

Expanding Access to Breakfast

Using Best Practices to Increase the Breakfast Participation Rate in Philadelphia Schools

BOTTOM LINE

As the nation's poorest big city, it is common knowledge that tens of thousands of students struggle with food insecurity. The federal Community Eligibility Program makes it easy to provide every student in Philadelphia with free breakfast and lunch. Unfortunately, too many of Philadelphia's students attend schools that don't prioritize increasing access to these meals.

KEY POINTS

Students who eat school breakfast perform better in school than children who don't.

Currently:

- Only 39.6% of public school students eligible for breakfast in the Philadelphia School District receive it.
- 100 of 220 District schools serve breakfast to fewer than 30% of students in attendance.
- In 35 of the 74 charter schools that offer free breakfast, fewer than 30% of students actually receive it. Four charter schools do not offer any breakfast.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Implement one or more best practices to increase breakfast participation:

- **Breakfast in the Classroom:** Breakfast can be delivered to each classroom or students can pick it up on their way to class. Students can eat breakfast during morning announcements or while the teacher takes attendance, checks homework, or reviews lessons.
- **Grab and Go Breakfast:** Breakfast is served using carts in the hallway or the cafeteria; students are permitted to eat on the way to class or during the first 10-15 minutes of the school day.
- **Second Chance Breakfast:** Breakfast is served from the cafeteria or carts in the hallway after first period during a morning break, allowing students who arrive later or are not hungry first thing in the morning to get a healthy breakfast.

Make school breakfast participation part of a school's evaluation process:

- Including a school's breakfast participation rate as an indicator on the school report card will ensure that schools are accountable for implementing these alternative programs and working towards making sure that all students eat breakfast every day.

Hold charter schools accountable:

- The School Breakfast Program should be part of the District's analysis of all charter school applications and renewals.

Learn from the schools that do it right:

- 39 District schools have breakfast participation rates higher than 70%. Provide opportunities for these principals to share their best practices.