



BREAKFAST: The Foundation for School Success

Breakfast is served daily at 98% of NC's traditional public schools. However, **there are major access issues for students** when breakfast served in the cafeteria is their only option. This results in low school breakfast participation, which impacts adversely the students who depend on school meals for their daily source of nutrition.

Benefits of eating school breakfast for students include:

- better attendance and less tardiness.
- increased ability to focus.
- fewer behavior problems.
- **improved academic performance.**

Proven ways to increase breakfast participation involve making breakfast part of the school day by offering breakfast to all students using one or more of the following innovative service models:

- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Grab and Go
- Second Chance

These three models can be blended and adapted for each school's unique needs and challenges, such as building layout or grade level. NC schools that serve breakfast innovatively **experience immediate, sustainable increases in breakfast participation, typically ranging from 70% to 90%** of students eating breakfast, with Breakfast in the Classroom yielding the highest participation.

Many NC school districts use the USDA's Community Eligibility Provision or Option (CEP or CEO), a policy under which schools in areas of severe economic need can serve breakfast and lunch free to every student. Others adopt "universal free" policies that enable schools to serve breakfast at no charge to all students. However, "free of charge" does not mean "free of stigma" or "free of barriers." **Innovative breakfast service ensures that all children receive a healthy meal to start the day.**

Grant money is available to help offset the start-up costs of implementing an innovative breakfast model.

Contacts for more information:

- Your district School Nutrition Director
- Helen Roberts, School Outreach Educator, No Kid Hungry NC at helen_roberts@unc.edu

Visit NoKidHungryNC.org for more information and resources such as:

- Breakfast toolkits and start-up guides
- Grant opportunities
- Video testimonials from educators
- A digital copy of this breakfast data at NoKidHungryNC.org/PREADY