

BREAKFAST CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS: FAQs

How can I increase breakfast participation? Students don't participate because breakfast is served too early and they don't come to school in time to eat breakfast.

Sometimes the solution is bringing breakfast to the students. Schools that utilize a breakfast in the classroom or grab and go breakfast model generally have a higher participation than those that don't.

Incorporate breakfast as part of the school day through breakfast in the classroom or grab and go breakfast.

- Create a "pass" for tardy students to eat breakfast. After the third "pass," the parents or guardians are included in a discussion about the student's tardiness.
- Let parents know about the importance of breakfast and send reminders home on when and how breakfast is served.

I can't do this without support from my supervisor and colleagues. How do I convince them that breakfast in the classroom is a good model?

Find out what other schools are doing so you can model that for your school.

- Talk to principals in schools where breakfast in the classroom is taking place.
- Talk to your regional food service managers about how your school can serve breakfast to more students.

How do I create buy-in from my teachers for breakfast in the classroom?

Almost all teachers that have breakfast in the classroom grow to love it and don't want it taken away!

- Invite teachers from other schools to provide testimony to the positive effects of breakfast in the classroom.
- Provide teachers with breakfast in the morning to eat with their students.
- Demonstrate that breakfast is a foundational tool for teachers by providing statistics on the importance of breakfast to test scores, attendance, and discipline.
- Create a section in your school newsletter that features breakfast and the benefits it provides for the students and school.

Won't breakfast in the classroom lead to problems with trash and get my classrooms dirty?

Focus on the importance of breakfast as a learning tool! Studies show that breakfast in the classroom does not make a big difference in classroom cleanliness because students are quickly

provided a structured routine for clean-up in the classroom.

- Get carpet sweepers for every classroom or enough to share.
- Get buckets and mops in every classroom or enough to share.
- Provide trash containers in hallways outside the classrooms for pick up.
- Have students take responsibility for clean-up.

My school is really old and has no working elevators. How do I serve breakfast in the classroom?

Creative solutions exist that may work for your school.

- Use the grab and go breakfast model where students pick up their own meals in convenient carrying cases in the cafeteria or hallway before heading up to class.
- Use community volunteers to help carry the food up to the classroom.
- Take all the dry foods up to the classroom for the entire week and only bringing up the other components each day.

We don't have the staffing in the school to serve breakfast in the classroom. How can we get more staff or trained volunteers to help out?

Schools with breakfast success have generally recruited and used their volunteers efficiently.

- Use students to do “community service” work and help with classroom breakfast.
- Create a “Breakfast Buddies/Club” with students or parents who will be responsible for helping with breakfast. (Participating as a volunteer can be good motivation for chronically late students).
- Create a training program for all volunteers so that they can be “certified” to help with breakfast – include parents.
- Reach out to the community, including the faith-based organizations in the area for volunteers.
- Serve breakfast to all volunteers.
- Use volunteers to help fill out meal applications. Make the volunteers available for parents if the parents need help (i.e. interpreters, help write up, etc.).
- Use volunteers to bag breakfast items the day before.

Documenting meals can be complicated. How do I ensure that everyone follows the rules?

This is a challenge for many schools as they make the transition from “traditional” serving methods, but the district and the state want to work with you to make it as easy as possible.

- Provide training for teachers and everyone who will be doing accountability for the meals.
- Offer frequent refresher training courses.
- Try using a share table where students can put extra food that they took. (The food cannot go back to the kitchen, but it can go to other places such as to the school nurse).