

# STAKEHOLDERS

## Principal

Principals have strong interests in the academic success of their students. For instance, some schools serve breakfast on test days because studies show an improvement in performance when students have eaten breakfast. However, breakfast is important every school day. Principals play an important role in deciding to expand the School Breakfast Program. They also lead teachers in the goal of developing successful students. Principals can influence the success of the School Breakfast Program as well as the success of their students.

### A principal may be concerned about:

**SCHEDULING:** The School Breakfast Program has various methods of serving students, so times of service may vary from program to program. However, certain methods, like breakfast in the classroom, can take as little as 10 minutes. Other methods allow students to eat their breakfast during a scheduled break between classes or on the way to class. If scheduling is an issue, there is almost always a method of service that can accommodate your school's needs.

**COSTS:** Expanding breakfast adds additional cost, but often the participation is high enough to support the program through economies of scale. Not only will there be revenue generated through participation, but federal reimbursement for breakfast can cover the additional food and/or labor costs.

**RESOURCES:** In Maryland, the State Department of Education administers the School Breakfast Program. The department is interested in the success of your students too and can provide support. Additional support for food service staff when expanding the School Breakfast Program is available through various organizations such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the American School Food Service Association. Other schools are also a resource; talk to other school food service to see if you can emulate your peers' experiences.

### School Breakfast Tips for Principals

- **Play a direct role in helping students succeed academically.**
  - Implement a schedule and delivery model that ensures that students have ample time and access to breakfast.
  - Affirm students for "starting smart" with a good breakfast by joining them in the morning.

*"Breakfast in the classroom helps teachers too. It's the kids who don't eat who are disruptive. Also, breakfast in the classroom gives teachers time to model socialization skills for the students, which is important for children... Then once breakfast is over, kids are already sitting in their seats. There is no lost transitional time."*

*-Principal, Baltimore City*

- **Support teachers.**
  - School breakfast helps children behave better and be more attentive in class. It also reduces disruptive hunger-related visits to the school nurse.
  - Distribute information to teachers about the link between breakfast and academic success. Encourage them to reinforce this message.
- **Provide a key resource for parents and families.**
  - Inform parents that they can count on school breakfast when family schedules are rushed and children do not feel like eating.
  - Send a letter or flyer to parents at the start of the year to make sure they know about the School Breakfast Program. Send regular communication home.
  - Encourage more families to complete their free and reduced meal applications.

## Teachers

Teachers are important supporters in expanding the School Breakfast Program. Teachers have multiple roles within the school environment. Cited studies show that eating a healthy breakfast improves attention span, academic performance and classroom behavior. In schools that have successfully expanded the School Breakfast Program, teachers have found that concerns are easily addressed and the benefits far outweigh the costs.

### A teacher may be concerned about:

**TEACHER WORKLOAD:** Teachers do many things besides teaching to support a successful learning environment. Studies show that school breakfast has a clear and direct impact on learning. School food service staff, janitorial staff or the students themselves, handle any additional work. Expanding breakfast would ease the teaching day.

**CLASSROOM ORDER:** When breakfast is served in the classroom, food service staff provides garbage bags, paper towels and other cleaning supplies for students to use. Students clean up themselves after eating their nutritious meal and are more ready to learn in the morning. The menu and methods of serving can limit both work and clean up for everyone. How to properly clean up and dispose of breakfast should be modeled first by the teacher.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** Studies have shown that breakfast is consumed pretty quickly. No matter what the serving method, breakfast can take as little as 2 minutes (grab and go) or 10-15 minutes (breakfast in the classroom).

*Breakfast in our classroom has added a new dimension to our school day. We are able to start the day like a real family having a warm atmosphere with food, conversation and morning activities.*

*-Teacher, Anne Arundel*

# School Food Service

School food service directors and personnel are very important to the educational process. Their work completes the cycle of providing a healthy learning environment through serving school meals.

## Food service staff may have concerns about:

**WORKLOAD:** Expanding the School Breakfast Program does not necessarily mean more work for food service personnel. When compared to lunch, breakfast can be simpler to prepare. Depending on the breakfast service method you choose, it can be set up to work with current operation with very little change. Also, prepackaged breakfast foods keep labor to a minimum.

## Parents

Parents are important decision makers in the school environment. However, not every child is prepared to learn in the morning for various reasons, including lack of sleep, bussing schedules or lateness. One way to assist students and parents with a successful school day is through breakfast.

## A parent may be concerned about:

**CHILD ALREADY EATS AT HOME:** It is great that some families eat together in morning; however, many eat unhealthy breakfasts on the run and others do not eat breakfast at all. Whether or not students have time to eat at home, the School Breakfast Program ensures a healthy option is always available.

**COST:** Breakfast at school is affordable. A full breakfast costs less than convenience store items. If students qualify for the lunch program, you also qualify for the breakfast program, with no additional paperwork. Payment is based upon parent income and is confidential.

**CHILD NOT HUNGRY:** Often, children are not hungry first thing in the morning. Children may have different hunger cycles, so they may not be ready to eat breakfast when parents are. Some of these children go to school and are ready to eat when they arrive or after 1<sup>st</sup> period. Eating school breakfast not only satisfies their hunger, but it also helps students focus during the morning school hours.

**BREAKFAST ALTERNATIVE:** Children, just like adults, base their food choices on what is available. They may make unhealthy choices if vending machines are the only option. Although some schools may have good breakfast vending options, these foods are often high in sugar and fat. Convenience stores and fast food locations are similar in providing high calorie choices. School breakfast is a value for parents and students alike.