

HOW TO START A

Breakfast After the Bell Program

Step 1: Meet with district leadership to discuss why you want to implement this program. If your state recently passed legislation, discuss the details of the policy, including the requirements and timeline for implementation.

Step 2: Host a meeting with school staff to discuss breakfast after the bell and start initial conversations about what model would work best for their school.

During this meeting, discuss why you (and hopefully the district) want to implement this best practice. Discuss the benefits of breakfast in the classroom (BIC) and your vision for the program; the different models available; and what they think will be most successful in the school. Make sure to listen to their thoughts and concerns. If you do not know the answer, say you will follow up, and then do it. Ensure all stakeholders are included: custodians, school support staff, teachers, and the principal.

Resources to help you plan for your stakeholder meetings:

- [School Nutrition Foundation's Developing Stakeholder Support for Breakfast in the Classroom video](#)
- [National Association of Secondary School Principals and FRAC's Secondary School Principals' Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit](#) (this includes a PowerPoint that can be customized for a meeting with school staff)
- [The NEA Foundation's School Breakfast Toolkit](#) (highlights potential questions educators might ask)

- [American Federation of Teachers and FRAC's Breakfast Blueprint](#) (also shares useful information about what educators may be curious about regarding a new breakfast program)

Breakfast After the Bell Service Options:

1. Breakfast in the Classroom (breakfast directly delivered to the classroom)
2. "Grab and go" (breakfasts are served in bags to be picked up from the cafeteria or kiosks in the hallway on the way to class)
3. Second chance breakfast (after first period and often combined with a "grab and go" model, and is extremely popular in secondary schools)

Resources to share with stakeholders as you consider a model:

- [FRAC's How It Works: Making Breakfast Part of the School Day](#) (fact sheet)
- [School Nutrition Foundation's Choosing Delivery and Distribution Models for Breakfast in the Classroom video](#)

Step 3: Set up the district for financial success.

Typically, districts see an improvement in their school nutrition finances when implementing breakfast after the bell programs due to increased participation and economies of scale. Does your state legislation require you to offer meals for free? If not, you should still consider offering breakfast for free. Doing so eliminates two main barriers to breakfast — stigma associated with the program, and cost — and this helps to increase participation even more.

There are three different methods to [serve breakfast for free to all students](#).

Community Eligibility Provision: Under community eligibility, high-poverty schools offer free breakfast and lunch to all students. Schools no longer collect and process school meal applications. Schools do not need to track meals served by fee category, but only need to count the number of meals served each day. This results in significant administrative savings, streamlined service, and increased participation. For more information on community eligibility, go to [FRAC's community eligibility webpage](#). Questions? FRAC is happy to help you at any point in the process.

Provision 2: Schools using Provision 2 (referring to a provision of the National School Lunch Act) can offer all students free breakfast, free breakfast and lunch, or free lunch. Schools collect school meal applications and count and claim meals by fee category during year one of the four-year cycle, called the “base year.” Participation in the base year determines the percent of meals reimbursed at the free, reduced-price, and paid rate for future years in the cycle. Provision 2 schools use economies of scale from increased participation and administrative savings to offset the cost of offering free meals to all students.

Nonpricing: No fees are collected from students, while schools continue to receive federal reimbursements for the breakfasts served under the three-tier federal fee categories (free, reduced-price, and paid). Typically, districts with more than 70 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced-price meals can make a profit or break even serving all breakfasts for free. Many schools with an even lower rate of free and reduced-price certified students determine that they can break even with the increase in participation at all

levels, after crunching the numbers. Additionally, many school districts have decided to offer free breakfasts to all students and make up the difference, given the huge impact breakfast can have on students' health and academic achievement. It is important to note that nonpricing is only an option for offering free breakfast to all students, and it cannot be used to offer free lunch to all students.

Financial Calculation Tools:

- [Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom Calculator](#) (see Tab 6, Participation Projections)
- [Arizona Breakfast in the Classroom Toolkit](#) (created by the Arizona Department of Education and Health Services, Dairy Council of Arizona and Valley of the Sun United Way; see Appendix A)

Step 4: Develop your implementation plan.

Work with stakeholders in your district to create a comprehensive implementation plan. Flesh out all the program details — where and how breakfast will be served, timing, roles and responsibilities, plan trainings, and communicate frequently and consistently with all stakeholders.

Resources to help develop your implementation plan:

- [Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom's Guide and Self-Assessment Form for School Nutrition Professionals to Plan for a Successful Program](#)
- [The NEA Foundation's Breakfast in the Classroom Toolkit](#)
- [American Federation of Teachers and FRAC's Breakfast Blueprint](#)
- [The National Association of Secondary School Principals \(NAASP\) and FRAC's Secondary School Principals' Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit](#)

Step 5: Make breakfast a buzzword.

Make sure students and parents know about your new breakfast program by executing innovative marketing strategies.

Effective marketing strategies include the following:

- Create a digital marketing campaign to promote program to parents and students on social media. Check out <https://www.facebook.com/BreakfastInTheClassroom/> to see how other districts promote their program.
- Host a contest. Students can submit logo or poster ideas for the new program, or recipes that could be featured on the menu.
- Host a food show for students to sample menu items and provide feedback on items.
- Plan events to celebrate National School Breakfast Week (NSBW), which is usually the first week in March. [Click here](#) for School Nutrition Association's marketing toolkit to help you promote breakfast during NSBW and year-round.

Helpful Marketing Resources:

- [Sample Letter to Parents](#)
- [Sample Press Release](#)
- [Sample School Public Announcements](#)
- [Automated Phone Call Script](#)
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Marketing Resources for the School Breakfast Program](#)

Sample Posters:

- [Did you know? You can eat your breakfast in the classroom](#) (pdf)
- [Have you had your morning nutrition break yet?](#) (pdf)

- [Did you know? You can grab breakfast on the go](#) (pdf)
- [Video contest poster template](#) (MSWord)

Step 6: Incorporate strategies to maximize student input and participation.

The more students buy into the program, the more likely they are to participate.

- Develop an appealing menu.
 - ◆ Survey students on menu items to see what they like, and what items make them not participate.
 - ◆ Make sure to review your data regularly, and adjust accordingly.
 - ◆ Offer scratch cooking.
 - ◆ Create excitement by incorporating local foods and student-grown foods.
- Make students part of the process.
 - ◆ Many schools have made breakfast a leadership opportunity through various methods, such as room breakfast captains or serving on planning committees.
- Offer free breakfast to teachers to gain buy-in and create excitement.
- Establish [shared tables](#) to eliminate waste.

Step 7: Be flexible and adjust to what works best for your district, school, or both. If your initial plan is running into challenges, engage stakeholders and make adjustments (cart location, menu items).