

Breakfast After the Bell

Also known as Breakfast in the Classroom, this program provides all students with free breakfast, at their desks, during the first 10 – 15 minutes of the school day.

Please support legislation by Sen. Sal DiDomenico (SD. 1878) and Reps. Vargas and Varga (HD.3145)



Why It Works:

- ✓ Eliminates stigma by feeding all children, regardless of economic need.
- ✓ Reduces visits to the school nurse.¹
- ✓ Reduces rates of absences and tardiness.^{2 3 4}
- ✓ Improves test scores.^{5 6 7 8} (In one study, math scores of school breakfast eaters were reported to increase by 17.5 percent compared to children who did not eat school breakfast.⁹)
- ✓ Increases feelings of classroom community.

Health Benefits:

- ✓ Students attending schools that offer breakfast are more likely to consume a nutritionally substantive meal than students from schools with a traditional means-tested school breakfast in the cafeteria program.¹⁸
- ✓ Children who increase their school breakfast participation as a result of a school breakfast program show greater improvements in depression, anxiety, and hyperactivity than children whose participation remains unchanged or decreases.¹⁹
- ✓ Longitudinal data shows that when children participate in school breakfast they have better psychosocial functioning.²⁰ These changes are crucial in creating a school environment that promotes learning.
- ✓ Improves dietary intake^{10 11 12 13} and health outcomes, including lower body mass index.^{14 15}

Results in Springfield, MA:

Truancy rates and the portion of students chronically absent fell by 1.8 and 1.5 percentage points, respectively for 2015–16 compared to 2011–12.

In the same period, the combined number of school suspensions fell by 45 percent, and student arrests and bullying incidents fell 53 percent.¹⁶

Visits to the school nurse due to children feeling hungry fell 23 percent, from 2,047 in 2015 to 1,577 in 2017.

An additional average of \$1.2 million/year in federal reimbursement funds has been brought in.

“Breakfast After the Bell is helping us close the achievement gap. We were a Level 3 school, and now we’re a Level 1. It was the only intervention we made during the year to make this change. No new curriculum, and no more specialists. We just fed kids and that has made all the difference.”

—Ginger Coleman, principal at General John J. Stefanik School, Chicopee

Sources

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