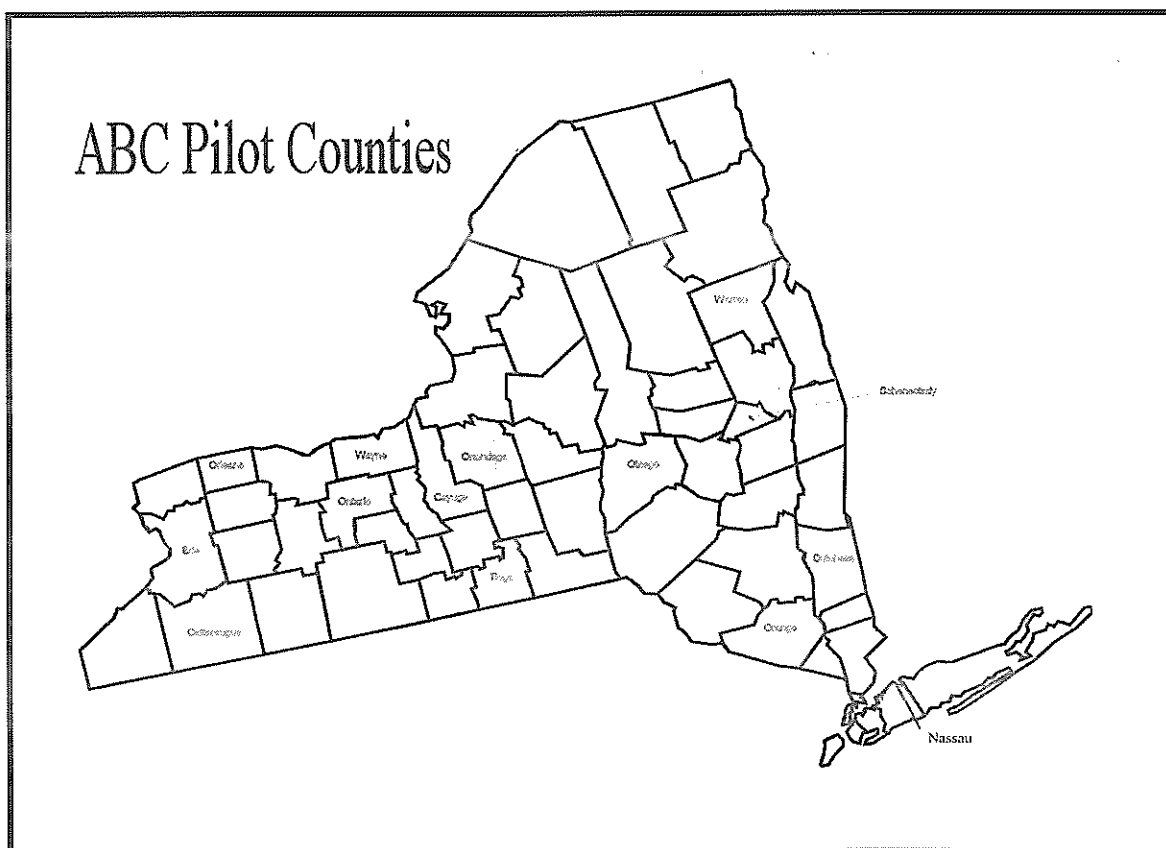


II. The Academics & Breakfast Connection (ABC) Pilot

Seeking to combat childhood hunger and to improve a child's ability to learn in school, the Nutrition Consortium of NYS created the Academics & Breakfast Connection (ABC) Pilot. Funding for the Academics & Breakfast Connection Pilot was secured from the Indirect Vitamins Purchases Antitrust Litigation Settlement administered by the New York State Attorney General. Twenty schools participated in the Pilot and received funding to assist with the implementation of classroom breakfast program during the 2003-2004 school year.

ABC Pilot schools included elementary and secondary schools from rural, urban and suburban areas of sixteen upstate counties, with schools having different levels of low-income student enrollment. Students at Pilot schools received breakfast at no charge regardless of income and consumed the meal in their classrooms.

Ultimately, the ABC Pilot resulted in several replicable New York State-based models for classroom breakfast program implementation. The remainder of this report provides an overview of the most important findings. A technical report with more detailed statistical analyses is available through the Nutrition Consortium¹⁷.



ABC Pilot School Selection Process

In planning for the ABC Pilot, Nutrition Consortium staff convened meetings with State Education Department representatives, school food service directors and individuals involved in classroom breakfast projects in other states. Insight from these meetings proved instrumental in developing our ABC Pilot.

Food service directors at each of New York's nearly 700 public school districts received an ABC Pilot application packet. The application collected general information about the schools such as current enrollment and program participation, and some specific details about their Pilot implementation plan and estimated program costs. The application also required principal and superintendent signatures to demonstrate commitment to Pilot implementation. The Nutrition Consortium received 87 letters of intent from 50 school districts in upstate New York, and thirty-six districts submitted complete applications. Note: The Consortium did not receive any New York City school applications.

To select ABC Pilot schools, the Nutrition Consortium's *Board of Directors Vitagrunt Subcommittee* and agency staff developed scoring criteria. In addition to scoring the individual applications from each school district, the Consortium created an 18-cell matrix to help ensure that a diverse sample of schools participated in the ABC Pilot. Each matrix cell identified an applicant as rural, suburban or urban; as small, medium or large; and as having high or low percentages of low-income students enrolled in the school. With a goal of including one school from each of the 18 cells in the ABC Pilot, the Consortium chose to fund the highest scoring applicant school in each cell. Overall, the ABC Pilot schools selected represent 15 of the 18 cells in the matrix. (The Appendix to this report includes this 18-cell matrix.)

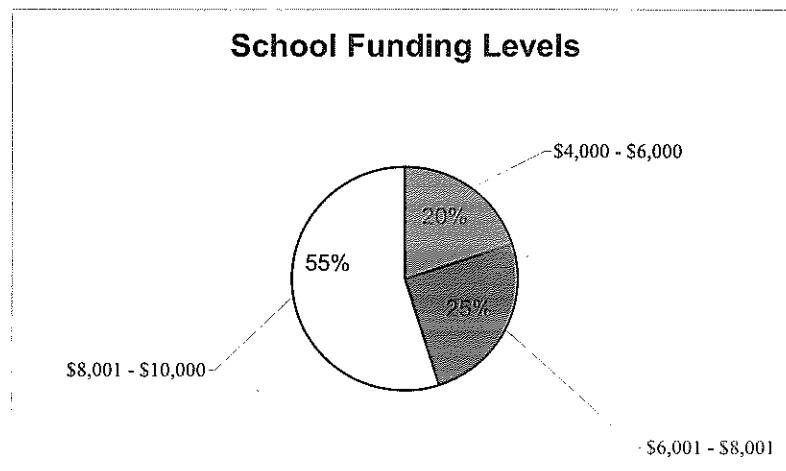
To select ABC Pilot schools, the Nutrition Consortium scored Pilot applications based on the following goals and criteria:

- Goal: To serve breakfast daily to a minimum of 4,000 children (total) through the ABC Pilot
- Goal: To select a variety of school-types from throughout the state, preferably at least one school from each matrix cell, to ensure that models will be replicable throughout the state.
- Criteria:
 - Principal and superintendent commitment to implementing the ABC Pilot and tracking Pilot results
 - Soundness of implementation plan
 - Scope of service (including number of grades/classrooms or school-wide and also menu options)
 - Anticipated increase in participation
 - Soundness and efficiency of proposed budget

This selection process resulted in nineteen ABC Pilot schools receiving Pilot funding from the Nutrition Consortium, with a twentieth school added at the half-year point.

ABC Pilot Implementation

To implement the ABC Pilot, schools received grants from the Nutrition Consortium averaging \$8500, although individual Pilot grants ranged from \$4,000 to \$10,000. Pilot schools continued to operate the School Breakfast Program according to USDA regulations as administered by the New York State Education Department. Although ABC Pilot students received breakfasts at no charge, the schools' reimbursement process through the State Education Department did not change. Schools received reimbursements based on the number of meals served within each payment category: students eligible for free meals, students eligible for reduced-price meals, and students that pay for their meals. As participation by students eligible for free and reduced-price breakfast increased, school reimbursements increased. In most ABC Pilot schools, this economy of scale increase in reimbursement funds sustained the free classroom breakfast program.



ABC Pilot funding assisted schools with classroom breakfast start-up and implementation costs. All but two schools utilized Pilot funds to purchase equipment necessary for classroom breakfast program start-up. This equipment included: food service carts, hot/cold food carriers, coolers, counter slant units, juice airpots, heat lamps, trays/sheet pans, and garbage cans. Also, some schools used Pilot funds to supplement state meal reimbursements, and some purchased non-food supplies such as paper goods.

Implementation Approaches

Every school designed its own classroom breakfast implementation plan.

- Classroom Delivery: eleven schools elected to deliver meals directly to participating Pilot classrooms
- Cafeteria-to-classroom: two schools distributed meals to students as they came through the cafeteria line. Students then took the meals back to their classrooms.
- Hallway Stations: three schools set up distribution stations in the school hallways so that students could pick up breakfasts on their way to class.
- Mixed Service: four schools utilized a combination of methods. For example, one school delivered breakfast to the younger students in kindergarten through second grade, while older students came through the cafeteria line and took their meal back to class.



While each ABC Pilot school developed an implementation plan that worked best for them, they periodically made changes to keep the program operating smoothly. For example, one school switched from hallway cart service to classroom delivery, while another school switched from hallway service to cafeteria pick-up.

Pilot schools also differed in their approach to menu planning. Eight schools offered both hot and cold morning meals to students; nine schools served only cold breakfast items; and one school served only hot breakfasts. As with meal service, schools adjusted their menu offerings as they assessed program participation and took individuals' comments into account. Three schools switched from serving both hot and cold breakfasts to an all-cold menu, and one school added hot breakfasts to their menu in response to teacher, parent and student requests. Like all schools operating school breakfast programs, all ABC Pilot schools were required to continue to meet the nutritional requirements and meal patterns set forth by USDA.

III. Evaluating the ABC Pilot



To assess the impact of the ABC Pilot, the Nutrition Consortium developed tools to evaluate the Pilot's effect on hunger, academic performance and other outcomes. The Consortium then collected and compiled data and survey results submitted by Pilot schools at two different points in the 2003-04 school year.

Data collected from ABC Pilot schools included breakfast program participation rates and incidences of absenteeism, tardiness, disciplinary referrals, and visits to the school nurse. In addition, the Nutrition Consortium surveyed teachers, principals and food service directors to gather their assessments of the Pilot. Teachers reported on the Pilot's effect on their ability to teach, student well being, academic performance, classroom behavior, and attentiveness. Food service director surveys obtained information around Pilot operation and program costs, and principal surveys appraised the Pilot's overall impact on student behavior and academic performance. Nutrition Consortium staff also collected anecdotal information and comments from staff and students during visits to each Pilot school.

In most instances, school food service directors maintained breakfast program participation records, school administrative staff collected information on absenteeism, tardiness and disciplinary referrals, and school nurses recorded student visits. In addition, the Nutrition Consortium used New York State Education Department data to confirm school breakfast participation at each Pilot school. For school breakfast participation, absences and most other indicators, information was available for the year before the ABC Pilot and the year of Pilot implementation. This allowed for pre-post comparisons of outcomes. To assess the statistical significance of the ABC Pilot results, the Consortium retained a professional evaluation group from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston with extensive experience in assessing universal free school breakfast programs in several other states and cities^{2,15-16}.

The Nutrition Consortium also attempted to measure academic outcomes more directly, but this proved to be extremely difficult. Each Pilot school served students of different grade levels, and in many cases, schools utilized different testing tools to monitor student academic performance. Many of the schools also did not have mechanisms in place to report year-to-year changes in academic performance. Since these problems prevented the Nutrition Consortium from being able to use test scores to directly measure academic outcomes, the Consortium developed surveys for principals and teachers to help provide an overview of perceived academic improvements.

As discussed in the next section of this report, the ABC Pilot succeeded in creating replicable New York State-based classroom breakfast models. Participation in the School Breakfast Program at Pilot schools soared; tardiness, absenteeism, disciplinary referrals and nurses visits all showed improvements; and principals and teachers expressed strong support for their classroom breakfast programs. In fact, 94% of Pilot school principals and 85% of teachers agreed that the ABC Pilot had a positive impact on students. These positive results occurred across the gamut of school types included in the Pilot, with some improvements more prominent in higher poverty schools and in those schools that experienced the largest increases in breakfast program participation.

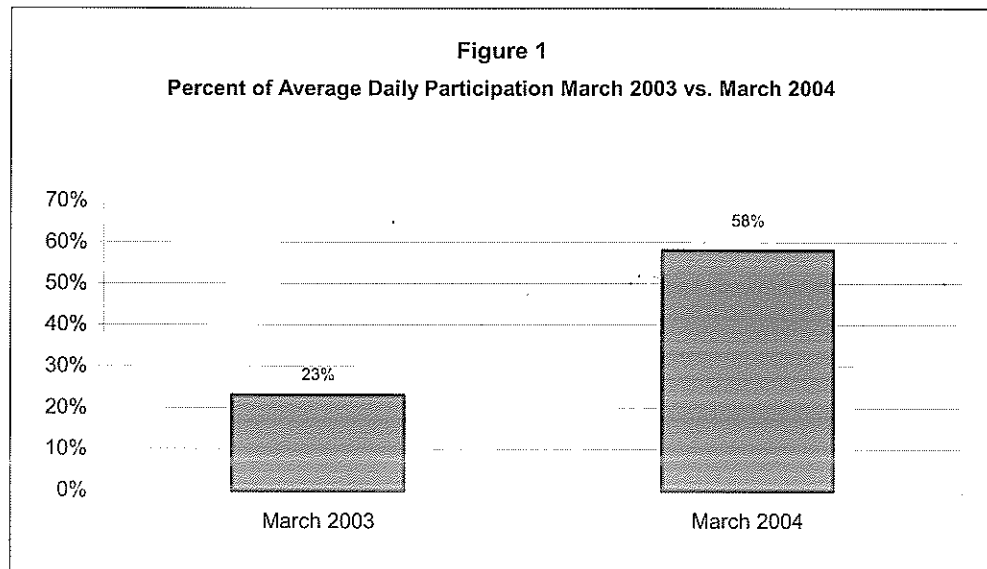


IV. Impact of the ABC Pilot

The ABC Pilot resulted in several New York State-based classroom breakfast models that can be duplicated by schools throughout the state. The Pilot dramatically increased participation in the School Breakfast Program, resulted in reductions in tardiness, absenteeism, disciplinary referrals and visits to the school nurse, and generated tremendous support among principals and teachers alike. These positive results occurred across the spectrum of the different Pilot schools, with some more substantial improvements in schools with higher concentrations of low-income students and in those schools that saw greater increases in breakfast program participation.

A. Breakfast Program Participation

When looked at as a whole, the rate of school breakfast participation in Pilot schools more than doubled. Figure 1 represents official state data showing that after ABC Pilot implementation, breakfast participation increased from an average of 23% in March of 2003 to 58% in March of 2004. In raw numbers, this means that more than 5,000 students ate breakfast daily at schools operating the ABC Pilot – up from under 1,900 in the same schools the previous year.

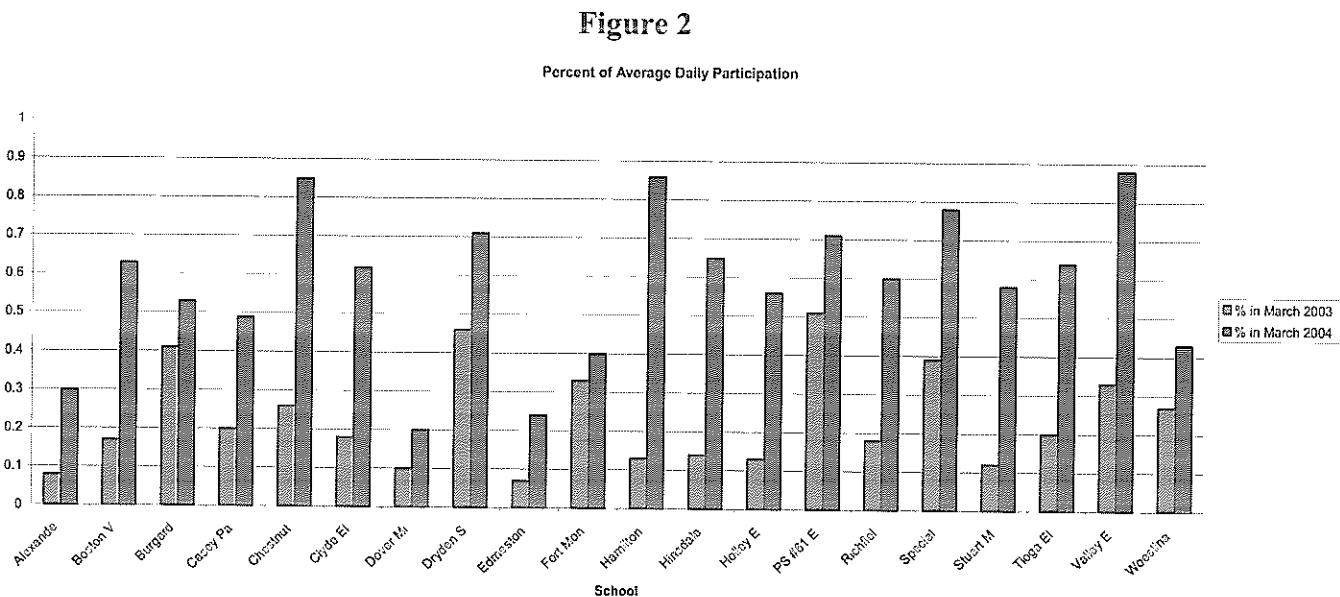


In addition, we note that participation almost doubled among the poorest students at the ABC Pilot schools (those from families certified as eligible for free or reduced-price school meals), with participation among these students increasing from 34% in March 2003 to 59% in 2004. This finding is remarkable since these are students that already qualified to receive free or reduced-price meals at schools before the ABC Pilot began, and this confirms results from other demonstrations that universal free and classroom breakfast programs together are effective ways to fight hunger as they get more food to children from the poorest families.

Another significant result of the ABC Pilot is that School Breakfast Program participation rates at Pilot schools approached and exceeded the statewide participation rate for the School Lunch Program. This is especially interesting because School Lunch Program participation traditionally exceeds breakfast program participation for many of the reasons mentioned earlier in this report – most students have lunch period as part of the official school day, more time is set aside for the lunch program, and stigma is less prevalent. During the 2003-04 school year, school lunch participation averaged 53% of students enrolled in public schools. That same year, participation in the breakfast program at ABC Pilot schools reached 58%.

Breakfast program participation increased in all twenty ABC Pilot schools.

Figure 2 below shows average daily breakfast program participation for each of the Pilot schools for the same index month (March) of the year before the Pilot (2002-03) and of the year of Pilot implementation (2003-04).

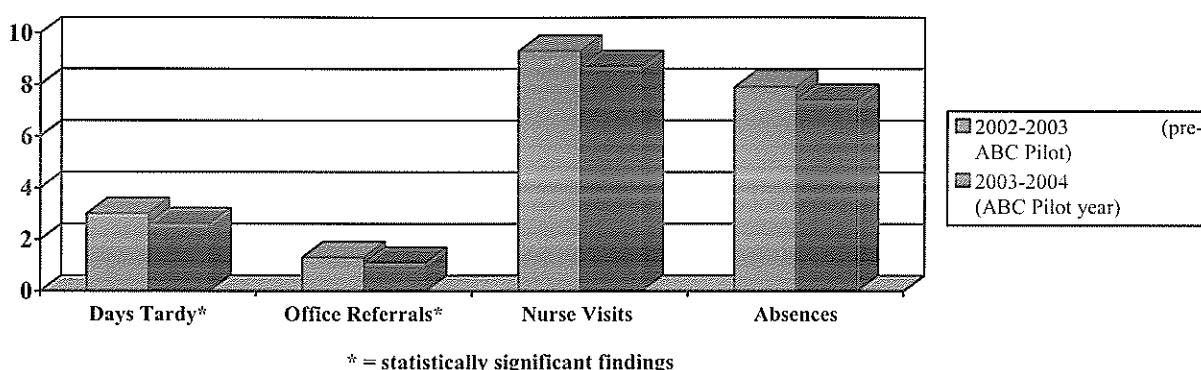


Any school can successfully implement a classroom breakfast program regardless of its socioeconomic characteristics. Additional analyses showed that participation increases were roughly the same for urban versus rural schools, high versus lower poverty schools, and elementary versus secondary schools. In all groups, participation was relatively low prior to Pilot implementation (around 20%) and doubled after the start of the Pilot.

B. Academic Performance Indicators

For the 2002-03 and 2003-04 school years, ABC Pilot schools provided the Nutrition Consortium with monthly totals of tardiness, disciplinary office referrals, absenteeism, and visits to the school nurse – all factors that contribute to a student’s ability to achieve their academic potential. This allowed for analysis of what happened to these outcomes prior to and during the ABC Pilot. For each school, data on each outcome variable were averaged across the ten months of school pre-ABC implementation and post-ABC implementation. Then, statisticians evaluating the ABC Pilot determined the statistical significance of each outcome.

Figure 3: Student outcomes for ABC Pilot
(per student/per year)



1) Tardiness

“Kids are in class on time, not marked tardy because they’re in the cafeteria.”
- Teacher, Edmeston Central

Figure 3 shows that the average number of days tardy per student decreased from 3.0 in the school year prior to ABC Pilot implementation to 2.6 during the Pilot school year. The Pilot evaluation team found this change to be statistically significant, indicating that this decrease in tardiness is not likely to have been due to chance. This finding is further supported by the fact that 63% of teachers surveyed attributed their students’ on-time arrivals to the classroom breakfast program.

2) Disciplinary Office Referrals

“There was an immediate change in rowdiness in the upper grades.”
Principal, Casey Park Elementary

Figure 3 also shows a statistically significant change in disciplinary referrals. Prior to ABC Pilot implementation, disciplinary office referrals at ABC Pilot schools averaged 1.3 referrals per student per year. This average fell to 1.1 during the ABC Pilot school year. Again, these findings were supported by reports from the schools: 75% of the Pilot school principals surveyed stated that the classroom breakfast program contributed to a decline in disciplinary office referrals.

Also, as mentioned earlier in this report, hungry children may exhibit behavior problems and it is difficult for these children to pay attention to lessons. Of the 265 teachers surveyed at ABC Pilot schools, 85% of teachers agreed that there were fewer complaints of hunger in the mornings since implementation of the Pilot. Furthermore, 75% of teachers reported that their students were better able to pay attention when they participated in the classroom breakfast program and 55% of teachers noted improvements in student classroom behavior since the Pilot began.

3) Absenteeism and Visits to the School Nurse

Absenteeism and visits to the school nurse also declined during the ABC Pilot school year. As Figure 3 shows, the average number of absences per student per year declined from 7.9 to 7.4, and nurse visits fell from 9.3 visits per student per year to 8.7. While neither of these outcomes reached statistical significance, these results do show a trend toward lower absenteeism rates and fewer nurses' office visits.

4) Principal and Teacher Assessments

As noted in Section II of this report, ABC Pilot schools operated their classroom breakfast programs in ways that best suited them. While principals did report some hesitance among various staff prior to starting classroom breakfast programs, a majority of principals reported great support for the program once it was up and running. Prior to implementing the ABC Pilot, 50% of principals found it difficult to generate support among janitorial staff and 37% expressed difficult in garnering support among teachers. By the end of the Pilot school year, 77% of principals agreed that there was great support among janitorial staff, and 73% found there to be great support among teachers.

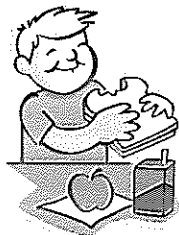
Perhaps more striking is the direct response of teachers to the ABC Pilot – almost 80% of teachers stated that they hoped their school would continue the classroom breakfast program in the next year. Also, while 58% of teachers surveyed stated that they had been hesitant about the ABC Pilot and the effect classroom breakfast would have on their teaching day, 76% reported that the program did not interfere with their ability to teach after all.

In terms of academic performance:

- 100% of ABC Pilot school principals and almost 80% of teachers stated they believed the Pilot made an important contribution to the education process
- 87% of principals believe that classroom breakfast contributed to an improvement in academic performance
- Teachers (nearly 80%) agreed that the Pilot made an important contribution to the education process
- 72% of teachers reported that the Pilot *did not* interfere with teaching
- Most teachers (85%) reported fewer complaints of hunger from students

Overall, principals expressed great satisfaction with the ABC Pilot. In fact, 75% of principals planned to continue classroom breakfast operations in the following school year.

V. Additional Analyses of Program Impact



The ABC Pilot evaluation team conducted several additional sets of analyses to further test the patterns found. Findings are summarized here briefly, but can be reviewed in greater detail in a separate technical report available through the Nutrition Consortium¹⁷. This technical report also contains more detail about the other analyses presented throughout this report.

Outcomes in Higher versus Lower Poverty Schools

The ABC Pilot evaluation team hypothesized that the impact of the Pilot would have been higher in schools with a higher concentration of low-income students. The ABC Pilot included ten higher poverty schools and ten lower poverty schools. Higher poverty schools are those with 40% or more of enrolled students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, and lower poverty schools are those with free/reduced-price eligibility rates of 39% or less. The results of this analysis showed:

- Higher poverty Pilot schools had significantly larger decreases in tardiness
- Higher poverty Pilot schools experienced a larger decrease in disciplinary office referrals (though not a statistically significant difference)
- In terms of the Pilot's impact on student education, student punctuality and hunger complaints, teachers from higher poverty Pilot schools rated the program's impact on students significantly more positively than teachers from lower poverty schools

Outcomes by Size of Participation Increase

The ABC Pilot evaluation team also hypothesized that the impact of the Pilot on student outcomes would be stronger in schools that experienced the largest increases in breakfast program participation. However, aside from teachers' assessments of the ABC Pilot and its effect on students (which were more positive), no statistical difference existed in the impact on student outcomes in schools with varying increases in breakfast program participation.

To conduct this assessment, the evaluation team categorized the Pilot schools as follows: large gain schools are those that increased breakfast program participation rates by at least 51%; medium gain schools experienced increases between 31% and 50%; and smaller gain schools increased participation by less than 31%.

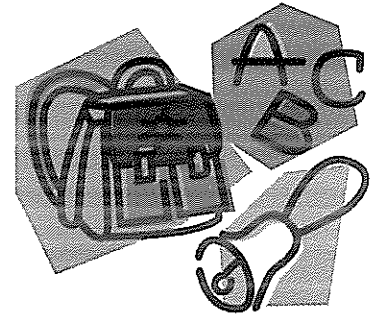
In the Pilot schools with the largest increases in participation, teachers rated the program's overall impact on students significantly more positively, including the Pilot's impact on the learning process, on student punctuality and on hunger complaints. Teachers in these schools were also significantly more likely to want the program to continue for another year, and significantly less likely to say that the program interested with their ability to teach.

VI. Conclusions

When asked what he would do if his school did not continue to offer classroom breakfast next year, one student replied:

“I would fall asleep in class like I used to.”

-Holley Elementary student



Classroom breakfast works! The ABC Pilot resulted in decreased hunger and improvements in factors critical to student learning, and teachers and principals alike took note of the important contribution classroom breakfast makes to the education process. Also, the Pilot yielded classroom breakfast models that any school can implement and reap the same benefits – primary or secondary schools in rural, suburban or urban areas, and schools with either high or low concentrations of students from low-income families.

The results of the ABC Pilot echo those of free classroom breakfast demonstration projects elsewhere in the nation. The fact that these findings are so very similar to those already reported in other demonstration projects throughout the United States provides further support for their validity and importance. Particularly striking is the doubling (and tripling) effect of free classroom breakfast on program participation. Large increases occur even among students from the poorest families who were already eligible for free and reduced-price meals prior to implementing the ABC Pilot. This emphasizes the point that serving breakfast in the classroom is a very effective way to increase breakfast eating among poor children – whom we know especially need the nutritional support.

VII. Recommendations

The ABC Pilot demonstrated that in New York State, as in other areas of the country, free classroom breakfast programs make a big difference. They are well-received by academic and food service staff, are effective in increasing the number and percentage of students who eat breakfast at school, and have a positive impact on objective indicators of student learning, behavior, and health.

Based on these findings, the Nutrition Consortium's overarching recommendation is for all New York State schools to establish classroom breakfast programs. To achieve this goal we recommend that New York State:

- Provide classroom breakfast start-up grants to school districts
- Strengthen the state's *School Breakfast Program Expansion Law* by requiring approval of a majority of the voting public before a school district can decline to operate a School Breakfast Program
- Strengthen the state's *School Breakfast Program Expansion Law* by requiring schools to set aside a minimum of 20 minutes for breakfast program operation
- Establish free breakfast programs at all schools with 50% of students eligible for free/reduced-price school meals
- Increase availability of free meals by making students eligible for free meals if household income falls below 185% of poverty. Currently, students qualify for free meals if household income falls below 130% of poverty. Students from households with incomes between 131% and 185% of poverty must pay a reduced-price for meals.

Endnotes

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Appendix A: Teacher Survey Results

Teacher Surveys of the ABC Pilot Program (total surveys received = 265)

	% Agree	% Disagree
1) When I heard that our school would be implementing a classroom breakfast program, I was hesitant about the program and concerned about the effect it would have on my teaching day.	58%	42%
2) I hope that our school continues to offer the classroom breakfast program next year.	79%	21%
3) Overall, the ABC Pilot has had a positive impact on my students.	85%	15%
4) Due to the classroom breakfast program, my students are in class on time for the start of lessons	63%	37%
5) The ABC Pilot interferes with my ability to teach.	24%	76%
6) I have seen improvements in student classroom behavior since implementation of the ABC Pilot.	55%	45%
7) My students that participate in the breakfast ABC Pilot are better able to pay attention to lessons throughout the morning.	75%	25%
8) There are fewer complaints of hunger in the mornings since implementation of the ABC Pilot.	85%	15%
9) I believe that the ABC Pilot makes an important contribution to the education process.	79%	21%

Appendix B: Principal Survey Results

Principal Surveys (17 ABC Pilot school principals returned surveys)

	% Agree	% Disagree
1) Prior to implementation of classroom breakfast, it was difficult to generate support among the following staff:		
a. Janitorial	50%	50%
b. Teaching	37%	63%
c. Cafeteria	13%	87%
2) Now that the program has been in operation throughout the school year, there is great support for classroom breakfast among the following staff:		
a. Janitorial	77%	23%
b. Teaching	73%	27%
c. Cafeteria	80%	20%
3) Overall, the ABC Pilot has had a positive impact on students.	94%	7%
4) I believe that the ABC Pilot makes an important contribution to the education process.	100%	0%
5) I believe that classroom breakfast has contributed to an improvement in academic performance.	87%	13%
6) I believe that classroom breakfast has contributed to a decline in disciplinary office referrals.	75%	25%
7) Will you continue to operate classroom breakfast next year?	75%	25%

Appendix C: School Selection Matrix

ABOUT THE NUTRITION CONSORTIUM OF NEW YORK STATE, INC.

The Nutrition Consortium of New York State, Inc., formed in 1985, is a statewide, private, nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing problems of hunger.

Hunger is a dreadful reality for many families in New York State: children are going to bed or starting their day without having eaten; working adults are going without food in order to pay the rent and heating bills; and the unemployed, the poor and near poor individuals and families are too often going hungry.

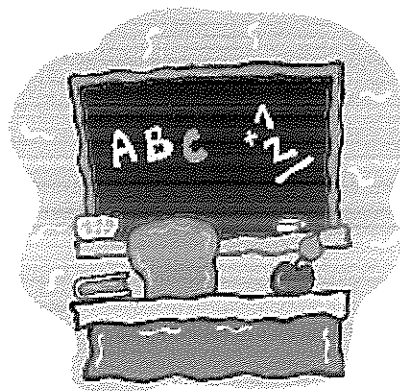
The Consortium believes that the crippling reality of hunger in New York State and the USA is unacceptable, and that it is reversible. We contend that a governmental response to hunger through state and federal nutrition assistance programs is the appropriate first line of attack in the fight to end hunger. Full use of these programs, made possible by adequate federal and state support in the form of funds, policies and actions will significantly reduce the incidence of hunger.

The mission of the Nutrition Consortium of New York State, Inc., is to alleviate hunger for poor and near poor residents of New York State, by expanding the availability of, access to, and use of governmental nutrition assistance programs, through outreach, education and advocacy. In pursuit of this mission, the Nutrition Consortium engages in the following activities:

- ◆ **Outreach** to low income populations regarding eligibility for nutrition assistance programs, and to provide enrollment information in order to maximize the number of New Yorkers who benefit from these programs.
- ◆ **Education** regarding nutrition assistance programs to the general public, eligible populations, policy makers, existing and potential program administrators and others through the use of meetings, media, promotional materials and additional documents, research and publications.
- ◆ **Program development and implementation** aimed at designing new programs or improving and coordinating existing governmental nutrition assistance programs, as well as working to establish needed programs throughout the state.
- ◆ **Policy work** with policy makers and administrators to ensure that an adequate and integrated response to hunger is in place, and to ensure that programs are operational consistent with their intent.
- ◆ **Coalition building** to unify varied interests and coordinate the dissemination of information regarding hunger policy and programs throughout the state.
- ◆ **Research** and the publication of findings to identify emerging problems and highlight the existence of hunger in NYS, and to offer recommendations to alleviate hunger through policies and programmatic responses.

Nutrition Consortium of NYS
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Albany, NY 12210
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Email: hungerNYS@aol.com

For more information about this report, or for additional copies, email HungerCHLN@aol.com or contact Child Nutrition Outreach Coordinator Casey Dinkin at (518) 436-8757 ext. 22



Final Report, July 2005. Funding for the Academics and Breakfast Connection Pilot was secured by the Nutrition Consortium of NYS from the Indirect Vitamins Purchasers Antitrust Litigation Settlement administered by the New York State Attorney General.

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathy Goldman

Address: _____

I represent: Food Bank of NYC

Address: 39 Broadway NYC 10006

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rima Cohen

Address: 253 Broadway, 14th Fl, NY 10007

I represent: Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs

Address: City Hall

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vincent Clark

Address: _____

I represent: DOE

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: David Berkowitz
Address: DOE

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Karen Alford
Address: Vice President Elementary
I represent: UFT
Address: 52 Broadway

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/20/08

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Casey Dinkin
Address: 14 Compiter Dr. E Albany, NY 12205
I represent: Nutrition Consortium of NYS
Address: same as above

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. School Buses Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Local 372/DC 37 (Santuz Craspu)

Address: _____

I represent: Local 372/DC 37

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/20/08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Madeline Levin

Address: _____

I represent: FRAC

Address: Washington, DC

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

Date: 11/20/08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristen Mancinelli

Address: 575 8th Ave 4th Fl, NY NY 10018

I represent: City Harvest

Address: (above)

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joel Berg

Address: 1 Plaza St Brooklyn

I represent: NYC Coalition Against Hunger

Address: 16 Beaver St, NY, NY

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀