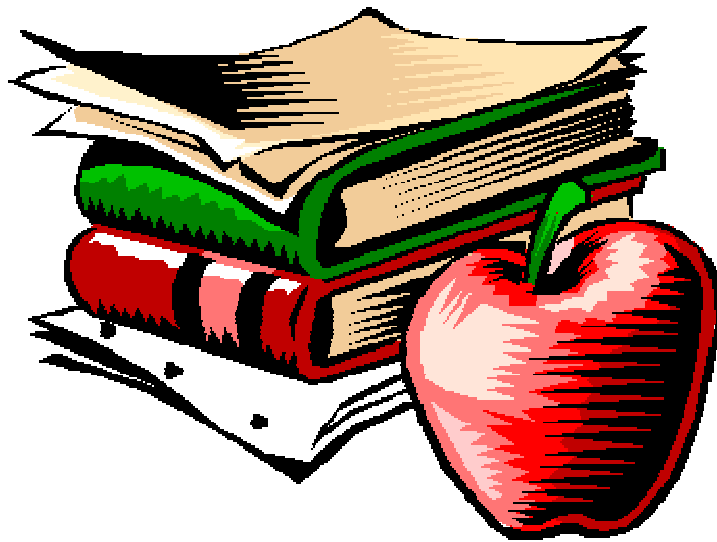


Feeding Children:

Expanding the School Breakfast Program in Connecticut

A tool-kit



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Executive Summary

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally funded program that functions at the federal level as a part of the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services. It is managed at the state level by the Connecticut Department of Education and is run at the local level by individual school food authorities. The program provides funding to local schools to enable them to provide a safe and nutritious breakfast to students. The goal of this tool kit is to provide a basic understanding of the SBP and encourage people to campaign for the SBP in their local communities.

The tool kit, *Feeding Children: Expanding the School Breakfast Program in Connecticut* provides an introduction to the federal SBP, identifies different models of providing school breakfast, highlights some of the benefits of the program and provides a brief overview of the Connecticut SBP. The tool kit goes on to discuss solutions to four main obstacles to expanding the SBP in Connecticut. These four obstacles were identified during a series of interviews with Connecticut School Food Service Directors and include finances, bus schedules, low student participation and non-support by administrators. Finally, there is an action plan for Connecticut. The action plan identifies steps various groups in Connecticut can take to promote and expand the SBP. The groups identified in the action plan include legislators, teachers/administrators, school boards, parent associations/community organizations and school food service directors.

The second section of the tool kit is a resource guide that includes a list of non-participating severe need schools in Connecticut that parents, legislators and various other groups can use to identify schools in which to target their efforts. The resource guide also includes a number of fact sheets that individuals can use to garner support for the SBP. Finally, there is a section entitled additional resources that highlights tools created by other organizations that can be used to advocate for the SBP or to work towards the expansion and improvement of the program.

Currently, less than half of the schools in Connecticut offer the SBP and only 34 free and reduced-price qualifying students participate in the SBP for every 100 that participate in the School Lunch Program. This is not a result of a lack of need in the State of Connecticut. In a recent survey of teachers in Connecticut, 92% said that they were aware of students who came to school hungry before the start of the SBP at their school.

This is particularly discouraging given the benefits that are associated with the SBP which include improved health, enhanced student behavior and greater academic success for students. The Action Plan for Connecticut in the tool kit outlines steps that the above mentioned groups can take to increase the number of schools offering the SBP

and increase the number of students participating. The primary activities outlined in the action plan are:

- Legislators should expand the current mandate in Connecticut to include, at the very least, all severe need schools.
- School boards should take it upon themselves to start the SBP in the school districts that they represent and approve requests by others to start the SBP.
- Teachers and administrators in schools that already operate a school breakfast program should encourage participation in these programs through various outreach strategies.
- School food service directors that currently operate school breakfast programs should use School Breakfast Week to highlight the program and encourage participation.
- Parents and community organizations in towns that currently do not operate the SBP should approach the school board in the town or the food service director at specific schools to work on bringing school breakfast to the town or school.

The main premise of this tool kit is that given a concerted effort on the part of these groups, the SBP in Connecticut can be expanded into additional schools and participation can be increased in those schools that already operate the program.

For a complete copy of the full tool kit contact:

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Acknowledgment

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Introduction

The School Breakfast Program is a federally funded nutrition assistance program run by the Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service at the federal level. At the state level, it is managed by the Connecticut Department of Education and is operated by school food service authorities at the local level. Currently in the State of Connecticut, less than half of all schools offer the School Breakfast Program and only 34 free and reduced-price qualifying students participate in the SBP for every 100 that participate in the School Lunch Program.

The tool kit is designed as a resource for anyone interested in advocating for the School Breakfast Program at the state and local level or anyone wanting to have a better understanding of this program. The tool kit includes the following:

- An introduction to the School Breakfast Program at the federal and state level.
- A brief summary of different types of methods of serving school breakfast, including Cafeteria or Traditional Breakfast, Grab and Go, In-classroom, After 1st Period, Breakfast on the Bus and Universal Breakfast.
- An overview of the health, academic and behavioral benefits associated with the School Breakfast Program.
- An Obstacles and Solution section that identifies four main obstacles (finances, bus schedules, low participation and administrator non-support) and solutions to these obstacles.
- An Action Plan for Connecticut that outlines steps that various groups, including legislators, school boards, teachers/administrators, school food service directors and parents can take to improve and expand the School Breakfast Program in Connecticut.
- A Resource Guide highlighting tools that have been developed by various organizations, fact sheets and a list of non-participating severe-need schools that various groups can use to identify schools to target in their efforts.

This tool kit was part of a collaborative effort between End Hunger Connecticut! and the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows Program. The tool kit is based on research conducted by a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow who worked with End Hunger Connecticut! between September 2003-February 2004. The obstacles identified in the tool kit are based on interviews with school food service directors from both rural and urban districts in Connecticut.

The School Breakfast Program

The purpose of the School Breakfast Program is to provide cash assistance to schools enabling them to provide a safe and nutritious breakfast to students. The School Breakfast Program (SBP) started as a pilot program in 1966 for communities with large numbers of working families and where students had long bus rides. It was expanded into a permanent entitlement program in 1975. The School Breakfast Program is a federally funded program that is administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. At the state level it is administered by the Connecticut Department of Education and is operated by school food service authorities in local schools. There is a great deal of flexibility given to local schools as to how to run the School Breakfast Program, but like the School Lunch Program the School Breakfast Program must meet specific nutritional guidelines.

The federal funding is provided through reimbursements for each breakfast served at a school. Schools receive \$1.20 for each free breakfast served, \$.90 for each reduced-price breakfast served and \$.20 for each paid breakfast served. Severe need schools (a school where at least 40% of the lunches served in the second preceding school year were free or reduced-price) are eligible for an additional \$.23 in federal funding for each free or reduced-price breakfast served.

Student's eligibility for free or reduced-price breakfast is determined by household income. Students whose household income is at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free breakfast. Those students whose family income is between 130% (\$19,838 for a family of three) and 185% (\$28,231 for a family of three) of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price breakfast.

- ✓ For additional information on the School Breakfast Program and other federal child nutrition programs visit the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>

The Many Faces of School Breakfast

While the School Breakfast Program is a federally funded program and is run at the state level by the Department of Education there is a great deal of flexibility over how it is operated at the local level. Depending on the needs of a school there are a number of different methods for providing school breakfast. The most common types of school breakfast include: Cafeteria (Traditional) Breakfast, Grab and Go, In-classroom, Breakfast after First Period, Breakfast on the Bus and Universal Breakfast

Cafeteria (Traditional):

Cafeteria or Traditional Breakfast is the most familiar type of breakfast program. Students eat breakfast in the Cafeteria before school starts, in a setting that is familiar to them if they also participate in the School Lunch Program. It is necessary to allot enough time between the arrival of busses and the start of class for kids to eat. This method allows for hot breakfast to be served, as there is no special transportation or packaging of the food that is required. Cafeteria Breakfast can also accommodate a large number of students. Depending on whether a school decides to serve a hot breakfast or not, this type of program can be operated with a minimal number of staff persons. Some schools are able to run this program with only one additional staff person. Students get to socialize with friends before the school day starts and get to eat a nutritional meal as well! This program does require a person to monitor the dining area. This individual can be a cafeteria worker a school staff person, a principal, a teacher or even a parent volunteer. A parent volunteer is a good option for a school that is trying to cut costs and works especially well in schools where parents may already come in to eat with their children, as they do in Meriden and in Hartford. This can also be used to encourage parents to spend time with their children.

Grab and Go:

This is a very simple and convenient way to offer school breakfast. It requires minimal staff and can often be run by only one staff person. Breakfasts can be bagged the day before or in the morning before kids arrive. As kids arrive they immediately go to the cafeteria or another convenient location where they pick up their breakfast. Kids can then eat this breakfast on the go, take it to first period or eat it on the playground. This method also requires minimal cleanup. One school in Plainfield operates a Grab and Go breakfast that is very popular with the School Food Service Director and the Principal because it required only one staff person to run the program in the morning and the School Food Service Director felt that this program had greater participation than the traditional cafeteria-style breakfast.

In-classroom:

Breakfast in the classroom provides a nutritional and healthy meal to students who may not be able to eat breakfast before school starts. Breakfast is eaten during announcements or morning break time. Breakfast is brought into the classroom on carts or picked up by student representatives and brought to the classroom. This program works best when breakfast is made available to all children. This program is often very popular with teachers once it is in operation. Hartford schools used to offer breakfast in the classroom until it was eliminated to allow for more teaching time. Student test scores have not improved as a result of the additional instruction time and teachers have expressed interest in bringing back In-classroom breakfast. Many schools believe that the benefits of an in classroom breakfast are worth the 7-15 minutes it requires of morning class time, especially when it can be operated while announcements are being read. In classroom style breakfast may actually add to curriculum time as kids are ready to learn and don't have as many behavior issues. Often times in classroom breakfast can be offered during morning attendance and announcement time and does not actually limit teaching time. In classroom style breakfast is also a perfect opportunity to incorporate nutrition education.

Breakfast After 1st period:

School Breakfast after 1st period provides a nutritional mid-morning snack to students and is a healthy alternative to vending machines. This is great for children who may not eat breakfast at home, who do not get an adequate breakfast at home or who eat breakfast at home very early in the morning because of long bus rides. Carts can be set up in convenient locations that allow students to quickly pick up breakfast between classes.

Breakfast on the Bus:

Some schools arrange to have kids eat school breakfast on the bus during their ride to school. This method works particularly well for school districts where students have long bus rides and where most of the students are bused to school. Kids are handed a brown bag breakfast when they get on the bus in the morning and are able to enjoy a nutritious breakfast before they get to school. For those schools that do not have flexible class or bus schedules this can be a good option. This method requires school food service to bag breakfast the day before or early in the morning, which is then picked up or delivered to the bus barn before routes begin in the morning.

Universal:

Universal school breakfast is when schools provide breakfast free to all students regardless of income. Schools cover the difference in cost between what they receive in federal reimbursement for free and reduce-priced breakfasts that they serve and the cost of providing it to students who do not qualify for free and reduced-price breakfast.

Despite this additional cost many schools are deciding to run Universal breakfast programs. Universal breakfast programs help to eliminate any stigma that may be attached to the program and results in much higher rates of participation. Often times Universal breakfast programs are run as in classroom program, although not always. Schools that run Universal programs, under Provision 2, only have to collect applications for free and reduced price meals once every four years. Additionally, schools do not have to track the number of free and reduced-priced students that they serve during at least three out of every four years. This allows schools to reduce administrative costs of running the program. This is an excellent model for schools that have high rates of free and reduce-priced qualifying students, although other schools have had great success with this type of program. Some states have appropriated additional state funds to help schools cover any additional costs of running a Universal breakfast program.

- ✓ To find out more about these different methods of providing school breakfast and which one might be right for the school in your community visit the Food and Nutrition School Breakfast Tool Kit on the United States Department of Agriculture website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm>
- ✓ To find out more about Universal School Breakfast visit the Food Resource and Action Center (FRAC) website: www.frac.org
- ✓ Contact the Connecticut Department of Education Connecticut to find out more about how to start a School Breakfast Program in your community. See the Resource Guide section of this tool kit for contact information.
- ✓ Contact the food service director at your local school to find out which of these methods might be right at your child's school.

The Many Benefits of Breakfast

There are number of reasons a school might choose to operate the School Breakfast Program, especially considering the many benefits associated with student participation, including improved student health, preparing students for academic success, and improved student behavior.

Health Benefits:

Obesity is a growing epidemic among youth in America. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that eating breakfast and especially school breakfast reduces kids risk of being overweight. Students that eat school breakfast consume more fruits than students who do not eat breakfast and those who eat breakfast at home. Students who eat school breakfast also drink more milk and eat less saturated fat than those students who do not eat breakfast and those who eat breakfast at home. Kids that eat breakfast also consume more whole grain cereal. A recent study published in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent medicine found that food-insecure adolescent girls who participated in three of the federal nutrition programs, including school breakfast, were **68% less likely to be overweight** than those food-insecure adolescent girls who did not.

Academic Benefits:

Schools are facing growing pressure to ensure that students are performing well on standardized tests. The school breakfast program is a great way for schools to give students the extra boost they need to succeed. There is a large body of data that supports the claim that feeding kids breakfast and especially school breakfast improves their academic performance. According to a study by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning students' math and reading scores increase when students eat school breakfast. A study published in Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine found that children who eat breakfast at school perform better on standardized tests than those who eat breakfast at home or do not eat breakfast at all. Additionally, in a recent study in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine titled, *The Relationship of School Breakfast to Psychosocial and Academic Functioning*, increased participation in the School Breakfast Program was associated with a significant improvement of student performance on a broad range of academic measures. While schools are pressed to find the most teaching time available in a day, taking the time to feed kids school breakfast will ensure that kids start the day ready to learn and will save classroom time in the long run. As one Connecticut teacher said about the School Breakfast Program, “[It] gets students into the school environment in a positive way before they get to class. Thus, they are better ready to begin the academic day.”

Behavioral Benefits:

The School Breakfast Program doesn't just improve students' health and prepare them for academic success; it also enhances students' behavior. In a recent survey of teachers in Connecticut 79% of teachers thought that student participation in the School Breakfast Program enhanced student behavior. Studies have shown that students who participate in the School Breakfast Program are more attentive, are tardy less often and have fewer absences. Students who eat school breakfast also have fewer behavioral problems and visit the nurse's office less frequently. Better student behavior (increased alertness/attentiveness, fewer absences) increases students' opportunities to learn. As one Connecticut teacher said, "When students are more attentive my job is easier."

- ✓ To find out more about the benefits of the School Breakfast Program visit the Food Resource and Actions Centers website and check out Breakfast for Learning fact sheet. <http://www.frac.org/pdf/breakfastforlearning.PDF>
- ✓ Use the fact sheets in the resource guide section of this tool kit to advocate for the School Breakfast Program in Connecticut.
- ✓ Contact End Hunger Connecticut to receive a copy of the report, *Teachers' perceptions of the School Breakfast Program*, that documents Connecticut teachers' experiences with the School Breakfast Program.
- ✓ Contact your elected school board officials and let them know the importance of the School Breakfast Program. Become an advocate for the School Breakfast Program in your Community.

School Breakfast in Connecticut

Despite these benefits, less than half of all schools in Connecticut participate in the School Breakfast Program. Only 34 students received free or reduced price breakfast per every hundred students who received free or reduced price lunch during the 2001-2002 school lunch year. There are many low-income children in the state of Connecticut who are not receiving breakfast at school. According to the Food Recourse and Action Center (FRAC), the State of Connecticut currently ranks among the ten lowest performing states in regards to the number of free and reduced priced students receiving school breakfast. Additionally, Connecticut ranks third to last of all states and the District of Columbia in regards to the number of schools that offer the School Breakfast Program, only ahead of New Jersey and Wisconsin.

The State of Connecticut has two financial incentives for schools, in addition to the federal reimbursement that all states receive. Grants of \$3,000.00 are available to severe need schools that wish to start a school breakfast program and schools may receive up to \$.10 in addition to the federal reimbursement for each free or reduced price breakfast that is served. Current Connecticut law requires all elementary and middle schools where 80% or more of students participate in free or reduced-price school lunch to operate a school breakfast program. Despite this law and the additional financial incentives, there are, based on 2001-2002 statistics, 58 severe need schools in Connecticut that do not participate in the School Breakfast Program. These 58 severe need schools include 20 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, 21 high schools, 1 alternative education high school and 1 all-ages school for the deaf.

- ✓ If you want to find out more about the School Breakfast Program in Connecticut contact the Connecticut Department of Education. See the Resource Guide section of this tool kit for contact information.

Obstacles and Solutions

What are the perceived obstacles that have prevented Connecticut from increasing the number of schools operating the School Breakfast Program and increasing student participation at schools that already offer the School Breakfast Program? What can be done to overcome these obstacles? The following four obstacles were identified during interviews with school food service directors as the primary obstacles to expanding the School Breakfast Program. The obstacles include: cost, bus schedules, student participation and administrative support.

Finances: *The cost of starting the program or expanding the program into additional schools is prohibitive.*

Most school food service authorities are self-contained operations and are responsible for covering all the costs of any program that they operate with student fees or federal reimbursement that they receive. **Eighty percent of schools nation-wide that operate the School Lunch Program also operate the School Breakfast Program, they have found that the federal reimbursement is enough to cover the costs of the program.** In Connecticut there is also additional state funding available to severe need schools. Start-up grants in the amount of \$3000 are available along with up to ten cents in additional per meal reimbursements. In addition most schools already offer a School Lunch Program and will have the facilities necessary to easily start the School Breakfast Program, with little additional staff time.

Promoting student participation is also an important way schools can ensure sufficient funding for the School Breakfast Program. The more students that participate in the program the more money schools receive in reimbursement from the federal and state government.

There are also ways that schools can limit the cost of the program, including operating a cold breakfast or a simple grab and go breakfast that would limit the additional labor and food costs necessary to operate the program. Schools can help limit cost by providing proper supervision free of cost to food service programs. Often teacher or administrators will eat breakfast with the children and provide supervision at the same time. Another option is having parent volunteers provide supervision; this is also nice because it encourages parents to spend time with their children and become involved in the school. In-classroom breakfast is also an option that does not require additional supervision. Often it is just a matter of finding the type of program that works best for a particular school. Sometimes it can be helpful to have a School Food Service Director who is thinking about starting the School Breakfast Program talk to another food service director who is already operating the School Breakfast Program.

- ✓ To find out how to get in touch with a school food service director who is already operating the School Breakfast Program contact the Connecticut Department of Education. See the Resource Guide in this tool kit for contact information.

- ✓ For further information on how to overcome perceived obstacles to starting the School Breakfast Program visit the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition School Breakfast Tool Kit:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm>

Bus Schedules: *Bus schedules do not allow for the operation of The School Breakfast Program.*

Many school districts have voluntarily rearranged bus schedules to allow for the operation of the School Breakfast Program. Given the academic, health and behavioral benefits of the program many schools have decided that it is worth it to rearrange bus schedules. Often it is only necessary to have busses arrive 5-10 minutes earlier. The State of Kentucky has passed a mandate that requires all schools to arrange bus schedules to allow for the operation of the school breakfast program.

Another option is to run a type of breakfast program that would not require rearranging bus schedules. Grab and go breakfast programs require minimal time between the time busses arrive and when classes start. Schools can also operate In-classroom Breakfast that does not necessitate busses arriving before school starts. Other options include breakfast on the bus and breakfast after first period. The different types of school breakfasts methods are discussed in “The Many Faces of School Breakfast” section of this tool kit. Additional resources are also identified in the Resource Guide section of the tool kit.

Low Student Participation: *Not enough students will participate to make it affordable or worth the time.*

There are simple steps that school food service directors and schools can take to increase student participation. The most important is getting the word out that the program is available. This can include notices home to parents and students. It can be helpful if these notices are sent out in the native language of parents so they can understand what the School Breakfast Program has to offer. These notices can also be sent as invitations to parents to come eat with their children. These notices should be sent home on a regular basis with information about the program and the food being served. A food service worker said in an interview, that she felt like there were students who still did not know that there is school breakfast available in their school. This is backed up by a recent survey of teachers in Connecticut, many who felt that students did not participate because they did not know the program existed. Food service directors can also hang up posters in the hallways of the school and in the school cafeteria to let kids know about the program.

Teachers and administrators can also play an important role in getting the word out about the program. Teachers can encourage kids to eat breakfast and can incorporate the school breakfast program into lessons. Schools can also celebrate school breakfast week with fun activities. Making the School Breakfast Program a part of the school day also helps remove any stigma that may be associated with the program. Removing the stigma that free and reduced price students may feel by participating in the program is an

important part of increasing overall student participation. In a recent survey of Connecticut teachers one teacher said this about the school breakfast program, “*I think that much of its success depends on the perception of it by the students and staff. If the kids feel degraded for getting free breakfast, then it won't work.*”

- ✓ To find out more about how to promote the School Breakfast Program visit the Food and Nutrition Service website and check out their School Breakfast Tool Kit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm>
- ✓ The American School Food Service Association also has a tool kit available on the internet with outreach material and fun activities: <http://www.asfsa.org/meetingsandevents/nsbw/>

Administrative Support: *The administration at school doesn't support the School Breakfast Program.*

School Food Service Directors identified this as one of the biggest obstacle faced when expanding the School Breakfast Program to additional schools. Yet at the same time, the support of Principals was also identified as the reason that many School Food Service Directors originally started school breakfast programs in some of their schools. One way to overcome lack of support from administrators is to encourage them to talk to other administrators that have and enjoy the School Breakfast Program. Community support and pressure from parents can also overcome initial hesitation on the part of administrators. In New York State, the Department of Education started the Think Breakfast! Campaign. They sent out packets to principals asking, “Are You Doing All You Can To Improve Classroom Performance?” Inside these packets was information the school breakfast program. A number of the School Food Service Directors that I talked to said that they would be in favor of a more expansive state school breakfast mandate as this would give them the support and leverage they needed to expand the school breakfast program into additional schools.

- ✓ For further information on how to gain administrative support or how to overcome other perceived obstacles to starting the School Breakfast Program visit the United States Department of Education Food and Nutrition website and check out the School Breakfast Tool Kit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm>
- ✓ Check out The Food Resource and Action Center's (FRAC) School Breakfast Scorecard: 2003 report for additional information on obstacles and solutions: <http://www.frac.org/pdf/2003Breakfast.pdf>

Action Plan for Connecticut

The following section outlines steps that various groups in Connecticut can take to improve and expand the School Breakfast Program

Legislators:

The legislators in Connecticut should make local schools responsible to Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens and ensure that schools are offering the federally reimbursable School Breakfast Program. Currently Connecticut has a state mandate that all schools, grades eight and below, where 80% or more of students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch must offer the federally mandated School Breakfast Program. **Legislators should expand the current state mandate to include all severe-need schools (schools where 40% or more of students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch).**

Many states around the country have much more expansive mandates, often including all severe-need schools or those schools where 20%-25% or more students qualify for free and reduced price school lunch. Two of Connecticut's neighbors, Rhode Island and Vermont have even mandated that all public schools operate the School Breakfast Program. Vermont has also leveraged private funds for start-up grants for schools that wish to start a school breakfast program. Kentucky has taken a unique approach by mandating that all schools arrange bus schedules in such a way that allows time for schools to operate the School Breakfast Program in the morning.

Recently, New Jersey, one of two states that ranks lower than Connecticut in the percent of schools that offer the School Breakfast Program, passed a mandate that would require all schools located in a local or regional school district where 20% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch to operate the School Breakfast Program starting with the 2004-2005 school year.¹ Governor Doyle of Wisconsin, the only State other than New Jersey that ranks below Connecticut, has recently called for legislation that would require all schools in Wisconsin to provide school breakfast. Governor Doyle stated that given Wisconsin's poor performance and its current national ranking, an "incremental approach" was not enough and that "bold" action was necessary.² **It is time for legislators in Connecticut to take "bold" action before Connecticut slips even further behind.**

- ✓ If you are interested in finding out which states have mandates check out the Food Resource and Action Center's Report: *School Breakfast Score Card: 2003* www.frac.org/pdf/2003Breakfast.pdf

¹ New Jersey State Legislature, Senate Bill 1498, January 2003. <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us>

² Erickson, Jessica. *Governor Calls for Legislation to Guarantee School Participation in School Breakfast*, Governor's Office Press Release. October 17, 2003

School Boards:

Often times, schools must obtain permission from school boards in order to start a breakfast program. School boards can also take the initiative in suggesting that schools start a breakfast program. For example, The School Board in Meriden, Connecticut recently voted to expand the School Breakfast program to seven new elementary schools. The vote took place only after, Meriden Children First a local parent organization ran a successful campaign in support of expanding the School Breakfast Program. A new board member, concerned with child health issues, initially started discussion of expanding the program.

Teachers/Principals:

Many of the School Breakfast Programs are started at the request of principals. A simple request by a principal may be all that is needed to get a food service director thinking about how to start a School Breakfast Program. Principals are beginning to recognize the benefits that school breakfast has to offer, including the potential to improve student scores on standardized tests. Imagine what could be accomplished if every principal in Connecticut requested that the School Breakfast Program be brought to their school.

Another important way that principals can support the School Breakfast Program is by encouraging student participation in the program. One way that principals can do this is by celebrating school breakfast week in their school. The American School Food Service Association has a Tool Kit available with outreach material and student activities that schools can use to promote the school breakfast program. Teachers can promote the program in their classrooms and call attention to the need for the School Breakfast Program in their schools. **Nine-two percent** of teachers in a recent survey were aware of children who came to school hungry before the start of the School Breakfast Program in their school.

School Food Service Directors:

School Food Service Directors that currently offer school breakfast should use every available opportunity to promote student participation. As discussed earlier, schools receive reimbursement on a per-meal basis. The more breakfasts that are served the more funds schools will receive in federal reimbursement, making it easier to operate the program. School Breakfast Week in March is a perfect opportunity for School Food Service Directors to promote the School Breakfast Program. The American School Food Service Association has a great deal of resources available on their website. The Additional Resources section of this tool kit has further information on what is offered on their website.

Parents/Parent Organizations/Community Organizations:

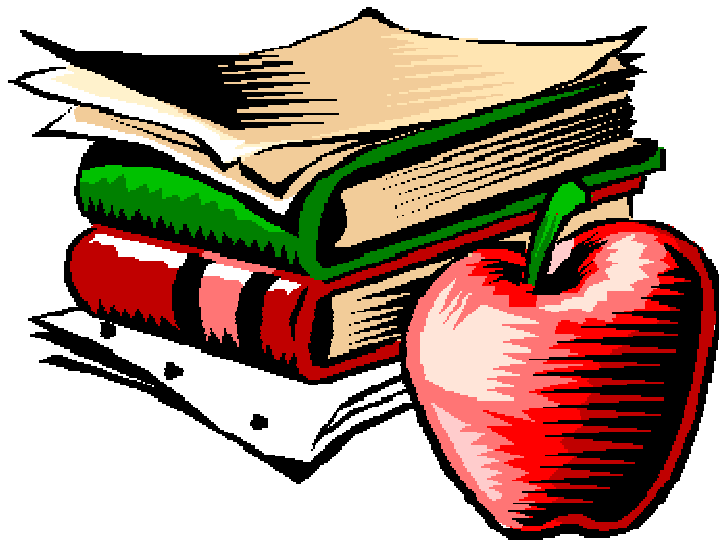
Parents can and should contact teachers, principals, school board members and state legislators and ask them to take action to promote and expand the School Breakfast Program. Very few School Food Service Directors receive feed back from parents and parents can be a very powerful force for change. Parents can contact food service directors, principals and teachers and ask them how they can work with them to bring school breakfast to the school in their community. Community Organizations can use the tools provided in this tool kit to educate communities about the School Breakfast Program and advocate for the program in schools.

- ✓ To find out the best way to work to bring The School Breakfast Program to the schools in your community visit the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service website and check out the School Breakfast Tool Kit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm>
- ✓ Explore the Resource Guide in this tool kit for additional tools that can be used to promote the SBP.

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Resource Guide

United States Department of Agriculture:

1) **The Food and Nutrition Service Website**

The following information about the School Breakfast Program is available on this website: A Fact Sheet, Program History, Free & Reduced Price Policy Information, Menu Planning, Regulations, Income Eligibility, Guidelines, Reimbursement Rates, School Breakfast Tool Kit. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/>

2) **United States Department of Agriculture's School Breakfast Tool Kit**

This kit is designed for individuals who have an interest in increasing access to the School Breakfast Program, determine the type of meal service most suited to their needs and developing a marketing plan that will capture and keep all of their customers. The tool kit includes the following sections: Introduction, Initial Assessment, Calculating Costs, There's More than One Way to Serve Breakfast, Roadmaps to Success, Marketing Efforts, Resources, and Program Evaluation. This tool kit is free to print out on the following website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/Default.htm>

3) **School Breakfast for First Class Learning Tool Kit**

This Tool Kit consist of 10 lessons that are divided into three categories: Value of Breakfast, How to Implement a School Breakfast Program and Enhancing School Breakfast Programs. Each lesson has a content overview, objectives, target audience, estimate of time needed, materials list and script. Several lessons have handouts that can be copied and distributed or made into transparencies. **To emphasize to decision makers the importance of breakfast, a PowerPoint presentation is included.**

Copies of the Breakfast Toolkit can also be obtained from the National Food Service Management Institute. Please call 1-800-321-3054 for information or print out from the following website:

<http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Training/5startoolkit/firstclass.html>

American School Food Service Association:

1) **Comprehensive Guide to Celebrating School Breakfast Week**

School Breakfast week 2004 is March 8-12. The theme for this year is *Navigate Your Day with School Breakfast*. The following website includes Activities, Logos, Flyers/Brochures, Menus, a Public Relations Tool Kit and a Proclamation that can be used to promote your School Breakfast Program in your schools and communities.

<http://www.asfsa.org/meetingsandevents/nsbw/>

Food Resource and Action Center:

The Food Resource and Action Center (FRAC) is a leading national organization working on anti-hunger policy in the United States. It is a non-profit, non-partisan public policy and research center. Every year the put out a report titled the School Breakfast Score Card. FRAC website: www.frac.org

- 1) This is one of the most comprehensive sites on the Internet about the School Breakfast Program with links to information on eligibility requirements, the benefits of the School Breakfast Program, Participation, USDA resources and contact information for the state agencies administering the program and much more!
http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sbp.html
- 2) This is the direct link for the 2003 School Breakfast Score Card, which has state rankings, state policies, obstacles and solution and a great deal of other information. Essential reading for anyone interested in understanding the School Breakfast Program.
<http://www.frac.org/html/news/110403Breakfast.htm>
- 3) This is the direct link for FRAC's School Breakfast Fact Sheet. This Fact Sheet has a great deal of general information on the School Breakfast Program and its benefits.
<http://www.frac.org/pdf/cnsbp.PDF>
- 4) This is the web address for FRAC's *Breakfast for Learning* Fact Sheet. This Fact Sheet references current research on the academic benefits of the School Breakfast Program.
<http://www.frac.org/pdf/breakfastforlearning.PDF>

Connecticut Department of Education:

The State Department of Education, office of Child Nutrition is responsible for managing the School Breakfast Program in the State of Connecticut. They can provide specific information and answer questions pertaining to the School Breakfast Program in Connecticut. The State Department of Education can also provide the student participation rates of specific school breakfast programs.

- 1) Contact information for the Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Adult Education and Nutrition Programs:

Maureen Staggenborg, Bureau Chief @ maureen.staggenborg@po.state.ct.us
Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Adult Education and Nutrition Programs
25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457
Telephone: (860) 807-2070
Fax (860) 807-2127

Connecticut Department of Education (Continued)

2) The direct link to the Connecticut Department of Education Nutrition Program website:
<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/nutrition/index.htm>

3) This is a two page Fact Sheet titled, *Breakfast: Key to Academic Excellence* that was compiled by the State Department of Education and the New England Dairy and Food Council.
<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/nutrition/SBP/B2-School02.pdf>

End Hunger Connecticut!

End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to ending hunger in Connecticut. The goal of EHC! is to raise awareness of hunger in the state of Connecticut, promote funding for and access to nutrition assistance programs, and to speak out to help eliminate the root causes of hunger. EHC! works with the goal of helping low-income families move “beyond the food pantry” towards self-sufficiency.

Contact EHC! for additional copies of this tool kit or a copy of the report, *Teachers’ Perceptions of the School Breakfast Program* a report documenting teachers’ experience with the School Breakfast Program in Connecticut.

End Hunger Connecticut!
102 Hungerford Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: (860) 560-2100
Fax: (860) 560-2108
www.endhungerct.org

Target Schools

Non-Participating Severe-Need Schools

This is a list of Severe-Need Schools (where 40% or more of students are qualified for free and reduced-priced school lunch) that are not offering schools breakfast. This information is based on 2001-2002 statistics and was provided by the Department of Education.

School Food Authority	Name of School	School No.	% F&R
Bloomfield School Lunch	Bloomfield High School	61	43.18
Branford School Lunch	Walsh Intermediate	51	41.60
Bristol School Lunch	Memorial Blvd. Middle	53	44.00
East Haven School Lunch	East Haven Academy	17	53.46
East Haven School Lunch	Joseph Melillo Middle	51	40.13
Granby School Lunch	Granby High School	61	57.51
Groton School Lunch	Groton Heights	07	44.36
Groton School Lunch	Mary Morrisson	17	44.26
Hamden School Lunch	Hamden Middle	52	45.51
Hartford Board of Education	Weaver High	63	57.91
Hartford Board of Education	Bulkeley High	61	79.95
Manchester Board of Education	Manchester High	61	47.18
Manchester Board of Education	No Schltable Record	75	78.55
Meriden School Lunch	Lincoln Middle	52	66.13
Meriden School Lunch	Washington Middle	54	69.18
Meriden School Lunch	Orville H. Platt High	62	51.36
Milford Board of Education	West Shore Middle	53	44.31
Naugatuck School Lunch	Salem	06	45.17
Naugatuck School Lunch	Andrew Avenue	08	43.47
Naugatuck School Lunch	City Hall Middle	51	40.78
Naugatuck School Lunch	Naugatuck High	61	46.52
New Haven Public Schools	Wilbur Cross High/Annex	61	98.03
New Haven Public Schools	James Hillhouse High	62	99.19
New Haven Public Schools	Cooperative Arts	64	94.69
New Haven Public Schools	High School Comm	66	89.07
New Haven Public Schools	Sound School	67	54.96
New Haven Public Schools	Hyde Leadership	68	82.21
Plainfield Board of Education	Moosup Elementary	01	55.14
Plainfield Board of Education	Shepard Hill Elementary	04	48.39
Southington School Lunch	No. Center	10	42.53

Stamford School Lunch	Stamford High	61	41.00
Stratford School Lunch	Center	02	51.16
Stratford School Lunch	Franklin	04	60.50
Stratford School Lunch	Lordship	08	43.84
Stratford School Lunch	Second Hill Lane	10	40.04
Stratford School Lunch	David Wooster Middle	52	43.86
Stratford School Lunch	Straford High	61	43.06
Torrington School Lunch	Forbes	02	50.06
Torrington School Lunch	No Schltable Record	07	81.36
Torrington School Lunch	Southwest	08	40.65
Torrington School Lunch	Torrington Middle	51	40.28
Torrington School Lunch	Southeast	91	82.08
Wallingford Board of Education	Moses Y. Beach	01	42.37
Waterbury School Lunch	Crosby High	62	78.43
Waterbury School Lunch	Wilby High	63	78.36
Waterbury School Lunch	John F. Kennedy High	64	71.38
Waterbury School Lunch	No Schltable Record	75	91.28
Wethersfield School Lunch	CREC - Soundbridge	99	42.34
Wethersfield School Lunch	Silas Deane Middle	52	46.30



The School Breakfast Program: *Frequently Asked Questions*

How is the School Breakfast Program operated?

- The School Breakfast Program is administered, at the federal level, by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. At the State level it is administered by the Connecticut Department of Education and is operated by school food service authorities in local schools.

How is the School Breakfast Program funded?

- **The School Breakfast Program is a federally funded program.** The federal government provides reimbursements for each breakfast served. Schools receive \$1.20 for each free breakfast served, \$.90 for each reduced-price breakfast served and \$.20 for each paid breakfast served. Severe need schools (a school where at least 40% of the lunches served in the second preceding school year were free or reduced-price) are eligible for an additional \$.23 in federal funding for each free or reduced-price breakfast served.
- **The State of Connecticut has two financial incentives for schools.** Grants of \$3,000.00 are available to severe need schools that wish to start a school breakfast program and severe need schools may receive up to an additional \$.10 for each free or reduced price breakfast that is served, depending on available funds.
- **Student's eligibility for free or reduced-price breakfast is determined by household income.** Students whose household income is at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free breakfast. Those students whose family income is between 130% (\$19,838.00 for a family of three) and 185% (\$28,231.00 for a family of three) of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price breakfast.

How does Connecticut compare nationally?

- **Connecticut ranks 49 out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia in the number of schools participating in the School Breakfast Program.** Less than half of the schools in Connecticut that participate in the National School Lunch Program participate in the School Breakfast Program.
- **Connecticut ranks 43 out of the 50 states in the number of low-income children participating in the School Breakfast Program that participate in the National School Lunch Program.** In Connecticut only 33 free or reduced-price eligible students participate in the School Breakfast Program for every 100 free or reduced-price eligible student that participates in the National School Lunch Program.

Solutions:

- Require all “severe need” schools to offer breakfast. New Jersey, one of two states that have lower rates of participation than CT, has recently mandated all schools where 20% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced price school lunch to operate a school breakfast program.
- Encourage the use of school breakfast models that attract the most eligible kids. Universal and In-classroom models increase participation, eliminate the stigma attached to participation and simplify the paperwork involved in operating a school breakfast program.



Answering the Critics: Responses to Arguments Against the School Breakfast Program

1) *It is parents responsibility to feed kids breakfast.*

- Ideally in Connecticut all parents would have the time and means to provide their children with a healthy and nutritious breakfast. Unfortunately this is not the case. Many children go to school hungry in Connecticut.
- Ninety-two percent of Connecticut teachers, in a recent survey, stated that they were aware of children that came to school hungry before the start of the School Breakfast Program at their school.
- Students should not be penalized because their parents cannot provide them with breakfast in the morning. Especially when there is a flexible, federally funded entitlement program that schools can use to easily provide safe and nutritious breakfast to kids.
- Connecticut schools should do all they can to insure that ***all*** their students have a chance to succeed. Often it is the most vulnerable students who benefit from the School Breakfast Program.

2) *A state mandate would infringe on local control of schools.*

- Twenty-five states around the country have implemented school breakfast mandates, including the State of Connecticut. The argument is for expansion of this mandate, not a new mandate.
- Even with a state mandate to provide school breakfast, schools would retain primary control over the program and how it was run.
- Within basic guidelines schools have a great deal of flexibility as to the time that breakfast would be served, where it would be served, what food would be served and how the program would be operated.

3) *The School Breakfast Program is too expensive for schools to provide.*

- Nationwide, eighty percent of those schools that operate the School Lunch Program also operate the School Breakfast Program. They have discovered that federal funding is enough to cover the costs of the program.
- The State of Connecticut has additional funding that is available to severe-need schools that offer the School Breakfast Program. This funding includes \$3000 start-up grants and up to ten cents in additional per meal reimbursement for free and reduced-price breakfasts served.
- By increasing the number of students that participate in the program schools increase the federal and state funds that they receive, making it easier for them to run the program.



Answering the Critics: *Responses to Arguments Against the School Breakfast Program*

4) *School Breakfast would take too much time out of class hours.*

- Given the overwhelming evidence that the School Breakfast Program prepares students to succeed academically it makes sense for schools to take the time to serve breakfast.
- Often the time that it takes to serve breakfast in the classroom is time that can also be spent doing routine morning classroom tasks such as taking attendance and making announcements. In-classroom breakfast does not have to take away teaching time.
- Schools can choose operate programs before school starts that do not take any time out of classroom hours including, traditional Cafeteria-style breakfast, Grab and Go breakfast and Breakfast on the Bus.
- Listen to what one Connecticut teacher has to say, “[School breakfast] gets students into the school environment in a positive way before they get to class. Thus, they are better ready to begin the academic day.”

5) *Parents would not have breakfast time to spend with their children.*

- Nationwide 40% of children do not eat breakfast. Unfortunately breakfast time is not a time parents spend with their children. Many parents are rushing around in the morning trying to get off to work and do not have to eat with their children.
- The School Breakfast Program can be a time that parents spend with their children. For example, parents in both Hartford and Meriden come in and spend time with their children while they eat.
- Encouraging parents to volunteer to supervise the School Breakfast Program can mean greater parent involvement in the school and more time they can spend with their children.



BREAKFAST FOR SUCCESS:

The Benefits of the School Breakfast Program

Preparing for Academic Success

- According to a study by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning students' **math and reading scores increase** when they eat school breakfast.¹
- According to a study published in Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, Children who eat breakfast at school **perform better on standardized tests** than those who eat breakfast at home or do not eat breakfast.²
- In a recent study in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine titled, *The relationship of the School Breakfast to Psychosocial and Academic Functioning*, increased participation in the School Breakfast Program was associated with a **significant improvement of student performance on a broad range of academic measurements.**³

Improved Student Behavior

- According to a survey of Connecticut teachers conducted by End Hunger Connecticut! 79% of the teachers surveyed believed that **student behavior is enhanced** by student participation in the School Breakfast Program.
- Students who increase their participation in the School Breakfast Program show an **improvement in their behavior and attendance.**
- Students who eat breakfast before starting school have **fewer discipline problems and visit the school nurses office less often.**

Improved Student Health

- A study by the American Medical Association that came out in 2003 found that food-insecure adolescent girls, who participated in 3 federally funded food assistance programs, including the School Breakfast Program, were **68% less likely to be overweight** than food-insecure adolescent girls who did not.
- Students who eat school breakfast **eat more fruit** than those students who do not eat breakfast or eat breakfast at home.
- Additionally students who eat school breakfast **drink more milk and consume less saturated fat** than those students who do not eat breakfast or have breakfast at home.

If you are interested in further information about the academic benefits of breakfast check out the Food Resource and Action Center's Breakfast for Learning fact sheet:

<http://www.frac.org/pdf/breakfastforlearning.PDF>

The Benefits of Breakfast End Notes:

¹ Food Resource and Action Center. *Breakfast for Learning*. <http://www.frac.org/pdf/breakfastforlearning.PDF>

² Food Resource and Action Center

³ Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman R. "The Relationship of School Breakfast to Psychosocial and Academic Functioning." *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 1998 152:899-907.