

Invest in School Breakfast



A healthy breakfast helps students focus in class, score higher on standardized tests and avoid trips to the school nurse. When children are hungry, they struggle to concentrate on a reading assignment or solve a math problem.

Despite strong evidence of the benefits of school breakfast, New Jersey ranks 48th in the nation for its very low participation in this federally-funded child nutrition program.

This is because many NJ districts serve breakfast before school starts when most children have not yet arrived at school. The solution is to serve breakfast after school starts. Known as “Breakfast After the Bell,” this approach significantly boosts participation and gives more kids a nutritious morning meal that can help them concentrate and learn.

FY 2013 Budget Recommendation

Restore a \$3 million cut to the school breakfast program to provide districts with an incentive to adopt more effective models of serving breakfast.



District officials often erroneously believe that serving breakfast after the bell, usually in the classroom, is logistically impossible. Common concerns are cost, clean-up and lost instructional time. But many school districts have easily met these challenges and are reaping the academic rewards of ensuring that school children begin their day with a full stomach.

Support School Breakfast Expansion

Although the School Breakfast Program is primarily federally-funded, New Jersey had allocated \$3 million to reimburse districts an extra 10 cents per breakfast served to hungry school children. This was done to encourage greater student participation in school breakfast.

That funding was cut in FY 2011. Since the cut, New Jersey has fallen even farther behind, dropping from 46th to 48th nationally.

A growing number of New Jersey districts are recognizing the need to change their approach to serving breakfast. State fiscal support would encourage and expand these efforts. This small expenditure can leverage the billions of dollars New Jersey spends each year on public education and advance the goal of ensuring that all students graduate career and college ready.

For more information and copies of the Kids Count report and budget brief, contact Advocates for Children of New Jersey at (973) 643-3876 , advocates@acnj.org, www.acnj.org.

Giving Every Child A Chance