

Executive Summary

This report examines the performance of school breakfast programs in 25 large urban school districts in the 2008-2009 school year, with the goal of monitoring their progress in increasing school breakfast participation among low-income students. This is FRAC's third annual report on school breakfast programs in large urban school districts.

Given the concentration of the population, it is somewhat easier to reach children with breakfast in large urban areas than elsewhere. This is borne out by the finding that 18 of the 25 districts performed above the national average in reaching low-income students with breakfast. But more than half failed to reach a majority of their low-income students with the important morning nourishment they need to succeed in school, and only one district exceeded FRAC's goal of reaching at least 70 low-income children with breakfast through the School Breakfast Program for every 100 low-income children who received lunch through the National School Lunch Program.

Key Findings:

- **The top three school districts – Newark, Columbus, and Boston - served breakfast to over 60 percent of the low-income students that received school lunch.** Only Newark achieved the goal of reaching at least 70 low-income children with breakfast for every 100 receiving lunch. If all 25 districts had reached this goal in the 2008-2009 school year, more than half a million additional children would have been eating a healthy school breakfast every day. Districts combined would have collected an additional \$136 million in federal child nutrition funding.
- **Seventeen of the 25 surveyed districts increased the percentage of low-income students eating breakfast each day from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009.** Most notably, San Diego Unified School District increased the proportion of low-income students eating breakfast each day from 38.4 eating breakfast for every 100 eating lunch, to 51.2:100, an increase of 12.8 points. Baltimore City Schools also increased considerably the proportion of low-income students eating breakfast each day, by 10.1 points.
- **The districts using breakfast in the classroom have the highest participation rates.** All top performing districts feature programs in which students receive breakfast at no charge and eat in the classroom at the beginning of the school day, and the two districts that increased their participation rates most dramatically – San Diego and Baltimore – did so by implementing large-scale classroom breakfast programs. In Newark, NJ, which has the highest participation rate, all K-8 schools serve breakfast in the classroom.
- **The key strategy that urban school districts across the nation should adopt to expand breakfast participation among low-income students remains the adoption of universal classroom breakfast programs, especially in schools with high percentages of low-income students.**
- **The upcoming Congressional Reauthorization of the child nutrition programs should include a grant program to support the start-up and expansion of universal and in-classroom school breakfast programs.** Schools with many low-income students need support to quickly implement large-scale classroom breakfast programs. A grant program would make a large impact with only a modest investment in each school. Funds would be used to purchase equipment and to pay for additional staff to provide temporary support for program implementation. These investments would result in many more children participating and increased federal funds for the schools to support the program.

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

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Introduction

Millions of families in the United States cannot afford to feed their children the healthy breakfasts they need to succeed in school. More than 49.1 million people lived in households struggling against hunger in 2008, a dramatic increase from 36.2 million in 2007 and 33.2 million in 2000. The recession contributed hugely to this rapid rise in 2008 in the number of Americans struggling against hunger, and it's likely that the number is even higher today. Many families are newly eligible for the school meal programs. The School Breakfast Program can be particularly responsive during this recession.

School breakfast provides a needed support to struggling families, but the numbers show that too many of their children are missing out. A school may not participate or may make participation difficult or uncomfortable for children. Parents may not know that their children qualify for school meal benefits, or they may be unaware of the program. Nationally, for every 100 low-income children who eat free and reduced-price lunch, only 46.7 low-income children eat free and reduced-price breakfast in school. Many of the children who do not eat breakfast start the educational day unable to concentrate and not ready to learn.

From every perspective – nutrition, health, education, productivity, restoring economic growth – cities should be doing much more to get children to breakfast and breakfast to children, and pull down federal dollars to do so. School breakfast improves children's diets, increases school achievement and positive student behavior, reduces obesity, and builds lifelong healthy eating habits. A full review of the positive effects of school breakfast can be found in FRAC's [School Breakfast Outreach Center](#).

This report focuses on large urban districts with many low-income students because they are in a unique position

Child Nutrition Reauthorization

The School Breakfast Program, along with all of the other child nutrition programs, will be reauthorized by Congress in 2010. Child Nutrition Reauthorization provides the opportunity to remove the barriers to participation and make program improvements so that more low-income children participate. The reauthorization should make the following improvements in the School Breakfast Program:

- create a grant program to support the start-up and expansion of universal and in-classroom school breakfast programs, especially in schools with high proportions of low-income children;
- expand universal breakfast programs (free for all students) by reducing or eliminating paper applications, and using alternative methods for determining eligibility, thereby reaching more children and reducing administrative costs for school districts that serve a high percentage of low-income children;
- raise the income eligibility cut-off for free meals to 185 percent of poverty and eliminate the reduced-price copayment for near-poor families; and
- provide USDA commodities to schools for breakfast meals.

For more background materials on Child Nutrition Reauthorization, visit FRAC's Legislative Action Center at www.frac.org/Legislative/action_center/index.html.

to benefit from economies of scale to increase breakfast participation. And the concentration of poverty in many cities means that these districts have a very important mission to ensure that children have access to adequate nutrition in order to learn, grow, and thrive. This report describes the gaps in many cities' current efforts, and the strategies they should be using to reach more children.

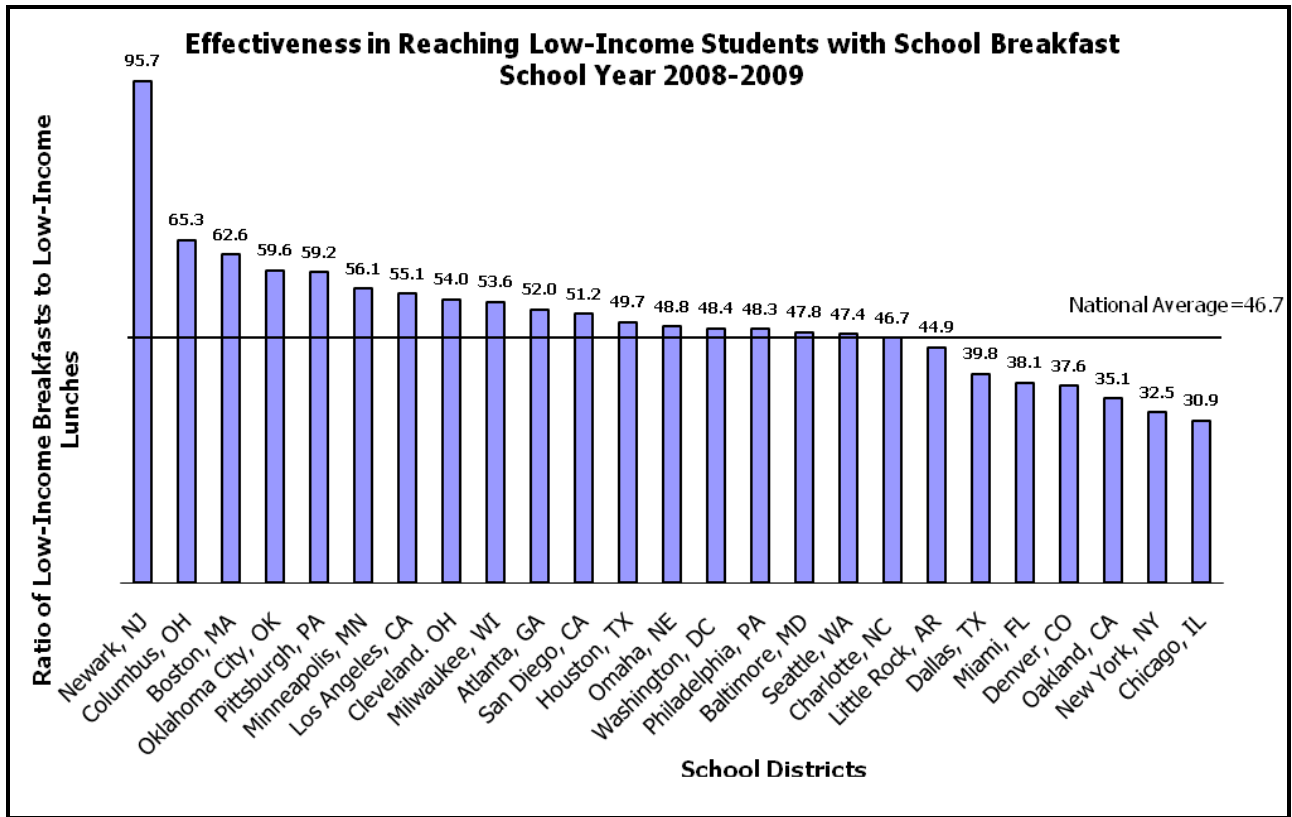
Survey Findings

FRAC gathered information for this report through a survey sent to 35 large school districts representing a broad geographic distribution around the U.S. Twenty-five districts completed the survey. More information about the survey and methodology can be found in the Appendix.

Enrollment and Student Eligibility Rates

Districts that participated in this study ranged in size from 26,000 to more than 1 million students during the 2008-2009 school year. Table I in the Appendix lists the participating districts, from the largest to the smallest enrollment as reported by the districts. 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. These figures provide a snapshot of the relative level of poverty and nutritional need, by which then to measure breakfast participation. Table II in the Appendix shows the 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 41.8 percent combined free and reduced-price eligible in Seattle, Washington to a high of 85.9 percent in Dallas, Texas.



Breakfast Participation

For this report, FRAC then 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 school year by the number of serving days, as reported in the survey by each district. Table III in the Appendix provides data for each district on the average daily number of low-income children participating in free or reduced-price breakfast in each district, and whether the number of reported participants increased or decreased from the prior year. Most districts increased their daily participation in the 2008-2009 school year. Five districts had fewer daily participants than in the previous year. While these numbers reflect in part decreases in overall enrollment, it is notable that many districts with falling overall enrollment were able to significantly increase breakfast participation. They included Chicago, Cleveland, Newark and Oklahoma City.

Effectiveness in Reaching Low-Income Students with School Breakfast

FRAC uses free and reduced-price participation in the school lunch program as a benchmark against which to measure low-income student participation in 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 and should be benefiting from school breakfast each day. (Table IV in the Appendix provides data for each district on the average daily number of low-income children

participating in free or reduced-price lunch in each district, and whether the number of reported participants increased or decreased from the prior year.) Nationally, for every 100 low-income children who ate free and reduced-price lunch, 46.7 low-income children ate free and reduced-price breakfast in school year 2008-2009. In the best performing states, the ratio is above 60:100.

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 larger federal reimbursements for the meals served. Most importantly, the concentrations of poor children in these urban areas present districts with the imperative to ensure that children have access to adequate nutrition in order to learn, grow, and thrive.

Only one district – Newark, NJ – met or exceeded the FRAC goal of 70 percent low-income student breakfast participation. Eleven of the 25 urban districts in this study served breakfast to more than half of their low-income students that received lunch each day. Seven districts met or exceeded the national average (46.7) but served fewer than half of their low-income students that ate lunch. Seven districts were below the national average. And ten were below even their state average for low-income student participation.

Table 1 ranks the districts in the report based on their ratio of low-income students eating school breakfast compared to lunch. Seventeen districts increased the percentage of low-income students eating school breakfast, while seven decreased and one remained unchanged. The largest gain was achieved by San Diego Unified School District, which increased the proportion of low-income students eating breakfast each day from 38.4 eating breakfast for every 100

eating lunch, to 51.2:100, an increase of 12.8 points. Baltimore City Schools also increased considerably the proportion of low-income students eating breakfast each day by 10.1 points. Both programs achieved these impressive gains through classroom breakfast programs, which are described later in this report. Pittsburgh achieved impressive growth in participation through the successful promotion of district-wide universal breakfast. (See text box on page 9.)

Table 1: Effectiveness in Reaching Low-Income Students with School Breakfast Comparison of School Year 2008-2009 and 2007-2008

School District	F & RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP SY2008-2009	Rank	F & RP Students in SBP per 100 in NSLP SY2007-2008	Rank
Newark Public Schools	95.7	1	89.8	1
Columbus City Schools	65.3	2	68.7	2
Boston Public Schools	62.6	3	67.9	3
Oklahoma City Public Schools	59.6	4	57.0	5
Pittsburgh Public Schools	59.2	5	54.0	7
Minneapolis Public Schools	56.1	6	55.6	6
Los Angeles Unified School District	55.1	7	54.2	4
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	54.0	8	52.8	8
Milwaukee Public Schools	53.6	9	52.4	9
Atlanta Public Schools	52.0	10	51.2	10
San Diego Unified School District	51.2	11	38.4	21
Houston Independent School District	49.7	12	49.6	12
Omaha Public Schools	48.8	13	48.4	13
D.C. Public Schools	48.4	14	51.1	11
Philadelphia School District	48.3	15	45.5	16
Baltimore City Schools	47.8	16	37.7	22
Seattle School District	47.4	17	47.2	14
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	46.7	18	46.7	15
Little Rock School District	44.9	19	44.2	17
Dallas Independent School District	39.8	20	39.9	19
Miami-Dade County Schools	38.1	21	40.8	18
Denver Public Schools	37.6	22	38.5	20
Oakland Unified School District	35.1	23	36.6	23
City of New York	32.5	24	31.4	24
Chicago Public Schools	30.9	25	28.9	25

KEY
Increase = 17 Districts
Decrease = 7 Districts
No Change = 1 District

Reaching 70 out of 100: The Nutritional and Financial Benefits

Each school day in 2008-2009, schools lost \$1.40 in federal nutrition funding for every child who would have received a free breakfast, and \$1.10 for every child who would have received a reduced-price breakfast, but was not served. An additional \$0.28 per child per meal was forfeited if those low-income 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.

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 participation, most fell short of their full potential. All of the districts in this report have schools with high concentrations of poverty where they can implement universal breakfast and breakfast in the classroom to reach more children. The

increased participation and resulting federal reimbursements, coupled with reduced administrative costs, help districts break even.

If each district in this survey had provided at least 70 low-income children with breakfast for every 100 low-income children that received lunch in the 2008-2009 school year, an additional 562,342 students would have eaten a healthy school breakfast every day, and districts would have received an additional \$136.4 million in child nutrition funding.

Table 2 provides these data for each district in the report, arranged from the highest to the lowest participation ratio. Most of the lost revenue and unserved low-income students are clustered in the largest districts, with over one third in New York City alone. New York City would have collected over \$47.6 million in additional federal funds, and served an additional 191,484 low-income students, if it met the 70:100 ratio.

Table 2: 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 100 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
Newark Public Schools	95.7	*	*
Columbus City Schools	65.3	1,449	\$341,576
Boston Public Schools	62.6	2,269	\$563,956
Oklahoma City Public Schools	59.6	2,556	\$609,720
Pittsburgh Public Schools	59.2	1,846	\$461,395
Minneapolis Public Schools	56.1	2,260	\$530,907
Los Angeles Unified School District	55.1	50,786	\$12,551,942
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	54.0	4,515	\$1,100,177
Milwaukee Public Schools	53.6	7,648	\$1,838,883
Atlanta Public Schools	52.0	5,201	\$1,302,550
San Diego Unified School District	51.2	10,599	\$2,578,697
Houston Independent School District	49.7	23,427	\$5,393,827
Omaha Public Schools	48.8	5,504	\$1,251,001
D.C. Public Schools	48.4	4,218	\$1,040,882
Philadelphia School District	48.3	19,237	\$4,772,487
Baltimore City Schools	47.8	9,272	\$2,054,196
Seattle School District	47.4	2,911	\$693,208
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	46.7	12,692	\$3,130,063
Little Rock School District	44.9	2,948	\$724,408
Dallas Independent School District	39.8	32,994	\$7,985,621
Miami-Dade County Schools	38.1	49,344	\$11,927,946
Denver Public Schools	37.6	11,296	\$2,585,195
Oakland Unified School District	35.1	5,964	\$1,482,800
City of New York	32.5	191,484	\$47,666,736
Chicago Public Schools	30.9	101,922	\$23,799,229
TOTAL		562,342	\$136,387,403

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

Providing Universal Breakfast and Breakfast in the Classroom

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 (usually called "universal"), and the implementation of programs where breakfast is consumed in the classroom at the beginning of the school day.

"Universal" Breakfast

Programs that offer meals at no charge to all students, regardless of income, often are called "universal." The traditional means-tested school breakfast served in the cafeteria before school (in which the meal is free or the child pays, depending on family income) creates a sense among the children that the program is just "for poor kids." (This is less true for lunch, at least through middle school, because typically all children go into the cafeteria for lunch.)

Universal breakfast reduces the stigma, making school breakfast more attractive to children who need it, including particularly low-income children, and providing 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 implement programs such as breakfast in the classroom at the start of the school day, or offering "grab and go" carts in hallways.

Of the 25 large urban school districts surveyed in this report, only three – Atlanta, Dallas and Little Rock – do not provide free breakfast to all students, regardless of income, at many or all of their schools. Notably, these districts failed even to achieve the average for low-income student breakfast participation in their states.

Provision 2

Of the 22 districts that provide free breakfast to all or many of their students, half use "Provision 2" of the National School Lunch Act as a structure. 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 that are served in each category (free, reduced-price 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., fewer applications to process) associated with Provision 2 help offset all or much of the cost differential.

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 in containers, 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. Depending on the school's rules, 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 eat in the classroom or cafeteria. Computerized systems ensure that children receive only one breakfast each day.

Breakfast in the Classroom

Twenty-one of the 25 districts in this study had some type of classroom breakfast program – where breakfast is served after the school day begins – in at least some of their schools during the 2008-2009 school year. Districts used a variety of methods, including "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. Allowing students to eat in the classroom dramatically increases participation by making it convenient and accessible to all. It helps families who find that early morning schedules make it difficult to fit in breakfast – either at home or before school starts in the cafeteria – due to long commutes and nontraditional work hours. Also, it eliminates the problem caused by tight school bus schedules or school security lines when students don't always arrive at school in time for breakfast before the first bell rings.

As demonstrated here, many large districts serving a high percentage of low-income children are finding that they can afford to offer universal in-classroom breakfast. The pace at which districts are able to implement these programs depends on several factors: administrative support, financial resources for start-up expenses, and buy-in from the school community (principals, teachers, janitors and other school support personnel). Baltimore and San Diego, the districts that were able to expand their classroom breakfast programs most quickly, both benefited from strong administrative support within their district. San Diego was able to expand its program

rapidly in part due to grant funds for start-up costs received from the [State of California](#).

Table 3 summarizes results from the cities FRAC surveyed on universal (free for all) and in-classroom programs (including all the alternative service methods described above). Twenty-

one of the 25 school districts have at least some schools that are serving breakfast after the school day begins, usually providing it during the first ten minutes of class time. Newark Public Schools reaches the largest percentage of low-income students by requiring classroom breakfast in all K-8 schools.

Table 3: Universal Breakfast and Breakfast in the Classroom*

School Districts	Universal Breakfast	Provision 2	Breakfast In the Classroom*	Ratio of low-income students eating breakfast compared to lunch
Newark Public Schools	All	Yes	Most	95.7
Columbus Public Schools	All	No	Some	65.3
Boston Public Schools	Partial	Yes	Some	62.6
Oklahoma City Public Schools	All	No	Some	59.6
Pittsburgh Public Schools	All	Yes	Some	59.2
Minneapolis School District	All	No	Most	56.1
Los Angeles Unified School District	Partial	Yes	Some	55.1
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	All	Yes	None	54.0
Milwaukee Public Schools	Partial	No	Most	53.6
Atlanta Public Schools	None	No	Some	52.0
San Diego Unified School District	Partial	Yes	Some	51.2
Houston Independent School District	All	No	Some	49.7
Omaha Public Schools	All	Yes	None	48.8
Philadelphia School District	All	No	Some	48.3
District of Columbia Public Schools	All	Yes	Some	48.4
Baltimore City Public Schools	All	No	Some	47.8
Seattle Public Schools	Partial	No	Some	47.4
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Partial	No	Some	46.7
Little Rock Public Schools	None	No	None	44.9
Dallas Independent School District	None	No	Some	39.8
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	All	No	None	38.1
Denver Public Schools	All	Yes	Some	37.6
Oakland Unified School District	Partial	Yes	Some	35.1
New York City Department of Education	All	Yes	Some	32.5
Chicago Public Schools	Partial	No	Some	30.9

* In this chart "breakfast in the classroom" also includes "grab and go" and breakfast after first period.

Case Studies: Baltimore and San Diego Breakfast in the Classroom

Baltimore City Schools

With the arrival of Anthony Geraci as the district's Food and Nutrition Director in 2007, Baltimore City students started noticing big changes – especially in the breakfast program. Starting in the 2007-2008 school year, the district organized several media events that highlighted breakfast in the schools and began offering universal breakfast (free to all children) to reach more children. But participation did not increase as significantly as planned, so at the start of the 2008-2009 school year, the district was eager to take additional steps to improve participation. As a result, Baltimore Schools' Food and Nutrition Department introduced a new grab and go breakfast model, utilizing pre-packaged breakfast boxes, and conducted intense marketing to help boost the participation rate. To ensure success of the program, the district obtained widespread support from school principals and food service staff for the changes in breakfast delivery models to include "grab and go" and in-classroom breakfast.

As a result of implementing widespread grab and go and in-classroom breakfast models, Baltimore City increased its average daily school breakfast participation by low-income students in school breakfast by more than 4,500 students, an increase of 29.5 percent. The ratio of low-income students eating breakfast compared to those eating lunch increased from only 37.7 students in the 2007-2008 school year to 47.8 in the 2008-2009 school year.

There currently are 20 schools serving breakfast in the classroom and more than 100 schools doing some form of "grab and go" breakfast. While the Food and Nutrition Department continues to reach out to additional schools to implement these models, Geraci emphasizes that principal-to-principal outreach is instrumental. He encourages principals who have seen success with new breakfast delivery models to call their colleagues and share the

positive results, including decreased tardiness and a calmer school atmosphere. To get teachers on board with breakfast in the classroom, Baltimore City Public Schools provides free breakfasts to teachers and encourages them to eat with their students. Baltimore City hopes that its breakfast participation trends continue to improve and plans to use new marketing strategies in the 2009-2010 school year. (Adapted from [Breakfast in Maryland's Counties](#), December 2009 by Maryland Hunger Solutions)

San Diego Unified School District

In 44 elementary schools in the San Diego Unified School District, the school day starts with breakfast in the classroom. Available only at Provision 2 schools where 80 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, breakfast in the classroom started in San Diego Unified during the 2006-2007 school year. Joanne Tucker, Food Services Marketing Coordinator, explains how the program grew: "We had already implemented in 11 schools with plans (and funding from grants) for nine more. But when the superintendent came on board and recommended that all Provision 2 schools have the program, the implementation rate was stepped up considerably. Many principals contacted us first – they saw the advantages right away." Provision 2 schools provide meals at no charge to all of their students, while reducing paperwork and administrative costs.

Principal Leah Tussey of Kimbrough Elementary School said that before breakfast in the classroom, fewer than 15 percent of her students were taking advantage of free breakfast in the cafeteria. "Students weren't having breakfast, weren't ready to learn and there was a high number of visits to the school nurse. It was enough of a problem that it was impacting learning." Now, students are on time and eating, and they enjoy being monitors to pick up, serve and clean up for breakfast.

Positive Press in Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh achieved an impressive 17.5 percent increase in low-income student participation when it implemented universal breakfast in the 2008-2009 school year. Michael Peck, Food Services Director, said several factors contributed to their success: the level of need among the students, an improved menu, effective outreach materials, and excellent media coverage of the program, including a positive editorial in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

School administrators' support also has been very important: they have changed bus schedules to ensure students can take advantage of the program, organized activities at breakfast to encourage participation, and offered a "last chance" breakfast for children who arrive at school late.

Peck reports that the whole school community has gotten behind school breakfast as a way to support the Pittsburgh Promise program, which gives scholarships for college tuition to qualified graduating high school seniors from Pittsburgh Public Schools starting with the 2008 graduating class.

The program was carefully planned, piloted and implemented so that it could be put into place smoothly in a large number of schools in the 2008-2009 school year. The district developed training materials for teachers, including a power point presentation, a [video](#) and even “job

descriptions” for the student tasks (including the “Breakfast Sheriff”.) The program benefited from three grants totaling approximately \$287,000 from the [California Department of Education](#) to cover non-recurring start-up costs for equipment, staff training and outreach.

Conclusion

When children eat breakfast at school, it reduces hunger, improves nutrition and health, and increases students’ achievement. In addition, the School Breakfast Program can help mitigate the serious negative effects on families of the recession, because participation can grow when the economy is weak and more children need help. But with less than half of eligible low-income children taking advantage of the program and substantial numbers of new children becoming eligible, it is essential to expand participation.

The provision of universal in-classroom breakfast is the most effective strategy to expand breakfast participation among low-income students. As more schools experience the positive outcomes of increased breakfast participation – higher attendance, lower absenteeism, reduced behavior problems, fewer visits to the school nurse, and higher student achievement – universal in-classroom breakfast programs continue to spread. But much more must be done to reduce barriers to implementing these effective practices to meet the increased need.

While many districts are taking steps to implement these strategies, many more would be able to expand their programs, and do so more quickly, with additional financial support for start-up costs. Most states do not have the financial resources to allow for allocations for this purpose. Congress can accelerate low-income student participation by creating a grant program in the 2010 Child Nutrition Reauthorization. A grant program would make a large impact with only a modest investment in each

School Breakfast: Helping Achieve the 2015 Goal

Increasing participation in the School Breakfast Program will help achieve President Barack Obama’s goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015. School breakfast is a prime example of the potential of the nutrition programs to boost nutrition, health, learning and economic security in both the short and long term at the same time that hunger is being reduced. As Agriculture Secretary Vilsack testified to Congress on November 17, 2009, “For many children in our programs, School Lunch and Breakfast represents the only healthy food that they eat all day. We must work to ensure access to nutrition assistance for children, when and where they need it, particularly during the ‘gap periods,’ when we know children struggle to receive the nutrition they need- summer months, during breakfast, and in after-school environments.”

Increasing participation in the child nutrition programs, including school breakfast, is one of FRAC’s seven strategies to reach the President’s goal. To learn more, visit www.endingchildhunger2015.org

school. Funds would be used to purchase equipment and to pay for additional staff to provide temporary support for program implementation. These investments would result in greater participation by low-income children and increased federal funds for the schools to support the program.

Appendices

The Survey

In the summer of 2009 FRAC sent a survey regarding school breakfast participation and practices to 35 large urban school districts. 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 25 districts responded between August and November 2009 with data on the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years, as well as answers to questions about current school breakfast practices.

The major goals of the survey were to:

- 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 who 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;
- monitor progress and examine the effectiveness of school districts' efforts to increase school breakfast participation through the provision of "universal breakfast" (breakfast offered at no charge to all students), and the implementation of programs where breakfast is eaten in the classroom at the beginning of the school day; and
- collect information on promising practices in the districts, which might serve as national models for increasing school breakfast participation by low-income students.

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 are 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 served breakfast for more or fewer days during the 2008-2009 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 would be reimbursed at the higher rate that "severe need" schools receive.

Table I: Total Student Enrollment

School District	SY 08-09 Total Enrollment	Change in Enrollment from SY 07-08 to SY 08-09
New York City Department of Education, NY	1,076,000	increase
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	668,432	increase
Chicago Public Schools, IL	391,016	decrease
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	336,080	decrease
Houston Independent School District, TX	201,000	increase
Philadelphia School District, PA	171,033	decrease
Dallas Independent School District, TX	155,670	decrease
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	136,721	increase
San Diego Unified School District, CA	135,792	increase
Milwaukee Public Schools, WI	85,722	decrease
Baltimore City Schools, MD	82,266	increase
Denver Public Schools, CO	75,857	increase
Boston Public Schools, MA	56,206	decrease
Columbus Public Schools, OH	53,200	decrease
Cleveland Metropolitan School District, OH	50,000	decrease
Atlanta Public Schools, GA	49,300	no change
Omaha Public Schools, NE	48,075	increase
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC	44,971	decrease
Seattle Public Schools, WA	44,876	increase
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	40,048	decrease
Newark Public Schools, NJ	39,563	decrease
Oakland Unified School District, CA	37,645	decrease
Minneapolis School District, MN	32,658	decrease
Pittsburgh Public Schools, PA	27,580	decrease
Little Rock School District, AK	26,146	decrease

Table II: 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
Dallas Independent School District, TX	78.5	7.4	85.9
Chicago Public Schools, IL	75.6	8.4	84.0
Newark Public Schools, NJ	72.1	10.5	82.6
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	74.1	5.9	80.0
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	70.9	6.5	77.4
Philadelphia School District, PA	68.9	7.8	76.7
Houston Independent School District, TX	67.1	9.2	76.3
Atlanta Public Schools, GA	71.3	4.6	75.9
Milwaukee Public Schools, WI	66.9	9.0	75.9
Cleveland Metropolitan School District, OH	69.8	5.7	75.5
Columbus City Schools, OH	69.0	6.0	75.0
Boston Public Schools, MA	67.0	8.0	75.0
Baltimore City Schools, MD	65.7	8.9	74.6
Pittsburgh Public Schools, PA	64.1	6.1	70.2
District of Columbia Public Schools, DC	62.4	7.3	69.7
Oakland Unified School District, CA	59.0	8.4	67.4
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	55.8	10.9	66.7
Little Rock School District, AK	57.0	8.0	65.0
Denver Public Schools, CO	56.7	7.8	64.5
Minneapolis School District, MN	60.0	4.0	64.0
Omaha Public Schools, NE	51.5	10.8	62.3
New York City Department of Education, NY	54.0	6.8	60.8
San Diego Unified School District, CA	44.2	13.1	57.3
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	41.0	7.7	48.7
Seattle Public Schools, WA	32.9	8.9	41.8

Table III: School Breakfast Average Daily Participation (ADP)

School District	Breakfast ADP for Low- Income Students (Free and Reduced-Price) in SY 08-09	Change in Breakfast ADP for Low-Income Students from SY 07-08 to SY 08-09*
Little Rock School District	5,266	-0.7%
Oakland Unified School District	5,991	-4.2%
Seattle School District	6,120	+2.3%
Minneapolis Public Schools	9,130	+3.5%
DC Public Schools	9,479	-8.4%
Pittsburgh Public Schools	10,125	+17.5%
Omaha Public Schools	12,681	+4.4%
Denver Public Schools	13,090	+7.5%
Oklahoma City Public Schools	14,648	+13.6%
Atlanta Public Schools	15,075	+1.5%
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	15,275	+11.2%
Boston Public Schools	19,250	-4.1%
Baltimore City Public Schools	19,982	+29.5%
Columbus City Schools	20,159	+6.9%
Newark Public Schools	21,678	+12.1%
Milwaukee Public Schools	24,900	+3.0%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	25,386	+6.5%
San Diego Unified School District	28,894	+40.3%
Philadelphia School District	42,906	+2.6%
Dallas Independent School District	43,493	+2.4%
Houston Independent School District	57,167	+1.4%
Miami-Dade County Schools	58,888	-2.8%
Chicago Public Schools	80,444	+7.4%
City of New York Schools	166,209	+1.6%
Los Angeles Unified School District	188,168	+1.7%

*Negative numbers in bold

Table IV: School Lunch Average Daily Participation (ADP)

School District	Lunch ADP for Low-Income Students (Free and Reduced-Price) in SY 08-09	Change in Lunch ADP for Low-Income Students from SY 07-08 to SY 08-09*
Little Rock School District	11,733	-2.2%
Seattle School District	12,902	+1.8%
Minneapolis Public Schools	16,271	0.0%
Oakland Unified SD	17,079	-0.2%
Pittsburgh Public Schools	17,101	+7.1%
DC Public Schools	19,567	-0.3%
Newark Public Schools	22,648	+5.2%
Oklahoma City Public Schools	24,577	+8.7%
Omaha Public Schools	25,979	+3.6%
Cleveland Metropolitan SD	28,272	+8.7%
Atlanta Public Schools	28,966	0.0%
Boston Public Schools	30,741	+4.0%
Columbus City Schools	30,868	+12.4%
Denver Public Schools	34,837	+10.0%
Baltimore City Schools	41,792	+2.2%
Milwaukee Public Schools	46,498	+0.7%
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	54,398	+6.6%
San Diego Unified SD	56,418	+5.2%
Philadelphia School District	88,775	-3.4%
Dallas Independent SD	109,268	+2.5%
Houston Independent SD	115,134	+1.3%
Miami-Dade County Schools	154,618	+4.2%
Chicago Public Schools	260,522	+0.5%
Los Angeles Unified SD	341,363	+6.9%
City of New York	510,989	-1.8%

*Negative numbers in bold

School District Contacts

School District	Name	Title	Phone	E-mail Address
Atlanta Public Schools, GA	Marilyn Hughes	Director of Nutrition Administration	404-802-1599	mhhughes@atlanta.k12.ga.us
Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	Anthony Geraci	Director	410-396-8755	ageraci@bcps.k12.md.us
Boston Public Schools, MA	Helen Mont-Ferguson	Director	617-635-9143	hmontfer@boston.k12.ma.us
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC	Cindy Hobbs	Executive Director	980-343-6041	c.hobbs@cms.k12.nc.us
Chicago Public Schools, IL	Louise Esaian	Director of Logistics	773-553-2833	lesaian@cps.k12.il.us
Cleveland Metropolitan School District, OH	Regis Balaban	Executive Director	216-574-8305	Regis.balaban@cmsdnet.net
Columbus City Schools, OH	Barbara Overholser	Accountant	614-890-5499	boverhol@columbus.k12.oh.us
Dallas Independent School District, TX	Dora Rivas	Executive Director	214-932-5503	drivas@dallasisd.org
Denver Public Schools, CO	Leo Lesh	Executive Director	720-423-5609	leo_lesh@dpsk12.org
District of Columbia Public Schools	Robert Kelly	Marketing Manager, Chartwells	202-576-7400	Robert.kelly@compass-usa.com
Houston Independent School District, TX	Ritchie Pickett	Director of Operations	713- 491-5700	Rpicket1@houstonisd.org
Little Rock School District, AR	Lilly Bouie	Director of Nutrition	501-447-2452	Lilly.bouie@lrsd.org
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA	Laura Benavidez	Deputy Director, Food Services	213-241-2993	Laura.benavidez@lausd.net
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL	Susan Rothstein	Coordinator, Nutritional Wellness	786-275-0438	srothstein@dadeschools.net
Milwaukee Public Schools, WI	Kymm S. Mutch	Administrator	414-475-8362	mutcks@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Minneapolis School District, MN	Rosemary Dederichs	Director, Nutrition Services	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	Robert Deschak	Strategic Initiatives, SchoolFood	718- 707-4334	rdeschak@schools.nyc.gov
Oakland Unified School District, CA	Jennifer LeBarre	Director	510-879-8345	Jennifer.lebarre@ousd.k12.ca.us
Oklahoma City Public Schools, OK	Steve Gallagher	Food Service Director	405- 587-1020	stgallagher@okcps.org
Omaha Public Schools, NE	Tammy Yarmon	Director	402-557-2230	Tammy.Yarmon@ops.org
Pittsburgh Public Schools, PA	Michael Peck	Director	412-488-3302	Mpeck2@pghboe.net
Philadelphia School District, PA	Wayne Grasela	Director	215-400-5531	wgrasela@philasd.org
San Diego Unified School District, CA	Gary Petill	Director	858-627-7301	gpetill@sandi.net
Seattle Public Schools, WA	Anita Finch	Director	206-252-0685	ajfinch@seattleschools.org