




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools and Charter School Administrators
FROM: Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education 
DATE: January 28, 2013
SUBJECT: The School Breakfast Program Supports Students' Readiness to Learn

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is committed to working with school districts and providers to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality education. As you know, we can only accomplish this goal if our children arrive at school ready to learn. Serving breakfast at school can play a critical role in ensuring such readiness.

The CSDE strongly encourages all Connecticut schools to take advantage of resources available to implement, or expand, the federally funded School Breakfast Program (SBP). The SBP provides funding for schools to make nutritious morning meals available to all students.

The SBP is severely underutilized in Connecticut, where a relatively small percentage of children take advantage of the program. According to the *Food Research and Action Center School Breakfast Scorecard*, released on 1/15/13, for every 100 low-income students that ate school lunch in Connecticut during school year 2011-12, only 45 ate school breakfast. The scorecard also ranks Connecticut last in the nation in the number of National School Lunch Program schools that also offer breakfast.

Therefore, as educational leaders committed to ensuring students' readiness for learning, I am asking for your support to increase the availability of breakfast in our schools. Schools may choose to serve breakfast in several ways. Most are familiar with the model where schools serve breakfast in the cafeteria outside of the instructional day. However, the model that results in the highest student participation is when the student consumes his or her breakfast in the classroom. This in-classroom model can occur when breakfast is delivered directly to the classroom or when the student takes the breakfast at a centralized location and then brings the meal to class. School breakfast may be served and eaten in the classroom while instructional activities are underway, therefore not impacting instructional time.

The good news is that there are resources to assist schools in getting started. These resources include:

- Federal and state funding are available to support school breakfast programs;
- In partnership with the CSDE, the New England Dairy and Food Council (NEDFC) offers funding for breakfast start-up or expansion program; and
- The Connecticut Breakfast Expansion Team (CBET), a collaboration of the CSDE, End Hunger CT!, the New England Dairy & Food Council, Action for Healthy Kids, and the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut, provides one-on-one support to schools wishing to start the SBP or improve the performance of an existing program.

Please know that the partners listed above have been asked to reach out to individual districts to provide their expertise and support in implementing or expanding the SBP. With the support of the CSDE and our partners, the SBP is an easy way to enhance children's health and readiness to learn.

Please contact Jackie Schipke, CSDE Education Consultant, by telephone at 860-807-2123 or e-mail at jackie.schipke@ct.gov to discuss the steps required to implement or expand the program in your school.