

Nebraska School Breakfast Playbook: *Implementation Toolkit*



Start the Day with a Win





Dear Breakfast Champions,

Nebraska has been piloting alternative breakfast models for years! We're lucky to have early pioneers of Grab and Go, Second Chance, and Breakfast in the Classroom and it's time we honor their legacy and help these models spread!

Research shows that children who eat breakfast have better focus, miss less school, have higher grades and test scores, and are healthier than children who skip breakfast.

We also know that moving breakfast out of the cafeteria before school and making it a part of the school day is the best way to get meals to the most kids! Alternative models do just that. Small changes can have a huge impact!

The Nebraska Student Nutrition Action Committee (SNAC) is a group of advocates, educators, school nutrition professionals and state agency leaders who have joined forces to help Nebraska improve school meal participation. Go Big Breakfast is a project focused on improving Nebraska school breakfast participation.

Use this playbook to move breakfast forward in your community. Please reach out with questions or requests for assistance as they come up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Savaiano".

Eric Savaiano
Nebraska SNAC Facilitator
Nebraska Appleseed





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Nebraska SNAC: Who We Are

- **School Breakfast Changes Lives:**
How one meal transforms students, classrooms and schools
- **Childhood Hunger in Nebraska:**
A problem with a solution
- **School Breakfast in Nebraska**

Thank you guys for feedin
us without you guys I DK
if any of us would be livin.

PS: Thank you guys 😊



School Breakfast 101

Research shows that the simple act of eating school breakfast can dramatically change a child's life. Making school breakfast a seamless part of the school day by serving it after the bell can also have a huge impact on classrooms ([Food Research and Action Center](#)).



Here are five impacts of breakfast:

1) Higher Test Scores

Hunger makes school harder. On average, students who eat school breakfast achieve 17.5% higher scores on standardized math tests.

2) Calmer Classrooms

Children who do not regularly get enough nutritious food to eat tend to have significantly higher levels of behavioral, emotional and educational problems.

3) Fewer Trips To The Nurse

When kids come to school hungry, they visit the school nurse more often due to stomach aches and headaches. Kids who struggle with hunger are also likely to be sick more often, recover from illness more slowly, be more susceptible to obesity and to be hospitalized more frequently.

4) Stronger Attendance & Graduation Rates

On average, student attendance increases by 1.5 days per year for kids who regularly start the day with a healthy breakfast. Students who attend class more regularly are 20% more likely to graduate from high school.

5) Maximizes Our Country's Future

When children are hungry, they struggle to grow up into strong, healthy and productive members of our society. This comes at a massive cost to the American economy and its potential.

Every time we feed a child, we're unlocking their ability to grow up to become the next future teachers, scientists and entrepreneurs.

School Breakfast 101

Over **91,000 children in Nebraska** live in households that struggle to put enough food on the table.

This is a problem with a solution. Programs like school breakfast are designed to close the gap between kids who have enough to eat and those who don't. These programs are only successful, however, when they actually reach the kids who need them.

Childhood Hunger in Nebraska By the Numbers

91,930

Number of children in Nebraska who struggle with hunger.*

19.2%

Percentage of children in Nebraska who struggle with hunger.*

40th

Nebraska ranks 40th in the nation for percentage of kids struggling with hunger.*

47%

Percentage of kids getting a free/reduced-price lunch who are also getting school breakfast.**

47th

Nebraska ranks 47th in the nation among percentages of kids getting a free/reduced price lunch also getting school breakfast.**

SOURCES

*Feeding America

**FRAC 2025 Breakfast Report (with data from SY23-24)

School Breakfast 101

Key Nebraska Stats

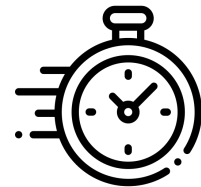


*Data based on NDE State Profile SY24-25 & FRAC 2025 Breakfast Report (with data from SY23-24)

Barriers to School Breakfast

Traditional school breakfast programs often have barriers that prohibit students from eating breakfast before school, such as:

- **Transportation:** The school bus doesn't arrive in time for kids to get breakfast in the cafeteria.
- **Busy mornings:** Regardless of their socioeconomic status, many families are rushed in the morning and don't always have time for breakfast at home.
- **Stigma:** There is often stigma associated with eating breakfast in the cafeteria before school starts; therefore, children avoid it, especially middle- and high-school students, for whom social status and the perceptions of their peers loom large.
- **Lack of resources:** For low-income families, there simply may not always be enough food at home for kids to have a healthy breakfast.



School Breakfast 101

What are Alternative Breakfast Models?

When schools move breakfast out of the cafeteria and make it a regular part of the school day, students are much more likely to participate. [Learn more.](#)

1. Grab and Go

Students pick up food from kiosks or service lines around the school and eat in their classrooms or common areas. This model can help schools with fewer nutrition staff serve a high volume of students as they enter the building and can also make clean up easier for janitorial staff.

2. Second Chance Breakfast

Students are given a second chance to pick up a meal following their first period class or home room. Students are then able to get a nutritious meal when they're heading to their next class and are actually hungry.

3. Breakfast in the Classroom

Students (usually younger) are served breakfast in their classroom at the beginning of the school day. The meal is brought to the classroom by a designated student, staff member, or volunteer in warming bags or coolers and then distributed by teachers who can incorporate lessons into meal time.

4. Breakfast after the Bell

Students are allowed to bring breakfast back to their classroom and eat 10-15 minutes after the first period bell.

How is Nebraska doing?

These programs are under-utilized in our state, resulting in less federal reimbursement and fewer students eating the food they need to be healthy and succeed academically. We can do better!

Alternative Breakfast Models in Nebraska SY25-26

Breakfast Model	Number of Schools	Average Participation %
<i>B/f in the Classroom</i>	25	78%
<i>Grab and Go</i>	262	54%
<i>Other</i>	30	56%
<i>Traditional</i>	500	43%
<i>No Breakfast</i>	131	0%

School Breakfast 101

What are Universal Free Service options?

Data shows that universal free meal options for high poverty schools, like the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and Provision 2, feed more students and also contribute to a culture of success. See options below.

1. Community Eligibility

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a federal program that allows high poverty schools to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students regardless of family income. Schools with populations of 25 percent or more directly certified students can elect to participate with reimbursement rising as poverty increases.

2. Provision 2

Provision 2 offers no cost meals to all students regardless of income for breakfast OR lunch using the average participation of students during the first of a four year cycle. Similar to CEP, this option allows districts to eliminate the free lunch application form.

3. Free meals (“Nonpricing”)

Studies have shown that schools with lower breakfast participation (under 50 percent) and relatively high FRPL populations (70 percent or more) can still break even using nonpricing because of the participation increase resulting from no cost meals.

4. Eliminating the Reduced Price Copay

For schools that can't operate CEP or Provision 2, they can consider using local nutrition program funds to pay the small copays difference (\$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch) for reduced-price category students, essentially expanding the “free” category

Additional Resources

UNIVERSAL FREE SCHOOL MEALS: COMPARING FUNDING OPTIONS TO CREATE HUNGER-FREE SCHOOLS

Every student deserves access to healthy food every day, and offering students meals at no cost to them, often referred to as universal free school meals, is a great way to make that happen. The most common benefits of offering universal free meals are:

- Reduced or eliminated stigma, as the financial barrier of paying for school meals is eliminated.
- Less paperwork for school nutrition staff.
- More streamlined meal service operations.
- Less unpaid meal debt, and
- Fewer students turned away due to inability to pay.

Removing the financial barrier of school meals for students also increases meal participation. Increased meal participation translates to more revenue coming into the district because each additional meal served increases the amount of federal reimbursements the district receives. The more kids that eat school breakfast and lunch, the more revenue the district has to reinvest in the school meals program and make it a success.

School districts have several school meal funding options for implementing universal free school meals, including the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), Provision 2, and locally funded universal free meals (“nonpricing”). The chart below highlights the differences between each option:

	Community Eligibility Provision	Provision 2	Non-Pricing
Which Meals Are Offered at No Cost to Students?	All students are offered both school breakfast and lunch at no cost to them.	Schools can use Provision 2 to offer either breakfast and/or lunch to all students at no cost to them.	Schools may offer either school breakfast and/or lunch to all students at no cost to them.
Which Schools Are Eligible?	High-poverty schools are eligible when the identified student percentage is at least 40%. Identified students are eligible to have meals brought to their schools through a state or local nutrition program or are households that participate in SNAP, TANF, or other federal nutrition programs, in foster care, or enrolled in head start (pre-kindergarten, in-state).	All schools are eligible to participate.	All schools are eligible.

[Providing Universal Free Meals - No Kid Hungry](#)

Free/No-Cost Meal Options in Nebraska Schools

Free/no-cost school meals were universal across the country for two years during the pandemic. They allowed equal access to school meals, leveling the financial playing field by giving every student a school meal when they asked for one. In many schools, these free/no-cost options can be realized again through National School Lunch Program (NSLP) options or local innovation. See below for options and even more benefits of free/no-cost school meals.

- Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**
CEP is an NSLP option that allows high-poverty schools and districts to offer meals at no charge. Eligibility is based on the number of students participating in SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, or other categories like homeless or foster youth. Meal reimbursement is based on the number of identified students and meals served. Participating schools lock in eligibility for four years and no longer need to collect annual meal applications, track down meal debts, or scan each child individually when receiving meals.
- Provision 2**
Provision 2 is another NSLP option that offers students free/no-cost meals at breakfast, lunch, or both. It potentially eliminates the need for meal applications for that meal service, reducing administrative burden for staff. Meal reimbursement is based on the number of students participating in school meals categorized as free, reduced-price, or paid. In year one of the four-year cycle, students are counted. In years two through four, those counts carry over from year one. Breakfast is the most popular meal with which to utilize this option.
- Eliminate the Reduced-Price Copay**
For schools that can't operate CEP or Provision 2, they can consider using local nutrition program funds to pay the small copays difference (\$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch) for reduced-price category students, essentially expanding the “free” category. This change helps families living on the edge economically and reduces the amount of meal debt collection needed.
- Non-Pricing**
No fees are collected from students, while schools continue to receive federal reimbursements for the meals served under the three-tiered (free, reduced-price, and paid) system. Schools must continue to collect school meal applications each year and count and claim meals as free, reduced-price, or paid.

Additional resources:

- EDNA's CEP Page
- Local Government Action Centers
- EDNA's CEP Page

Pairing a free/no-cost meal option with an alternative breakfast model is the best practice for reaching as many students as possible. See [EDNA's CEP Page](#) for more information.

[Free/No Cost Meal Options for Nebraska Schools - Nebraska Appleseed](#)

PART 2

Make It Happen: Resources and Technical Tools

By Stakeholder:

- Resources for Administrators (p.11)
- Resources for Nutrition Staff (p.16)
- Resources for Teachers (p.21)



Resources for Administrators



- You and Alternative Breakfast Models
- Alternative Breakfast Model Educational Materials
 - Student Participation Tips
 - Breakfast after the Bell Myths
 - Implementation Tools
- Hear from Other Administrators



Resources for Administrators

You and Alternative Breakfast Models

Administrators like school principals and district leadership are vital to ensuring students get the food they need to succeed.

Many students struggle with academics because they don't get the food they need, no matter what economic background they come from.

Traditional school breakfast can maintain barriers that keep kids from eating:

- parents and busses dropping students off too late,
- students not knowing about school breakfast,
- students choosing to socialize with friends,
- stigma around school breakfast

[Alternative breakfast models](#) like Grab and Go to the classroom, Breakfast In the Classroom, and Second Chance Breakfast, provide more kids with the healthy food they need to learn and thrive.

More kids eating breakfast is great for schools:

- improved academic outcomes and attendance
- decreased school nurse visits and behavioral disruptions. [[Food Research and Action Center](#)]

By supporting alternative breakfast, you are directly supporting the health and well-being of all students, you are advocating for teachers and school nurses, as hunger contributes to loss of instructional time and more nurse visits, and you are aiding parents, because mornings at home can feel rushed and time for breakfast can easily get pushed aside.

School breakfast expenses are not part of the school system's education budget. Learn more about how school meals reach kids and the finances involved with [How School Meals Reach Kids](#).

This playbook is here to provide you with everything needed to get a successful alternative breakfast model up and running.

“For many of our students, breakfast at school is more than a meal — it’s a chance to start the day nourished, focused, and ready to learn. Providing that foundation ensures every child has an equal start, no matter their circumstance.”

Jason Owens

Principal

Aram Center (6-12 alternative
education school)

Kearney Public Schools

Resources for Administrators



Implementation Resources

Nebraska Alternative Breakfast Models Fact Sheet for Administrators:

Nebraska-specific information for district and school administrators including common concerns and solutions that have proven useful in other districts.

Participation Tips And Student Surveys: High breakfast participation is the result of many different aspects of the breakfast program running smoothly, from the logistics of the program, to gaining buy-in from the student body. These resources highlight how to increase breakfast participation.

Alternative Breakfast Models 101 Webinar: Geared towards teachers and administrators, this FRAC webinar outlines how Breakfast After the Bell benefits students and classrooms, and how it can be a seamless part of the instructional day.

School Breakfast – Healthier Than You Think: School breakfast often gets a bad rap for being unhealthy, when in reality the food options served at breakfast must adhere to strict nutritional guidelines and are often much healthier than store-bought breakfast.

Innovative Breakfast Delivery Options: Alternative breakfast models often incorporate elements of multiple models and can look different in each school; however, three models in particular are the most effective at increasing breakfast participation. Learn about each Breakfast After the Bell Model and choose which model best suits your school's needs.

Breakfast after the Bell Myths: This easy-to-read document addresses common myths about Breakfast after the Bell (alternative breakfast models) and provides information to dispel concerns you or your staff may have.

Implementation Checklist: This collection of tools includes a Pre-implementation Checklist, Breakfast After the Bell Rollout Timelines and a Breakfast in the Classroom Activity Guide. Each tool is unique, but complement each other nicely to create an extensive set of implementation tools that can guide multiple school stakeholders on how to create a successful Breakfast After the Bell launch.

How School Meals Reach Students: This resource traces the path of the funding that supports school breakfast and lunch from Congress to cafeteria. It also answers common questions that educators have about how the programs work.



Resources for Administrators



Hear from other Administrators

"'Breakfast Is The Most Important School Supply!' This statement resonates deeply with me. As I reflect upon what our learners need to be successful, school breakfast is one of the most, if not the most, critical. Proper nutrition leads to higher focus and cognitive ability both inside and outside of the classroom. We are so blessed and thankful to have a strong breakfast program within our district. I KNOW it has supported the success of our kiddos in so many ways."

*Jason Libal, Superintendent,
Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools*

"Our Grab and Go Breakfast ensures all elementary students start their day ready to learn by providing quick, nutritious meals that increase participation, improve focus, and reduce tardiness."

*Dr. Shannon Thoendel,
Director of Elementary
Education,
Bennington Public Schools*

Nebraska Examples



Breakfast Success Story from West Lawn Elementary in Grand Island, NE: [Watch](#) how nutrition services, a principal, and teachers came together to promote the district's vision for breakfast and transition from a traditional cafeteria model to a breakfast in the classroom model.



Millard, NE's Superintendent supports breakfast : [Hear from](#) Millard Superintendent Sutfin about how he is combating hunger in his district with breakfast.

Resources for Nutrition Staff



- You and Alternative Breakfast Models
- Implementation Resources
 - Choosing the Right Breakfast Model
 - Pre-Implementation Checklist
 - Menu Planning
 - Financial Management
 - Gaining Buy-In From Stakeholders
- Hear from School Nutrition Staff

Resources for Nutrition Staff



You and Alternative Breakfast Models

School Nutrition Staff play an essential role in the lives of students in their district.

School nutrition staff greet students each day with healthy, delicious food. This food fills students' bellies and helps them focus on what is important - learning and having fun with their friends - not hunger.

Many students do not participate in school breakfast because of factors beyond their control: bus schedules and stigma associated with eating in the cafeteria are just a couple.

Alternative breakfast models are options that makes breakfast a part of the school day.

By implementing an alternative model in your district, you are:

- supporting students eating together in their classrooms as a community
- helping remove stigma from the breakfast program
- supporting teachers and principals by ensuring that students get their basic needs met and are able to learn more effectively

Alternative breakfast models are the most effective way to boost breakfast participation. By implementing an alternative breakfast model, you are ensuring increased revenue and a stronger nutrition department. Offering an alternative breakfast is a win for students, the school, and the nutrition department!

This playbook is here to provide you with everything you need to get a successful alternative breakfast model up and running in your district.

“Alternative breakfast models provide Districts with tools to customize breakfast in ways that uniquely serve their students and foster relationships of support. Using an alternative model to provide breakfast allows for interaction with students and staff that isn't seen in strictly traditional service scenarios. In my experience this relationship building has proven to be beneficial to all stakeholders.”

Shelia Sanford

Director of Nutrition Services,
Kearney Public Schools,
Kearney, NE

Resources for Nutrition Staff



Implementation Resources

Nebraska Alternative Breakfast Model Fact Sheet for Nutrition Staff:

Nebraska-specific information for Nutrition Directors and staff including common concerns and solutions that have proven useful in other districts.

Participation Tips And Student Surveys: High breakfast participation is the result of many different aspects of the breakfast program running smoothly, from the logistics of the program, to gaining buy-in from the student body. These resources highlight how to increase breakfast participation.

Choosing the Right Breakfast Model: Learn about the different Breakfast After the Bell models and determine which models suit your community best.

Pre-Implementation Checklist: Preparing for implementation can make the transition from traditional cafeteria breakfast to Breakfast After the Bell smoother and increase the chances of maintaining a successful breakfast program. Allowing for adaptations during early implementation can help improve your program along the way. This resource provides a detailed checklist that schools can use to help prepare for Breakfast After the Bell implementation.

Grab and Go Rollout Timeline: The Grab and Go Rollout Timeline outlines action steps school stakeholders can take to help prepare for the launch of an alternative breakfast model. The rollout timelines span both long-term action steps and short-term action steps — starting at 8 weeks before implementation and counting down each week until launch.

Menu Planning: There are many things to consider when building a Breakfast After the Bell menu. Food must meet USDA guidelines and be appealing to kids. Food must also be easily transportable and easy to consume in the classroom. These sample menus and menu planning tools can help build your menu and succeed in the kitchen as well as with kids.

Equipment Tips: A Breakfast After the Bell program may require specialized equipment. This resource will help guide your equipment selection based on the model you choose.

Financial Management: The financial impact of expanding school breakfast can be calculated so you have an idea how it will affect the budget. Here are multiple resources that schools can use to determine how expanding school breakfast will affect the revenue and overall operation of breakfast, and analyze variable costs versus fixed costs.



Resources for Nutrition Staff



Implementation Resources

Gaining Buy-in from District Stakeholders: For alternative breakfast models to be successful, multiple district and school stakeholders need to be on board. Use these resources to engage stakeholders and gain buy-in.

Grant Opportunity Information: These grant opportunities can help schools purchase equipment and other classroom preparation items to start-up their Breakfast After the Bell program.

Get the Word Out to Your Staff and Community: Using communication materials like banners, flyers, posters and more will help you build a network of champions in your school and community.

Hear from other Nutrition Staff

“We’re really big on trying to make it so that everybody eats breakfast. If you eat it at home that’s awesome. But for the kids that don’t get that option we’d love to see those kids eat breakfast everyday.”

Jamie Schmitt, former Nutrition Manager, West Lawn Elementary, Lincoln Public Schools

“Kids get on the bus at 6:15 and are ready for something by 9 or 9:30 to pull them through till lunch. High school kids who play sports would eat at 6:30 at home, eat brunch, eat lunch and it was 6:30 or 7:00 at night before they got food again. It makes a big difference.”

Joni Jacobsen, former Nutrition Director, Gothenburg Public Schools

Breakfast Champions Are All Over Nebraska:

In this [brief video](#), you’ll hear from School Nutrition Director Justin Wiley from Millard Public Schools in Nebraska. He is committed to feeding kids and eager to share tips to make breakfast during the school day a success.



Resources for Teachers



- You and Alternative Breakfast Models
- Alternative Breakfast Educational Materials
 - Breakfast after the Bell Myths
 - School Breakfast - Healthier Than You Think
 - Classroom Set Up and Clean Up
 - Classroom Activity Guide
- Hear from Teachers

Resources for Teachers



You and Alternative Breakfast Models

Teachers know that students that are hungry for food cannot be hungry for knowledge.

Many students across the country miss a morning meal at school because of when and how it is served. In schools where breakfast is offered in the cafeteria before the school day begins, students often face barriers to eating school breakfast including:

- parents and busses dropping students off too late
- students not knowing about school breakfast
- students choosing to socialize with friends
- stigma around school breakfast

There is a sustainable solution. Schools that incorporate breakfast into the school day with [Alternative Breakfast Models](#) like Grab and Go to the Classroom, Breakfast In the Classroom, and Second Chance Breakfast, are able to provide more kids with the healthy food they need to learn.

Students who eat breakfast do much better in school:

- improved academic outcomes and attendance
- decreased school nurse visits and behavioral disruptions. [[Food Research and Action Center](#)].

Teachers at schools that provide breakfast through an alternative model regularly note that when students start their day by eating in the classroom, a true community begins to form where social emotional skills can grow.

School breakfast is made affordable for all students through subsidies and reimbursements provided by the federal government. School breakfast expenses are not part of the school system's education budget. Learn more about how school meals reach kids and the finances involved with [How School Meals Reach Kids](#).

You can be part of the movement to ensure students start each day ready to learn. In this playbook you will find resources on how to make breakfast part of the school day.

“I love when my students show up with breakfast in my classroom having just eaten breakfast! They can get breakfast without worrying about having the money to do so. They seem to have more energy and are more ready to learn.”

Grace Trumler
Teacher
Lakeview Elementary
Lincoln Public Schools



Implementation Resources

Nebraska Alternative Breakfast Models Fact Sheet for Teachers:

Nebraska-specific information for teachers including common concerns and solutions that have proven useful in other districts.

Alternative Breakfast Models 101 Webinar: Geared towards teachers and administrators, this FRAC webinar outlines how Breakfast After the Bell benefits students and classrooms, and how it can be a seamless part of the instructional day.

Breakfast after the Bell Myths: This easy-to-read document addresses common myths and concerns about Breakfast after the Bell, and provides facts and testimony from teachers who have already implemented.

School Breakfast – Healthier Than You Think: This resource provides teachers with helpful nutritional information about school breakfast. School Breakfast often gets a bad rap for being unhealthy, when in reality the food options served at breakfast must adhere to strict nutritional guidelines, and are often much healthier than store-bought breakfast.

How School Meals Reach Students: This resource traces the path of the funding that supports school breakfast and lunch from Congress to cafeteria. It also answers common questions that educators have about how the programs work.

Classroom Set Up and Clean Up: This resource outlines how classrooms can be affected by Breakfast After the Bell, and shares best practices on how to create a plan for classroom set-up and clean up where breakfast is served or eaten.



Grab and Go Rollout

Timeline: The Grab and Go Rollout Timeline outlines action steps school stakeholders can take to help prepare for the launch of an alternative breakfast model. The rollout timelines span both long-term action steps and short-term action steps — starting at 8 weeks before implementation and counting down each week until launch.

Resources for Teachers



Hear from other Teachers

Nebraska Examples

“It’s a real happy feeling for them. And it seems to get our day going in the right direction. Everybody’s positive, and their stomachs are full, and they’re happy.”

Susan Greeley, 4th Grade Teacher, Grand Island Public Schools

“Think about not eating in the morning as an adult, and then think about little kids from ages 6-11, if they’re not eating or getting their nutrition in the morning. That can affect your focus, your energy level, and performance in a lot of ways.”

Jordan Clancy, PE Teacher, Lincoln Public Schools



Breakfast Success Story from West Lawn Elementary in Grand Island, NE: [Watch](#) how nutrition services, a principal, and teachers came together to promote the district’s vision for breakfast and transition from a traditional cafeteria model to a breakfast in the classroom model.



Teachers and Principals are on board: [Hear from Millard Assistant Principal](#) who say that breakfast changed the culture of their school and teachers support efforts to increase participation fully.

PART 3

How It Works: Nebraska Success Stories

- **Grab and Go to the Classroom** at Campbell Elementary in Lincoln Public Schools
- **Second Chance** at Gothenburg Public Schools
- **Grab and Go to the Classroom** at West Lawn Elementary in Grand Island Public Schools
- **Second Chance** at Brady Public Schools
- **Grab and Go** at Bayard Public Schools

**Note that some of the stories and quotes in these stories come from former stakeholders. The enthusiasm and model specifics, however, are as relevant today as they were when they were shared!



Nebraska Success Stories



Campbell Elementary, Lincoln, NE (2019)

Lincoln's Campbell Elementary offers a Grab and Go to the Classroom model and has since 2015. Service includes meals for before school care offered through the Community Learning Center, the general population, and for late-arriving students.



Julie Lawler, Principal

“We know that families are busy in the morning - they’re running, getting ready for work. We want to set the kids up for success without being stressed. Grab and Go, and then having breakfast in their classroom already immerses them in the learning setting.”

“I’ve seen a lot of students who have come in either ‘hangry’ or just tired. Whenever I send them to get breakfast, they can go quickly, come back to my classroom and eat it. **Then right after it’s an immediate mood change. They’re a lot more calm, a lot more focused.** It’s very helpful for them to have breakfast in the morning.”



Benjamin Esters, Teacher



Jamie Schmitt, Nutrition Manager

“Before the kids would stand and stare at their options forever and then forget you have to take a juice too and forget about it. Instead they can just grab it and then go eat. Ms. Julie, the principal, encourages the teachers to allow them to eat and that is big.”

Nebraska Success Stories



Gothenburg Public Schools, Gothenburg, NE (2019)

Nutrition Director, Joni Jacobsen, has been serving “brunch” to students in Gothenburg for years. When kids wake up, they may not be hungry so it makes sense to serve a small snack to help keep up their energy.



Joni Jacobsen, Nutrition Director

“I think that [breakfast] makes a big difference. It gives them a chance to wake up get moving around.

Kids get on the bus at 6:15 and are ready for something by 9 or 9:30 to pull them through till lunch. **High school kids who play sports would eat at 6:30 at home, eat brunch, eat lunch and it was 6:30 or 7:00 at night before they got food again.** It makes a big difference.”

-Joni Jacobsen, Nutrition Director

“When we started, the school nurse said, I can’t believe it, usually it’s like a revolving door, **I’ve got headaches and tummy aches, and this type of stuff and breakfast/brunch took care of that** - it took care of that need. It still takes care of that.”

-Joni Jacobsen, Nutrition Director



Nebraska Success Stories



West Lawn Elementary, Grand Island, NE (2019)

West Lawn Elementary switched from a traditional to a Grab and Go to the Classroom model this past year. Through strong district and building-level leadership, the transition and results have been amazing! Watch a [short video about West Lawn's](#) experience!



“I would say to any superintendent that is considering whether to provide innovative solutions for meals that we (as superintendents) are looking for innovative solutions to educate our students on a daily basis, but **we can't get to the academics without getting to meeting their basic needs.**”

-Dr. Tawana Grover, Superintendent

“We went from less than 50% to over 80% (average daily breakfast participation). So that's a lot more students getting breakfast. **The increase in breakfast is a financial win for us as well as a nutritional win for the students so we can keep the program viable.**”

-Kris Spellman, Nutrition Director



“I'm convinced that any schools in the state of Nebraska can run this program and it is **extremely beneficial.** It doesn't matter if your demographics are that you have a very high poverty population or very low one. Every child needs to start off their day with a healthy breakfast and getting them prepared to learn in the classroom - this is just one way of meeting that.”

-DW Holley, Principal, West Lawn

Nebraska Success Stories



Brady Public Schools, Brady, NE (2019)

After reviewing participation data showing only 2% of all 7-12 graders were eating school breakfast, the leadership team in Bayard decided to implement Second Chance breakfast for those grades. Participation has gone up to 65%. Students in grades 1-6 continue with traditional service before school.



“We knew that given the opportunity to sleep in or come 10 minutes early to school for breakfast, kids in 7-12th grade are going to sleep in. **Our kids were ravenous by the end of the day, and this program has helped.** If they don’t get food, they’re in a caloric deficit to start the day. Research shows it takes their bodies some time to be awake and say, ‘I’m hungry.’”

“The students’ attitudes are different. Before lunch everybody was hungry. They were ready to eat NOW. And if lunch was “not good” that day, we heard about it. Now, I don’t have the complaints that I used to have about our food service. It’s changed the atmosphere of the cafeteria ladies as well - they’re not as rushed to get kids through the lunch line, the 7-12th graders, because before our seconds numbers were a lot higher. Kids can last through 5th hour.”

-James McGown,
Superintendent



Nebraska Success Stories

Bayard Public Schools, Bayard, NE (2019)

Bayard Superintendent Travis Miller knows that sometimes you have to go slow to go fast. After hearing about alternative breakfast models at a conference, he brought his principal to a similar session later on. They piloted and then implemented Grab and Go and have never looked back.

“We ran our first pilot in the spring and the elementary teachers were concerned about spills. The first day we ran the pilot there were 2 spills - 1 in kindergarten and 1 from me.

Running our mini-pilot took away a lot of the resistance to the idea because people were excited about how easy it was.



Our High School principal used to joke about ‘hangry.’ We talked about how hangry students and hangry teachers are not an effective recipe for a school environment.

The High School principal told me in November of our first year, ‘I gotta tell you - between the start of school and first lunch, **I’ve had 2 students sent to the office all year. A year ago my office was full of people all morning long.**’ It made a tremendous difference.”

-Travis Miller, Superintendent

	Served Breakfast SY 13-14	Served Breakfast SY 14-15	% Difference
Bayard Elementary	12,834	27,283	113% Increase
Bayard Jr. / Sr. High	2,954	10,470	254% Increase
School District	15,788	37,753	139% Increase

PART 4

Take Action

If your goal is to initiate change, you have come to the right place. You have a role in ensuring more kids start the day with a win and we have resources to help!

Grants

Nebraska SNAC posts grant opportunities available to improve school nutrition programs and a grant inquiry form [on our website](#).

Individualized Assistance

We want to help! Reach out to our coalition partners to get connected with trainings and technical assistance, individualized district data, more success story highlights, grants and funding opportunities, peer to peer connections, talking points, and inspiration to see that every child has the food they need to succeed!

Visit our websites

State.nokidhungry.org/nebraska/nebraska-snac has information about the Nebraska SNAC coalition, our focus on school breakfast, lunch, after school, summer, universal free, and farm to school meals. Visit to learn more about our free services, grant opportunities, and more.

GoBigBreakfast.org has these resources and more to inspire, address concerns, and help you advocate for change depending on who you're talking to in your community.

We hope you'll visit, learn more, and reach out with any questions.



PART 5

Who We Are



Nebraska Student Nutrition Action Committee (SNAC)

State.nokidhungry.org/nebraska/nebraska-snac

The vision of the Nebraska SNAC is to ensure every child in Nebraska gets the food they need to learn and grow. Visit our website to find more resources including district-specific participation and equity profiles..



Go Big Breakfast

GoBigBreakfast.org

Go Big Breakfast is a part of the Nebraska SNAC that works to provide resources and promotion to support better breakfast service in Nebraska schools. Visit our website to find more resources based on stakeholder and opportunities to engage.

Steering Group Organizations



Nebraska Appleseed

NEAppleseed.org

Visit Nebraska Appleseed's website to learn more about school breakfast and other child nutrition programs including advocacy opportunities that provide food for students.



Nebraska Department of Education, Nutrition Services

Education.NE.gov/ns/

Visit the Nebraska Department of Education's website to find forms, guidance, and regulatory information related to school meals.



No Kid Hungry

NoKidHungry.org

Visit the Center for Best Practices to get the information, tools, and resources designed to successfully end childhood hunger.