



School Breakfast: Questions and Answers

Questions about School Breakfast	How School Breakfast and Lunch Work
<p>Isn't it a family's responsibility to feed its kids? Schools have no role here.</p>	<p>Many families cannot afford to feed their children the healthy meals they would like to provide. One out of eight Alaska families struggles to put enough food on the table.¹ Even for more fortunate families, bus and commuting schedules can interfere with children being fed and ready to learn when they arrive at school.</p>
<p>How can schools make this work with everything else they are required to do?</p>	<p>School breakfast and lunch supports the educational mission of schools by enhancing student achievement and learning. Hungry children show lower test scores, more absenteeism and tardiness, and more behavioral and emotional problems.²</p>
<p>How does the state government get involved in supporting breakfast and lunch in schools?</p>	<p>39 states have passed legislation supporting school meal reimbursements. Alaska is not one of them.³ Alaska is missing out on \$1.9 million in federal funds due to underutilization of the School Breakfast Program—and state action can help leverage those federal dollars.⁴</p> <p>School Lunch programs in Alaska are experiencing extraordinary expense increases, as are Alaska families. State assistance with the federal national School Breakfast and Lunch programs will add to success for Alaska children in Alaska classrooms.</p>
<p>Shouldn't schools be working on the obesity problem instead?</p>	<p>Eating a healthy breakfast and lunches is associated with reduced risk of obesity.⁵ Children who eat school breakfast start their day with healthy foods including milk, fruits, vegetables, and whole or enriched grains.</p>
<p>References: ¹Nord, Mark, Margaret Andrews and Steven Carlson. "Household Food Security in the United States, 2005." Economic Research Report 29. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, November 2006. Available at http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR29/. ²Center on Hunger and Poverty. "The Consequences of Hunger and Food Insecurity for Children: Evidence from Recent Scientific Studies." June 2002. Available at http://www.centeronhunger.org/pdf/ConsequencesofHunger.pdf. ³Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). "School Breakfast Scorecard 2007." Washington, DC: FRAC, December 2007. Available at http://www.frac.org/pdf/SBP_2007.pdf. ⁴Ibid. ⁵<i>Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine</i>. 2003;157:780-784. See also Center on Weight & Health, <i>Pediatric Overweight: A Review of the Literature</i>, June 2001, page 48.</p>	

SCHOOL BREAKFAST FACT SHEET (Provided by the Alaska Food Coalition)

- **Improves Student Performance:**

Children who eat a complete breakfast, versus a partial one, make fewer mistakes and work faster in math and number checking tests.

Wyon D, Abrahamson L, Jartelius M, Fletcher R, "An Experimental Study of the Effects of Energy Intake at Breakfast on the Test Performance of 10 Year-Old Children in School." International Journal of Food Science and Nutrition, 1997, 48 (1): 5-12.

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.

Vaisman N, Voet H, Akivis A, Valil E, "Effects of Breakfast Timing on the Cognitive Functions of Elementary School Students." Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine 1996 150:1089-1092

Serving breakfast to kids at school significantly improves their cognitive or mental abilities, enabling them to be more alert, pay better attention, and to perform better in reading and math.

Brown, JL, Beardslee, WH, Prothrow-Stith, D, "Impact of School Breakfast of Children's Health and Learning: An Analysis of the Scientific Research," 2008, available through www.SodexoFoundation.org.

- **Increases School Attendance**

Schools breakfast programs can lower absence and tardiness rates and improve standardized achievement test scores.

Meyers A, Sampson AE, Weitzman M, Rogers BL, Kayne H, "School Breakfast program and School Performance." American Journal of Diseases of Children 1989; 143: 1234-39.

School administrators in Minnesota reported significant improvements in school attendance as the result of instituting a breakfast program over a two-year period.

Begalle. "More Than Test Scores: Results of the Universal Breakfast Pilot in MN," Topics in Clinical Nutrition, 1999:15.

- **Decreases School Violence**

Teens experiencing hunger are more likely to have been suspended from school, have difficulty getting along with other children, and have no friends

Kleinman RE, Murphy JM, Little M, Pagano M, Wehler CA, Regal K, Kellinek MS. "Hunger in Children in the United States: Potential Behavioral and Emotional Correlates" Pediatrics 1998; 101(1):E3.

Research shows corresponding decrease in discipline problems directly related to participation in the breakfast program.

Begalle. "More Than Test Scores: Results of the Universal Breakfast Pilot in MN," Topics in Clinical Nutrition, 1999:15.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found "strong evidence that school-based meal programs "decrease rates of violence and aggressive behavior among school-aged children. (www.cdc.gov, 2008)

- **Fights Obesity and Improves Nutrition**

Adolescents who eat breakfast tend to have a lower body mass index (BMI); higher BMI's can indicate overweight and obesity

Fiore H, Travis S, Whalen A, Auinger P, Ryan S. "Potentially Protective Factors Associated with Healthful Body Mass Index in Adolescents with Obese and Non-Obese Parents: A Secondary Data Analysis of the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1988-1994," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 2006; 106: 55-64.

Studies show that nutritionally at-risk kids in the U.S. exhibited improvements in nutritional intake as a result of participating in the School Breakfast Program.

Kleinman, Hall, et. al, "Diet, Breakfast and Academic Performance in Children, *Annals of Nutritional Metabolism*, 2002:46