

# How School Breakfast Can Help Kids – and Your Bottom Line

by Rachel Sabella, Director, No Kid Hungry New York

While every staff member in a school district has a unique role to play, they all share one major responsibility: ensuring the well-being of each and every student. That includes everything from their safety, education, and mental health, to their social and emotional welfare. We spend so much time and energy on ways to improve our schools and communities, but the simple truth is that if kids are coming to school too hungry to learn, we've lost before we've even begun.

It may surprise many to learn that 1 in 5 children in New York State live in households that struggle to regularly put enough food on the table. When children do not start the day with a nutritious breakfast, they lack the proper tools needed to ensure their success. That's why we're thrilled so many schools across the state have implemented Breakfast After the Bell (BAB), which shifts the time breakfast is served so that it's a part of the school day and moves breakfast from the cafeteria to where students are, like classrooms and common areas. BAB increases school breakfast participation by meeting the needs of the kids so that every child starts the day ready to learn. A healthy breakfast is a critical school supply, just like textbooks and pencils!

## Financial Impact of School Breakfast

Maximizing school breakfast participation can have significant impacts on a school district's budget and revenue. Meals provided through the National School Breakfast Program are reimbursed by the federal government, meaning that improved participation in the program brings additional dollars directly into the school system. In addition to state grant funds, many non-profit organizations, including No Kid Hungry, provide grants that are available to schools to support implementation of Breakfast After the Bell.

When surveyed, school districts that implement Breakfast After the Bell did not find the process to be cost-prohibitive as the increased revenue from higher participation adequately covered start-up costs. No Kid Hungry works with superintendents, school business officials, and school food service directors across the country who consistently highlight increased revenue as a top reason for choosing to start Breakfast After the Bell programs.

## What is Breakfast After the Bell?

Breakfast After the Bell is one of the most effective ways to significantly boost school breakfast participation. The three most common delivery models include:

- **Breakfast in the Classroom:** breakfast is served and eaten in the classroom after the official start of the school day.
- **Grab and Go:** students pick up conveniently packaged breakfasts from mobile service carts in high traffic areas, such as hallways, entryways or cafeterias and eat in the classroom or common areas.
- **Second Chance Breakfast:** students eat breakfast during a break in the morning, often after first period or midway between breakfast and lunch.

BAB programs often incorporate elements of multiple models and can be customized to meet the needs of each school.

## The Impact of Breakfast After the Bell Programs

In schools where breakfast is offered in the cafeteria before the school day begins, students often face barriers that prevent them from participating in the breakfast program, including:

- Carpool and buses arrive too late for students to eat breakfast at school,
- Students choosing to socialize with friends before school starts rather than eat breakfast,
- Cafeteria location is not convenient for students, and
- Stigma associated with school breakfast being only for low-income students.

Breakfast After the Bell meets the needs of all students by addressing these barriers and providing more kids with the healthy food they need to learn and thrive. Making school breakfast a seamless part of the day by serving it after the bell is connected to positive impacts in classrooms and schools. After implementing Breakfast After the Bell in their schools, principals and teachers report seeing numerous benefits for their students including:

- Higher test scores
- Calmer classrooms
- More attentive students
- Fewer referrals to the principal's office for behavioral problems
- Higher attendance rates
- Higher graduation rates
- Fewer visits to the nurse for stomach aches
- Improvements in health

### What's New for New York State and School Breakfast

The 2018 New York State budget included an incredible opportunity for nearly 1,400 schools in every corner of New York State to expand their school breakfast offerings to include Breakfast After the Bell, and to be eligible for state grant funding for implementation. This opportunity includes all schools with 70% or more students eligible for

free and reduced-price meals. More information about what is available from the New York State Education Department on school breakfast can be found at <http://www.cn.nysed.gov/>.

To connect with No Kid Hungry New York and learn more about school breakfast options that best support your community, please contact Rachel Sabella, Director, at [NoKidHungryNY@strength.org](mailto:NoKidHungryNY@strength.org).

### About Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign

No child should go hungry in America. But 1 in 6 kids will face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger through effective programs that provide kids with the food they need. This is a problem we know how to solve. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization working to end hunger and poverty. Join us at [NoKidHungry.org](http://NoKidHungry.org). ◀

*Rachel Sabella is the Director at No Kid Hungry New York.*



**Independent Financial Advisors**

CMA assists over 180 school districts across New York State to meet all of their capital and cash flow needs.

**CMA's services include:**

New money serial bond and bond anticipation note financing, TAN and RAN cash flow financing, Sale of refunding bonds and refunding analysis, Competitive lease financing, Credit rating presentations, State aid maximization, Consolidation studies, and Continuing Disclosure.

**Long Island**  
**Richard Tortora**  
 Great Neck  
 516-487-9815

**Western New York**  
**Rick Ganci**  
 Orchard Park  
 716-662-3910

**Hudson Valley**  
**Beth Ferguson**  
 Hopewell Junction  
 845-227-8678

**Southern Tier**  
**Roy McMaster**  
 Elmira  
 607-734-4308

[www.capmark.org](http://www.capmark.org)