FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

EXPANDING SCHOOL BREAKFAST IN NEW ORLEANS

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A Toolkit for Schools

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Of the students in Louisiana who received a free or reduced-priced lunch in school year 2010-2011, only 54.1 percent also participated in the School Breakfast Program.[1] Given the high levels of poverty and food insecurity in New Orleans, many children who don't participate in school breakfast may be missing breakfast completely.

Participation is low for a variety of reasons. The following barriers often impede children from eating breakfast at school:

- Buses or carpools arriving too late for children to eat breakfast in the cafeteria
- Tight morning schedules at home
- Not being hungry first thing in the morning
- Preference or peer pressure to socialize or play instead of eat breakfast
- Stigma that eating breakfast in the cafeteria is only for low-income students[2]

When schools remove these barriers through alternative breakfast models, students are able to eat school breakfast and get a healthy meal guided by nutrition standards that ensure children have the energy needed to focus and learn in the classroom: quite literally, food for thought.

About this Toolkit
Food For Thought is designed to serve as a resource to help schools expand their breakfast programs so that no child has to start the day hungry. The many breakfast models that have proven successful in increasing participation are outlined in this toolkit, along with various resources that will be helpful to schools as they implement these models. Combined with the experience and resources offered by the New Orleans No Kid Hungry campaign, this toolkit serves as a guide for schools to ensure all students in New Orleans start the day with a healthy meal that helps them live, learn and play.

INTRODUCTION

HUNGER IN OUR SCHOOLS

One in five children in New Orleans is at risk of hunger.[3] Furthermore, about 30% of households with children in the Greater New Orleans area struggled to afford food for themselves and their families in 2010.[4] This gives New Orleans the *8th highest rate of food hardship* for households with children among major metropolitan areas in the United States.[5] Louisiana has the third highest rate of childhood poverty in the United States (27.3%),[6] and in Orleans Parish the rate is even higher (42%).[7]

There are several terms used to describe hunger. The term used by the USDA is food insecurity, which is a measure of periodic lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.[8] Food insecurity negatively impacts both the physical and mental health development of children through inadequate nutrition.[9]

Children who experience hunger suffer the following consequences to their academic performance:

- Lack of concentration
- Slower recall
- Difficulty paying attention
- Diminished academic performance
- Emotional and behavioral difficulties
- Issues with aggression and anxiousness
- Difficulty getting along with other children
- Hyperactivity
- Increased illness leading to increased absence and tardiness[10]

Children who skip breakfast are more likely to repeat a grade, have lower math scores, have poorer cognitive functioning and have slower memory recall than students who regularly eat breakfast. Missing breakfast has negative consequences even if overall hunger is not an issue for a child. However, research suggests that children who suffer from hunger are even more susceptible to the effects that missing breakfast has on their cognitive ability.[11]

HUNGER IN OUR SCHOOLS

What does hunger look like in our schools?
An astonishing *90% of children* in Orleans Parish are
eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals (family
incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty line).[12]

Of the students in Louisiana who received a free or reduced-priced lunch in school year 2010-2011, only 54.1 percent also
participated in the School Breakfast Program.[13] Most schools in New Orleans are on par with or worse than the state average for
participation in school breakfast. However, many schools that have innovative breakfast models far surpass that mark. The following
are statistics from actual schools in New Orleans:[14]

	% Student Body Free/Reduced Meals	% Student Body Participating in Breakfast	Breakfast Model
School A (K-8)	95%	25%	Traditional before school (hot)
School B (K-8)	81%	30%	Traditional before school (hot)
School C (9-12)	87%	30%	Traditional before school (hot)
School D (PK-8)	100%	60%	Traditional & Grab-n-Go
School E (K-5)	98%	84%	Breakfast in the Classroom
School F (K-8)	97%	85%	In cafeteria at start of school day

Given the high levels of poverty and food insecurity in New Orleans, it is likely that many of the children who are not eating school
breakfast may be missing breakfast entirely.

In a nationwide survey, Share Our Strength found that **3 out of 5** K-8 public school teachers say students **regularly come to school
hungry**. Among teachers who see hunger, 80% say that kids are coming to school hungry at least once a week. Additionally, 78% of
these teachers spend about $26 per month on food for their classroom.[15]

"My hungry students are concentrating on how soon until lunch rather than on learning to read."
-Washington, K-3 grade teacher

WHY BREAKFAST?

To understand the effects on a child of missing breakfast, think about how you feel and act when you're hungry: distracted, irritable, unable to concentrate, moody, tired. Your stomach starts to growl and feel uncomfortable. Now imagine your behavior if you had to sit through an entire morning of class or meetings in that condition. Worse still, how would you perform if you had to take a test or give a presentation? For many students in New Orleans, this is a regular occurrence. Luckily, school breakfast can help combat the negative consequences of hunger.

*School breakfast improves children's **academic performance**[16-19]:*
- Children who eat a complete breakfast make fewer mistakes and work faster on math tests than children who eat a partial breakfast.
- Children who eat breakfast at school, closer to class and test-taking time, perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat breakfast at home.
- Children who eat breakfast show improved cognitive function, attention and memory.
- Participating in school breakfast is associated with improved math grades, attendance and punctuality.

*School breakfast improves children's **attendance and behavior**[20-22]:*
- Schools that provide Breakfast in the Classroom to all students show decreases in tardiness and suspensions as well as improved student behavior and attentiveness.
- Providing students with Breakfast in the Classroom is associated with fewer disciplinary measures.
- Children who participate in school breakfast have lower rates of absenteeism.

*Breakfast improves children's **diets and overall health**[23-24]:*
- Children who eat breakfast tend to have more adequate nutrient intake than children who do not.
- Children and adolescents who eat breakfast are more likely to maintain a healthy body weight.

Adapted from The Food Research and Action Center's "Breakfast for Learning" Child Nutrition Factsheet.
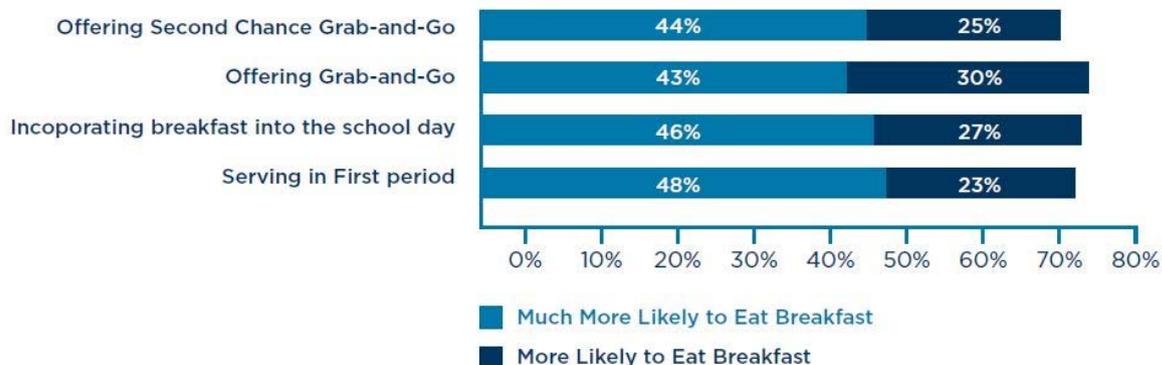
BARRIERS AND BRIDGES TO BREAKFAST

Why is participation in school breakfast so low? Most schools offer traditional breakfast in the cafeteria before the start of the school day. There are a variety of reasons why this model is often incompatible with the reality of a child's morning:

- Buses or carpools arriving too late for children to eat breakfast in the cafeteria
- Tight morning schedules at home
- Not being hungry first thing in the morning
- Preference or peer pressure to socialize or play instead of eat breakfast
- Stigma that eating breakfast in the cafeteria is only for low-income students[25]

These barriers are easily overcome by changing the way breakfast is served in schools. In a survey of over 400 students enrolled in grades 6-12 in public schools in Maryland, Share Our Strength found that 75% of students say they would eat breakfast if they had the time.[26] Alternative breakfast models seek to meet kids where they already are: socializing in the hall, rushing to class from the bus or carpool line or already in the classroom. Students in the survey responded positively to the following approaches to breakfast:

HOW TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM: STUDENT INTEREST IN A VARIETY OF APPROACHES

Approach	Much More Likely to Eat Breakfast	More Likely to Eat Breakfast
Offering Second Chance Grab-and-Go	44%	25%
Offering Grab-and-Go	43%	30%
Incoporating breakfast into the school day	46%	27%
Serving in First period	48%	23%

BREAKFAST SERVING MODELS

BREAKFAST SERVING MODELS

There are several different serving models a school can use for their breakfast program. This section outlines what each model entails, tips to make it successful, a checklist for determining whether the model will work well for your school's unique situation, and stories of success from local schools that have implemented some of the models. The different types of serving models addressed in this toolkit include:

- Traditional Breakfast
- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Grab N' Go Breakfast
- Second Chance Breakfast
- Breakfast on the Bus

It is possible to use more than one model in the same school. For instance, some schools do Breakfast in the Classroom for younger grades and Traditional Breakfast at the start of the school day for older grades. Second Chance Breakfast can follow the Grab N' Go or Breakfast in the Classroom method. The best way to make your breakfast program successful is to thoughtfully examine your school's situation to formulate a creative use of these models that works for your students.

TRADITIONAL BREAKFAST

Traditional Breakfast refers to breakfast served and consumed in the cafeteria. Some of the benefits of this model are that the cafeteria is already set-up for a large amount of thru-traffic, no additional equipment is necessary to serve meals and it is easy to serve hot meals. Making the cafeteria the mandatory meeting point for students when they arrive to school helps increase participation if breakfast is served prior to the start of school.

Does traditional breakfast work for my school?

1. School buses arrive early enough to allow students sufficient time in the cafeteria.　□ YES　□ NO
2. Non-bused students can arrive at school in time to participate in breakfast in the cafeteria.　□ YES　□ NO
3. The cafeteria can easily serve as a central meeting place for students in the morning.　□ YES　□ NO
4. Staff is available and willing for morning service.　□ YES　□ NO
5. Cafeteria is available for use/not in use for other purposes before school.　□ YES　□ NO
6. Cafeteria is centrally located for ease of service.　□ YES　□ NO
7. Teachers are likely to eat breakfast with students.　□ YES　□ NO
8. Cafeteria is large enough to serve potential participants.　□ YES　□ NO

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then Traditional Breakfast might be ideal for your school!

A Spin on the Traditional Model

Most schools offer Traditional Breakfast as an *option* available to students prior to the official start of the school day. However, structuring breakfast as part of the official school day is the best way to ensure maximum participation. One way schools have structured breakfast into the school day using a Traditional Breakfast model is to have students report to their first period classroom when they arrive, and then teachers lead the students as a class to the cafeteria to eat together. For schools that do not have a cafeteria large enough to fit the entire student body at once, breakfast can be served in shifts by grade.

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

Breakfast in the Classroom results in the highest participation rates of all the breakfast models and is the best at integrating breakfast into the school day for every student. Children whose schedules don't allow them to eat before school can look forward to a nutritious meal in the familiar setting of their classroom.

The model works by having students eat breakfast in the classroom at the start of the school day or during their morning break. Breakfasts can be either hot or cold and are typically packaged individually in easy to grab bags. Food service staff can deliver the meals to either the floor or individual classroom right before class starts. Alternatively, student representatives from each class can be sent down to the cafeteria to pick up the pre-packaged meals and bring them back to their classrooms. After breakfast, students or staff return meal containers and any remaining food to the cafeteria. Trashcans are placed in the hallway outside the room to eliminate mess in the classroom and make it easy for custodial staff to pick up.

Breakfast in the Classroom takes only about 10-15 minutes and does not take away from instructional time. Teachers use this time to take attendance, collect homework, make announcements or read to the class. This time could also be used for students to work on their homework or read silently.

Will breakfast in the classroom work for my school?

1. School buses arrive right before school begins.   □ YES   □ NO
2. Non-bused students arrive right before school begins.   □ YES   □ NO
3. Classroom schedules are flexible enough to incorporate breakfast into the day.   □ YES   □ NO
4. The cafeteria is small and crowded.   □ YES   □ NO
5. The cafeteria is centrally located for ease of service.   □ YES   □ NO
6. Classrooms and the kitchen are on the same floor or have accessibility ramps.   □ YES   □ NO
7. School administrators, teachers, food service staff and custodial staff are open to   □ YES   □ NO
   trying a new breakfast delivery model.

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then Breakfast in the Classroom might be ideal for your school!

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

Meal Delivery

Special equipment can be purchased to make delivery of meals to the classroom easier. This could include warmer bags for hot meals, coolers for milk and plastic containers to carry meal components. Carts can be used to hold the containers so staff can easily deliver meals down the hallway. For schools without elevators it may work well for food service staff to wheel the meals on carts to the stairwell and have a team of student leaders from each class pick up the containers for their class. By using a team of students the load is less for each child to carry, and staff avoid having to transport entire cartloads of meals up stairs.

Payment Methods

Payment can be simple with Breakfast in the Classroom. Teachers can use a roster and as they take attendance they check off which students eat breakfast. Another option is to have students drop their IDs into a bucket when they pick up their breakfast. The IDs are brought to the cafeteria with the meal containers after breakfast, and are returned to the classroom prior to lunch. Some schools have purchased portable Point of Sale machines so food service staff can collect student PINs or ID numbers in the classroom when breakfast is delivered. If the school implements Universal Breakfast (described later) then no payment collection is necessary.

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

SUCCESS STORY

School: **John Dibert Community School**
School System: **RSD Charter**
Charter Organization: **FirstLine Schools Inc.**
Grades Served: **K-8**
Enrollment: **475**
Free and Reduced Meal Enrollment: **90%**
Average # Lunches Served Daily: **401**
Average # Breakfasts Served Daily: **345**

John Dibert Community School has had great success with their Breakfast in the Classroom serving model. They adopted Breakfast in the Classroom for a few reasons. The school's cafeteria has limited physical space so it was not feasible to serve the entire student body breakfast at the same time. Also, the administration wanted to maximize the amount of classroom time for each student, which would not have been possible using the Traditional Model and having different grades eat in shifts. So the administration adopted Breakfast in the Classroom for grades K-3, and older grades eat breakfast in the cafeteria as usual.

K-3 students report to their classroom and teachers lead the students to the cafeteria together as a class. Students still pass through the cafeteria line to pick up their breakfast, which works well for schools who are using the "offer" versus "serve" method for meal components. The kitchen cashier collects each student's PIN as they pass through the checkout line. Teachers also provide rosters to the kitchen staff to back up the meals given. The meals are served onto trays which children then carry back to their classrooms to eat breakfast. Large trashcans are placed in the hallway outside the classrooms and once students have finished eating they dispose of their trash in the hallway trashcan. This not only makes clean-up easy for custodial staff but also eliminates trash in the classroom. The school has not had any problems with custodial classroom clean-up, nor have they had any complaints from teachers. On the contrary, teachers have noticed that overall there is more engaged student classroom participation since they started using Breakfast in the Classroom.

GRAB N' GO BREAKFAST

Grab N' Go is an innovative way to offer breakfast conveniently to students. The meals are easy to prepare, eat and clean up. This method works especially well for reaching middle and high school students who enjoy the flexibility and autonomy of being able to eat breakfast when and where they want.

Grab N' Go meals are prepared ahead of time and packed in paper bags, boxes or trays. The breakfasts are placed on a cart and strategically positioned in areas with a high student traffic in the morning: near the bus/carpool line, inside the main entrance or even in the gym. Food service staff operate the cart and a roster or portable Point of Sale machine can be used to collect payment if the school is not offering Universal Breakfast. Grab N' Go can be done before school, during morning break or between classes, depending on what works best for your school.

Where do students eat?

Since Grab N' Go meals are convenient and portable, students are free to eat their breakfast when and where they want. Students can eat outside, in the hallway, cafeteria, gym or classroom, depending on what the school decides are appropriate places for students to eat. Custodial staff have no increased responsibilities since students are responsible for disposing of their own trash. It may be advisable to place extra trashcans in hallways or outside, wherever students decide to congregate to eat breakfast.

GRAB N' GO BREAKFAST

Will Grab N' Go breakfast work for my school?

1.	School buses arrive right before school begins.	□ YES	□ NO
2.	Non-bused students arrive right before school begins.	□ YES	□ NO
3.	Food carts are available or space exists for placement of tables in entrances for "curb side" services.	□ YES	□ NO
4.	Breakfast needs to be served faster and serving areas need to be more accessible.	□ YES	□ NO
5.	Students grab soft drinks and snacks from vending machines as they rush to class.	□ YES	□ NO
6.	Meal payment system does not require cash at point of service.	□ YES	□ NO
7.	The cafeteria is small and crowded.	□ YES	□ NO
8.	Congestion in cafeteria dining room needs to be reduced.	□ YES	□ NO
9.	School administrators, teachers, food service staff and custodial staff are open to trying a new breakfast delivery model.	□ YES	□ NO

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then Grab N' Go might be ideal for your school!

Tip: Have Multiple Stations

Placing multiple Grab N' Go breakfast stations throughout the school is a good way to ensure maximum participation. This way all areas where students like to hang out can be covered. For schools that serve both elementary and middle school students, designating separate serving areas for those grades can be a good idea. This way, younger children don't feel intimidated, and older children don't feel like Grab N' Go is just for little kids. Usually it takes a few weeks for schools and students to figure out the best flow and positioning for Grab N' Go, depending on their school's unique situation.

GRAB N' GO BREAKFAST

SUCCESS STORY

School: **Arthur Ashe Charter School**
School System: **RSD Charter**
Charter Organization: **FirstLine Schools Inc.**
Grades Served: **K-8**
Enrollment: **496**
Free and Reduced Meal Enrollment: **90%**
Average # Lunches Served Daily: **356**
Average # Breakfasts Served Daily: **345**

Arthur Ashe Charter School uses the same breakfast serving model as John Dibert Community School. This method can best be described as a hybrid between Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab N' Go. For Arthur Ashe, the reasons for adopting an alternative breakfast model were due to space limitations. Their brand new school dining room was not large enough to handle all of the students at the same time, so younger grades (K-3) "Grab" their breakfast in the cafeteria and "Go" to their classrooms to eat. The Grab N' Go method was chosen for the younger grades because the school has found that it is easy to serve them bagged breakfast in the classroom.

Just like at John Dibert, students pass through the cafeteria serving line as a class, checkout by giving their PINs to the kitchen cashier, and carry their breakfasts back to the classroom to eat. The cafeteria dining room is then free for use by the older grades to eat breakfast, which accounts for the high breakfast participation both Arthur Ashe and John Dibert experience among the older grades who use the Traditional Model. The creative use of three different models in these schools are excellent examples of how schools can adapt the breakfast serving models outlined in this toolkit to work for their own unique situation.

SECOND CHANCE BREAKFAST

Second Chance Breakfast is a serving model in which breakfast is served to students after their first instructional period. Many children aren't hungry early in the morning before school, and some children who do eat a small breakfast at home might already be hungry again after their first class.

Meals are often served in a Grab N' Go fashion from carts in high traffic areas in the hallways as students head to their second class. This method works particularly well with middle and high school students. For high schools that have homeroom between first and second period, it is possible to do Second Chance Breakfast by offering Breakfast in the Classroom during homeroom.

Second Chance Breakfast works best when a morning break already exists or scheduling is flexible enough to incorporate one. Offering a mid-morning breakfast is a more nutritious option than students having to rely on items from vending machines for a snack to tide them over until lunch.

Will Second Chance Breakfast work for my school?

1. There is flexible class scheduling to accommodate a breakfast break.   □ YES   □ NO
2. Food carts are available or space exists for placement of tables in high-traffic areas.   □ YES   □ NO
3. Students grab soft drinks and snacks from vending machines as they rush to class.   □ YES   □ NO
4. There are one or more areas in the building where breakfast could be distributed.   □ YES   □ NO
5. Meal payment system does not require cash at point of service.   □ YES   □ NO
6. The cafeteria is small and crowded.   □ YES   □ NO
7. School administrators, teachers, food service staff and custodial staff are open to trying a new breakfast delivery model.   □ YES   □ NO

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then Second Chance Breakfast might be ideal for your school!

BREAKFAST ON THE BUS

Breakfast on the bus is ideal for school districts where most students have a long bus ride in the morning to get to school. This Is increasingly an issue in areas when students no longer attend the school in their neighborhood. Long bus rides mean that students have to leave their homes even earlier and may not be hungry that early. It could also mean that once they arrive at school they have little time to eat breakfast in the cafeteria before class starts. Serving breakfast on the bus is a great way to make sure these students get a healthy start to their day.

Food is kept in containers on the bus and coolers are used to keep the milk at the proper temperature. Meals are served to students as they board the bus. This serving model works best when the school is doing Universal Breakfast, but it is possible to have a roster in the front of the bus and students check their names off as they take their meal.

Will Breakfast on the Bus work for my school?
1. Most students have a long bus ride to school in the morning.　　□ YES　□ NO
2. School buses arrive right before the start of class.　　□ YES　□ NO
3. Students grab soft drinks and snacks from vending machines as they rush to class.　　□ YES　□ NO
4. Meal payment system does not require cash at point of service.　　□ YES　□ NO
5. School administrators, food service staff and bus drivers are open to trying a new breakfast delivery model.　　□ YES　□ NO

If you answered YES to most of these questions, then Breakfast on the Bus might be ideal for your school!

EXPANDING BREAKFAST

UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST

To facilitate the implementation of alternative breakfast models, there are some financial strategies that schools can take advantage of. A popular strategy is Universal School Breakfast: schools provide free breakfast to all students regardless of their family income status. This makes models like Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab N' Go easier to implement because it is no longer necessary to collect individual student PINs or IDs. One of the main barriers that prevents kids from eating school breakfast is the stigma that school breakfast is only for poor students. Offering free breakfast to all students eliminates this stigma and increases participation in breakfast.

Provision 2 and Universal Breakfast[27]

How does offering free breakfast to all students work financially for schools? Provision 2 is an option within the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program that allows schools offering Universal Breakfast to reduce the paperwork and streamline the operation of school breakfast. Participation in Provision 2 operates in four-year cycles:

- Baseline Year: In the first year of adopting Provision 2, schools collect applications and track meal reimbursement categories (free, reduced-price and paid), while offering free meals to all students.
- Years 2-4: Schools do not collect applications and continue to serve meals free of charge to all students, tracking only the total number of meals served. For reimbursements during years 2-4 schools apply the percentages of free, reduced-priced and paid meals from the baseline year to the total number of meals served.
- Renewal: If at the end of four years the income level of the school's population has not improved by more than five percent, then the school may continue to participate in Provision 2 without collecting new applications.

Schools must pay the difference between the cost of serving meals free to all students and the federal reimbursement. This cost is offset by the additional revenue from increased participation and the significant administrative savings. There is less paperwork as applications, claims and verification are only conducted once every four years. Meal service takes less time since cashiers are no longer needed to collect students' PINs or IDs. This allows staff to spend more time on meal preparation and service. Furthermore, increased participation in breakfast leads to economies of scale resulting in lower per-meal costs.

**Schools with a high percentage of free and reduced-price students are able to use
Provision 2 for breakfast and lunch without losing any money.[28]**

MFP AND UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST

Usually schools with 70% or more free and reduced-price students are able to use Provision 2 without losing money, although many schools with a lower percentage of free and reduced-price students use Provision 2 without losing money as well. The vast majority of schools in New Orleans fall into the 70% or more category, but are not adopting Provision 2. This is due in large part to how Louisiana ties the proportion of the student body that is "at-risk" (qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch) to a school's general funding. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is required by the Louisiana Constitution to "annually develop and adopt a formula which shall be used to determine the cost of a minimum foundation program of education in all public elementary and secondary schools."[29] This is referred to as the Minimum Foundation Program Formula, or the MFP.

Under the Level 1 tier of MFP funding, each school district is guaranteed $3,855 per weighted enrolled student. A weight is applied to students with special needs to account for additional expected costs of educating a particular type of student. The four categories used in Louisiana and their respective weights are: "at-risk" students (1.22), special education (2.5), gifted and talented (1.6), and career and technical units (1.06). So for a school district with 1,000 enrolled students and a weighted enrollment of 1,200, the minimum foundation amount for one school year would be 1,200 x $3,855 = $4,626,000.[30]

The data on the number of "at-risk" students is gathered from free and reduce-price school meal applications. Currently schools in New Orleans would not benefit from the reduced paperwork and administrative savings associated with Provision 2 because they would still have to collect applications in order to receive their MFP funding.

Changing the MFP Formula Policy
Louisiana Appleseed is a nonprofit organization that recruits professionals to donate pro bono time to solve social justice problems by effecting change at the policy level. In partnership with the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee, Louisiana Appleseed is negotiating with the Louisiana Department of Education to change the MFP data collection process. Ideally schools could use their baseline year meal category percentages under Provision 2 for the MFP funding calculation for that four-year Provision 2 cycle, although other options are being explored as well. At the time of this publication no decision has been reached.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

The barrier of the MFP "at-risk" multiplier calculation notwithstanding, there are several options available to schools who wish to implement alternative breakfast models. Significant savings and efficiencies are associated with these work-around methods.

Offer Universal Breakfast without Provision 2

Under this option, schools still collect free and reduced-price meal applications, and they still track meal reimbursement categories for lunch as usual. For breakfast, however, they offer meals to all students free of charge. For schools with a high number of students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals, the increase in participation generates sufficient revenue to cover the additional costs, even without the administrative savings of reduced paperwork. Since staff don't have to collect individual student IDs it becomes easy to offer Grab N' Go or Breakfast in the Classroom. Traditional breakfast in the cafeteria even benefits because cashiers are no longer needed so staff can spend more time on food preparation and service, thereby making the breakfast line faster and more efficient.[31]

Eliminate Reduced-Priced Breakfast

Schools offer students only two prices for breakfast: full price or free. Breakfast operates normally with individual student IDs still being collected. The difference is that free breakfast is offered both to students who qualify for free meals and to students who qualify for reduced-priced meals. The school still claims federal reimbursement at the correct income category for those students. Under normal circumstances, students who qualify for reduced-price breakfast still have to pay something for the meal and often their families can't afford it. Eliminating reduced-price meals results in higher participation in breakfast from those students. This strategy can be more attractive than Universal Breakfast for schools who have a high percentage students qualifying for free and reduced-price meals but not high enough so that Universal Breakfast becomes financially sustainable.[32]

ASSESS YOUR SCHOOL

The USDA has several tools to help schools assess their potential for expanding breakfast, including **cost calculation sheets**. To learn more please visit:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/CND/Breakfast/expansion/assessingpotential.htm.

STAKEHOLDERS

Principals
Principals are concerned with the academic success of their students, and breakfast has been shown to improve a child's ability to learn. By eating breakfast at school every day students will learn and perform better in the classroom. Principals who support expanding their school's breakfast program can garner support from teachers by reinforcing the message that breakfast helps children learn, reduces disruptive behavior problems and minimizes visits to the school nurse that take away from instructional time.

Some concerns principals might have include costs associated with expanding breakfast. As previous sections have shown, the increased participation is sufficient to support expansion through economies of scale, and increased federal reimbursements help offset costs as well. Another concern might be how alternative breakfast models affect scheduling of classes. Creative use of the strategies described for each model ensure scheduling will not be an issue.

Teachers
In schools that have already expanded their breakfast programs, teachers have found that their concerns were easily addressed and that the benefits far outweighed any costs. Participation in school breakfast improves a child's attention, academic performance and behavior.

Teachers are frequently concerned about additional workload, decreased instructional time and trash in the classroom. School food service staff, janitorial staff or the students themselves handle any additional workload associated with alternative breakfast models. Using the proper equipment can reduce work and clean-up time, as can proper breakfast clean-up techniques being modeled to students by their teachers. With Breakfast in the Classroom, teachers use the time when students are eating to take attendance or pass back homework so instructional time is not lost.

School Food Service Staff
School Food Service Staff are instrumental in making sure expanding breakfast is successful and runs smoothly. Most frequently they are worried about increased workload with expanded breakfast, yet this is often not the case. Implementing alternative breakfast will require staff to do their jobs differently but should not increase the overall amount of work. In many cases, methods like Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab N' Go can reduce the amount of time staff spend facilitating breakfast service and allow them more time to focus on meal preparation, clean up faster and have more time to get ready for lunch.

STAKEHOLDERS

School Custodial Staff

The custodial staff plays a critical role in making sure students have a clean, healthy and safe school environment in which to learn. When implementing alternative breakfast models it is important to make sure the proper trash cans are used and that students are doing their part to minimize trash and clean-up for the custodial staff. Involving students as School Breakfast Leaders who oversee clean-up provides them with a leadership and learning opportunity that students enjoy. In schools already doing alternative breakfast, the custodial staff did not find that their workload increased or that pests became a problem.

Parents

Parents are an important group in the school setting, and offering a healthy, nutritious breakfast at school helps their children to have a successful school day. Many parents are grateful for their school's breakfast program because children may not be able to eat breakfast at home for a variety of reasons: busy schedules, children aren't hungry first thing in the morning, etc. School breakfast is less expensive than many traditional breakfast meal items that might be purchased for the home, and if children are eating free or reduced-price breakfast at school, this helps out families' financial situations even more. Some students do eat breakfast at home, but a quality School Breakfast Program ensures that a nutritious breakfast option is always available to students.

GETTING STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

For additional information on how to get stakeholder support, frequently asked questions about alternative breakfast models from stakeholders, and how to address stakeholder concerns, please reference the following resources:

> **NEA-HIN & Share Our Strength Guide to Increasing School Breakfast Participation**
> **(**http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast - under "Guides & Toolkits"**)**

> **USDA Food and Nutrition Services Breakfast Expansion Resources**
> **(**http://www.fns.usda.gov/CND/Breakfast/expansion/stakeholders.htm**)**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS ABOUT EXPANDING SCHOOL BREAKFAST

<Date>

Dear Parents:

This year, we are evaluating our school community to make sure all of our students are fully prepared for academic success. As we all recognize that hungry children cannot learn, the first step in fostering a productive academic environment is ensuring that all students begin the school day with a nutritious breakfast at home or at school.

The School Breakfast Program is available to all students every weekday morning. No advance registration is necessary; your child can attend every day or only occasionally. These supervised meals are based on the nutrition recommendations set out in the Dietary Guidelines.

School Breakfast is an ideal solution on mornings when kids are running late or parents have early commitments. Whatever the reason, if breakfast at home is not convenient, please take advantage of breakfast here at school. *<Insert more details about the delivery method, price, time, etc.>*

Thank you for helping us make sure that all of our students start the school day alert, well fed and ready to learn.

Sincerely,

Principal

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SAMPLE LETTER TO PRINCIPALS ABOUT EXPANDING SCHOOL BREAKFAST

<Date>

Dear Principal:

Research shows that offering breakfast at school results in increased math and reading scores, fewer nurses' office visits, improved classroom behavior, improved attentiveness, decreased student absences and tardiness, and overall improved performance. Let's take advantage of the benefits of school breakfast by increasing student participation. While most schools traditionally offer breakfast prior to the start of the school day, barriers to participation exist. Many schools around the state have succeeded in eliminating these barriers by changing how breakfast is delivered.

There are a number of models that schools can develop to expand school breakfast participation. Some include:
- Extended breakfast periods before school.
- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Grab N' Go carts in the hallways or other locations in addition to the cafeteria.
- "Second Chance" breakfast served between first and second periods.
- Any combination of these or your own ideas that result in a plan that works for your individual school.

Make increasing breakfast program participation part of your strategy for school improvement.
Your school can expand breakfast without financially burdening the food service program. Schools can choose what they charge for breakfast based on their costs; they usually charge less than a dollar. USDA provides reimbursement for every breakfast served, based on each student's eligibility category. For each meal served, your school may receive up to $1.76 in reimbursement. Breakfast meals may increase the productivity of the food service staff you already employ.

For the health and well-being of your students, expand the School Breakfast Program in your school. Students need access to a nutritious breakfast every day.

Sincerely,
<Enclosures>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

NEA-HIN & Share Our Strength Guide to Increasing School Breakfast Participation
Share Our Strength's Center for Best Practices has many resources relating to school breakfast. The "Guide to Increasing School Breakfast" can be found in the Guides & Toolkits section. It contains the following useful information:
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Checklists for items needed to start an alternative breakfast model
- Ideas for Educators: Student Activities for Breakfast Time
- Marketing New Breakfast Programs to Students
- School Food Service 101: The Cost of School Breakfast
- Expanding School Breakfast Talking Points

(http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast)

USDA Food and Nutrition Services
- Assessing School Breakfast Potential, including help with calculating costs
- Strategies for Program Expansion
- Involving Key Stakeholders
- Marketing Resources

(http://www.fns.usda.gov/CND/Breakfast/expansion/assessingpotential.htm)

Food Research and Action Center
- Provision 2 explanation (http://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/provision2.pdf)
- School Breakfast Outreach
- School Meal Nutrition Standards
- School Meal Eligibility

(http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/school-breakfast-program/)

ABOUT SHARE OUR STRENGTH

More than 16 million children in America struggle with hunger. Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry® campaign is ending childhood hunger by connecting kids to the healthy food they need, every day. No Kid Hungry brings together governors, mayors, businesses, chefs, federal and state agencies, educators and community leaders to connect children at risk of hunger with food and nutrition programs where they live, learn and play. No Kid Hungry also teaches families how to cook healthy, affordable meals through Cooking Matters® and invests in community organizations that fight hunger. Get involved at Strength.org.

ABOUT THE NEW ORLEANS NO KID HUNGRY CAMPAIGN

In November 2010, Share Our Strength joined together with Mayor Mitch Landrieu to launch the New Orleans No Kid Hungry Campaign, a public-private partnership working to end childhood hunger in New Orleans. The campaign is working to achieve that goal by connecting kids to federal food and nutrition programs including school breakfast, summer meals and afterschool meals programs as well as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

When the New Orleans No Kid Hungry campaign launched in 2010, there were many groups addressing childhood hunger in the city. The No Kid Hungry campaign united these efforts into a single partnership and created a plan with measurable goals to end childhood hunger in New Orleans.

AT THE CORE OF THE NO KID HUNGRY STRATEGY TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN NEW ORLEANS ARE THREE GOALS:
1. Improve access to public and private nutrition programs that provide food to families and their children who need and are not receiving it.
2. Strengthen community infrastructure and systems for getting healthy food to children and families.
3. Improve families' knowledge about available programs, as well as healthy and affordable food choices that will stretch the family food budget.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katie Williams has been involved with the New Orleans No Kid Hungry Campaign since January 2011. She began as an Outreach Coordinator for the campaign through the Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corp AmeriCorps VISTA program. She is currently an MPH candidate at Tulane University's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, studying nutrition and epidemiology. She continues to work with the New Orleans No Kid Hungry Campaign on a consulting basis, developing campaign resources and conducting program evaluation.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE NO KID HUNGRY CAMPAIGN VISIT:

http://neworleans.nokidhungry.org/

http://www.nokidhungry.org/