



GUIDELINE 4

Schools maximize their participation in federal child nutrition programs.

BEST PRACTICES

- ★ Universal Breakfast, Oregon State Schools
- ★ Ohio Department of Education and Children’s Hunger Alliance School Breakfast Partnership, Columbus, Ohio
- ★ Cleveland Universal Breakfast Program, Cleveland, Ohio
- ★ Second Chance Breakfast, Los Angeles, California
- ★ National School Breakfast Week, State of Massachusetts
- ★ Breakfast program, Ronan, Montana
- ★ Team Nutrition grant, State of Connecticut
- ★ Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch, Madison, Wisconsin

Obesity and overweight trends in the United States are alarming, and the complications can be devastating. Federal and state school-wellness legislation and programs provide the groundwork to enable schools to better meet these challenges. It is in the best interest of the community to see that every child has access to good nutrition and physical activity.

Elvira Jarka, director, USDA Special Nutrition Programs,
Midwest Regional Office, Chicago, IL



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Federal child nutrition programs are beneficial for both schools and students. Each school meal provides one-third of a student's regular daily allowance of nutritional needs. Research has shown that students who participate in the National School Lunch Program eat healthier meals on a more regular basis, and those who eat school breakfast are ready to learn when the school day begins.

OBJECTIVE

Offer school breakfast and lunch if not currently participating in the federal Child Nutrition Program.

Because all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program must adhere to nutritional standards, students are more likely to eat a well-balanced meal with high nutritional value than if they pack their own lunches or purchase meals through other sources on or around the school building.

In some schools, students who receive lunch through the federal child nutrition programs are stigmatized as being low income. However, when schools take proper precautions to ensure that students cannot distinguish between free, reduced or fully paid lunches, students do not make those distinctions and are encouraged to participate. Further, when schools promote their meals and make them visually appealing, more students tend to participate in the programs.

BEST PRACTICES

★ 1. Universal breakfast, Oregon State Schools

Background: Oregon has instituted a universal breakfast program with help from a USDA grant. More than 200 schools participate by offering free breakfast to all students.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=271

★ 2. Ohio Department of Education and Children's Hunger Alliance School Breakfast Partnership, Columbus, Ohio

Background: The Children's Hunger Alliance and the Ohio Department of Education work together to assist local schools in promoting school breakfast programs. They work with school officials to overcome barriers to participation. In addition, Children's Hunger Alliance hosts local media events, including legislators and other key community leaders, to raise community awareness and celebrate the good work that school districts are doing in providing school breakfasts.



Duration: 2003-2006.

Success: From 2003 to date:

- More than 250 schools have joined the School Breakfast Partnership program;
- The number of school breakfasts served annually statewide has increased by approximately 7 million (from 34.7 million in 2003 to 41.7 million in 2005); and
- Teachers and principals have noted improvements in both attendance and behavior among students participating in the program.

★ 3. **Cleveland universal breakfast program, Cleveland Municipal School District, Cleveland, Ohio**

Background: Cleveland area schools are promoting free breakfast and lunch programs to all students. By obtaining a USDA outreach grant, the district can offer free breakfast to 77,000 students in 122 schools. Through the grant, the district also promotes the free breakfast program through mailings to all students’ homes and by creating programs to increase student awareness. Special contests have been held on “Lucky Tray Days” for students who participated in the program, with local vendors donating prizes.

Duration: The program started in the 2000-2001 school year and is ongoing.

Success: During the first year, more than 5 million breakfasts were served to approximately 28,200 students. The program has seen increased participation, especially among students at the secondary level, where an additional 325,000 more breakfasts were served since the program was implemented. A 2001 survey found that nearly 46 percent of parents stated they would not have been able to provide a breakfast for their children without the program.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=190

★ 4. **Second Chance Breakfast, Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles, California**

Background: Second Chance Breakfast was created as an alternative for those schools where other breakfast options such as Breakfast in the Classroom were not viable. Often, bus schedules did not allow students enough time to eat breakfast before school started. Under Provision 2 of USDA’s National School Lunch Program regulations, a free breakfast is provided either during morning recess or during a specially scheduled snack break between 9 and 10 a.m. A breakfast is still offered in the cafeteria for those who arrive early. To ensure that students only receive one breakfast per day, a swipe card system is used. This program allows students to receive a nutritious meal when otherwise they may have grabbed unhealthy snacks during breaks.



Duration: Started in 2004 and is ongoing, with significant rise in participation expected.

Success: By fall 2005, 700 schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District were expected to initiate Second Chance Breakfast. In 2004, 75 percent of the schools had already started the program, and reports indicate that it is most popular in secondary schools. Increased federal and state revenue is expected in the future as participation increases.

For more information:

<http://www.breakfastfirst.org/2ndChance.html>

✦ **5. National School Breakfast Week, Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Service**

Background: In order to promote the National School Breakfast Program, the state of Massachusetts distributed a poster and a suggested menu to all schools. For each day of the week, the program designated a fun nutritional theme that incorporated the name of a healthy breakfast item. The themes included “Know Your Sign,” with items such as “Addition Breakfast Sandwich,” “Multiplication Milk” and “Friendly Fractions,” with “Fruit-on-the-Bottom Yogurt” and “1/2 and 1/2 Whole Wheat Bagel.”

Duration: The American Food Service Association and the USDA started National School Breakfast Week in 1989.

For more information:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/news03/0206memo.html>

<http://www.ces.org/infobase/hotlinks/newsletter%202-04/nsbw.htm>

✦ **6. Breakfast program, Ronan School District #30, Ronan, Montana**

Background: The Ronan school district collaborated with the Department of Defense’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing Program to offer a variety of nutritious offerings to their students. Prior to participating in the program, students involved in the breakfast program were only choosing fruits and vegetables 10 to 20 percent of the time in the upper grades, and 70 percent of the time at the elementary level.

The program offered students more choices of fruits, and provided the option of fruit cups “to go.” The staff took more time to ensure that the fruits and vegetables were attractively arranged. For example, fruit that browns quickly when exposed to the air was dipped in a solution to better maintain its fresh appearance longer.



Success: After the inception of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing Program, participation in the School Breakfast program increased 10 percent (a total of 300 to 475 students now participate). Students choosing fruits and vegetables every day increased from about 25 to 150, with most of the increase seen in the middle and high school ages.

For more information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/Making-It-Happen/>
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/dod/default.htm>

★ **7. Team Nutrition grant, Department of Education, Connecticut**

Background: The state Department of Education was presented with a Team Nutrition grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service. The goal of Connecticut’s grant is to provide a support system to help school foodservice professionals with planning, preparing and serving nutritious meals that are appealing to children. The grant will provide regional training workshops, including multiple sessions of 12-hour courses and three-hour workshops, for foodservice personnel. The focus of the workshop training is increasing the serving of fruits and vegetables in school meals. On-site assistance will also be provided to school staff.

Duration: The grant was received and implemented in September 2004 and will continue through September 2006.

For more information:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>
<http://www.team.uconn.edu/>

★ **8. Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch, Madison, Wisconsin**

Background: Through a two-year federal Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) grant, three elementary schools in Madison, Wisconsin, are piloting a program to bring farms and school programs together. This program includes activities such as field trips, classroom visits by farmers, taste-testing of local foods, schoolwide food fairs and local meals, lunchroom composting and recycling, school gardening, curricula enrichment, and art projects focused on themes of food and community. For many schools, farm-to-school programs have an immense appeal, because they bring fresh produce to the school lunchroom.

Duration: Begun in the 2005-2006 school year, it will conclude at the end of the 2006-2007 school year.

For more information:

http://www.theorganicreport.com/pages/345_organic_food_in_schools_part_1.cfm



RESOURCES

Communities can play a role in preventing childhood obesity.

The Institute of Medicine addresses a community's ability to positively impact childhood obesity. The document addresses health disparities mobilizing communities, and the community's food environment as key factors for involvement and interaction.
<http://www.iom.edu>

Help school children make the grade in nutrition.

This document reviews the success of the National School Lunch Program and its nutritional value in participating schools. The article highlights competition from "outside food," local healthy school policies, resources, cafeteria environment and healthy recipes.
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/oct05/school1005.htm>

Institute of Medicine of the National Academies: Nutritional standards for foods in schools

This site provides reviews and resources for food service professionals and addresses issues surrounding nutritional standards for schools and youth. The food and nutrition board has been established to address food supply and food safety. The site provides numerous references for best-practice requirements and recent research findings.
<http://www.iom.edu/fnb>

Keystone Center Youth Policy Summit

This is the final report of the "Keystone Youth Policy Summit Student Agreement, Child and Adolescent Nutrition in America Policy Recommendations." Forty high school students, along with 10 specialized science and math teachers from across the country, researched nutrition and then met in order to produce recommendations helping youth to lead healthier lives. The report includes those recommendations, along with further useful resources to improve wellness.
<http://www.keystone.org>

Food and Drug Administration

Information on all types of programs sponsored by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, including useful information on nutrition and food safety resources.
<http://www.fda.gov>

Nutrition.gov

A guide to nutrition and health information on various federal government Web sites, provided by the United States Department of Agriculture.
www.nutrition.gov

US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service

Information on nutrition assistance programs, child nutrition, food stamps and other nutrition assistance programs.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov>



Regulations, USDA Child Nutrition Programs

Information and regulations for participating in the USDA child nutrition programs.
<http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Regulations/index.html#lunch>

Ohio Department of Education Child Nutrition Services

Resources on teaching children the link between nutrition, health and educational success.
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us> (Search for food service or nutrition education.)





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