

## Breakfast Meal Service Styles

When schools improve access to school breakfast, typically more students will eat school breakfast. This allows more students to receive the academic and behavioral benefits of breakfast each day. Considering a new method of serving the breakfast meal that meets the needs of school staff and students can increase meal participation and revenue. For example, Breakfast in the Classroom has been shown to be very successful in elementary schools while Second Chance and Grab 'n Go breakfasts work well in middle and high schools.

### CAFETERIA STYLE

The traditional cafeteria breakfast model has its advantages. Food can be served hot and fresh straight from the kitchen, allowing for innovative recipes. There is no pre-packaging of food into individual servings. Cafeteria service makes it easier for staff to track meals for those sites without universal free breakfast. As it is offered before school, students who cannot arrive early can miss this opportunity, so it partners well with Second Chance Breakfast or a Grab 'n Go option.

### BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

This delivery method brings the food to the student at the start of the school day. Meals are delivered to the classroom, or to carts in the hallway, at the beginning of class during announcements, attendance, and class business. This allows the opportunity for all students to have a healthy breakfast and establishes a social norm

among peers to eat a healthy breakfast every day. It is an especially effective delivery method for elementary schools, as it begins the day with a consistent structure and starts them on task. Classroom structure allows students to develop a routine that will assist in delivery and clean up as well as meal counting and claiming. This delivery method works best where universal free breakfast has been implemented so as to prevent students from being excluded from the meal service. Breakfast in the Classroom requires more individual pre-packaging of foods to ensure food safety and for ease of delivery. Prepackaged foods can be purchased, or staff time can be used to package items prepared in the kitchen. Transporting food can be done with small equipment such as rolling insulated containers or carts. In some schools, food service staff can deliver meals to classrooms. Other schools use student classroom helpers to pick up their classroom breakfast cart.

### Breakfast in the Classroom

has become a part of our routine. Students take ownership of bringing the cooler to our classroom and pass out the breakfast to each desk. I feel it is incredibly important for every student to be set up for success by getting a healthy start to the day, and with Breakfast in the Classroom I know that every child is ready to learn.

*Lindsay Waggener • 2nd Grade Teacher  
Orofino Jt. S.D. #171*

[**Breakfast in the Classroom**] has been a work in progress, figuring out all the details and fine tuning things, but the positive far outweighs the negative. Everyone has had to exercise patience and flexibility and I believe that built a respectful working relationship that has benefitted the children and families in the community.

*Michelle Shady • Child Nutrition Director  
Wendell S.D. #232*



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*No child should start the school day hungry.*

2

*Not all children are able to eat at home.*

3

*Your school has a breakfast program!*

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*Breakfast in the Classroom gets more students to participate.*

Source: 10 Reasons to Try Breakfast in the Classroom Flyer located at [http://www.fn.usda.gov/sites/default/files/10reasons-breakfast\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.fn.usda.gov/sites/default/files/10reasons-breakfast_flyer.pdf)

I recommend the **Grab 'n Go** breakfast program at all grade levels, but especially at the high school level. It will increase your participation and students' academic achievement during class time.

*Bobbie Coleman • Child Nutrition Director  
Lake Pend Oreille S.D. #084*

**Breakfast in the Classroom** is the way to go! Pulling together to find solutions to our challenges while keeping our eye on the goal - feeding our children - is what makes our program a success.

*Carmen Griffith • Food Service Director  
Orofino Jt. S.D. #171*

### GRAB 'N GO

Components of the breakfast meal are quickly grabbed from the cafeteria, or carts in the hallway to be eaten in the classroom at the beginning of the school day. Grab 'n Go is great for middle and high school students who want to just grab something on their way to class. It is ideal for students who have less time to eat or where the cafeteria infrastructure is limited or where it is not feasible to deliver food to each classroom. It is healthy food that is fast and convenient. For maximum exposure, Grab 'n Go breakfast carts can be positioned in high traffic areas, or it can be administered in a conveniently located cafeteria. This method uses individual pre-packaged foods or multiple food items packaged together for easy selection. Special consideration is necessary to ensure an accurate meal count if service occurs in multiple locations.

### SECOND CHANCE BREAKFAST BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

Busy schedules may prevent a student from eating upon arrival to school. Offering Second Chance Breakfast during a nutrition break after homeroom or first period can be the solution. This delay gives those students who are not hungry first thing in the morning the opportunity to participate at a later time. Schools can offer an abbreviated breakfast service in the cafeteria or Grab 'n Go breakfast on their way to their next class period. Special consideration is necessary to ensure an accurate count of meals taken by students. This is a great opportunity for middle and high schools.



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*Breakfast in the Classroom requires minimal work...*

6

*...and can have great payoffs.*

7

*Ensuring that students eat breakfast helps create healthy habits for life.*

8

*Breakfast can be incorporated into lesson plans.*

9

*Breakfast in the Classroom allows teachers to spend time with students.*

10

*Students will thank you!*

## SERVING STYLE

## PROS

## CONS

## WORKS BEST WHEN

### Cafeteria



- Whole school socialization opportunities
- More flexibility in serving hot or cold meals
- No prepackaging of food
- More readily allows for use of Offer versus Serve, which cuts down on food waste
- Trash disposal more convenient
- Requires direct approval by fewer stakeholders

- Requires students to arrive early in order to participate
- The cafeteria is often the school's gymnasium and meal service can take away from physical education instruction time

- School buses arrive early enough to allow students to participate without being rushed
- The cafeteria is conveniently located
- There is a high demand for hot foods at breakfast
- The counting and claiming apparatus does not support alternate methods
- Offered in conjunction with an alternate method to further boost participation

### Breakfast in the Classroom



- Begins class with a structured task
- All students can participate and class may be more productive with all students having had something to eat
- Creates a "norm" among peers of eating a healthy breakfast
- Opportunity to reinforce responsibility through assigned clean up tasks

- Requires additional considerations for trash disposal
- Individual packaging may require additional labor or food costs
- More attention must be paid to food safety concerns
- Food quality may be affected if made too far in advance
- Have to figure out point of service counting if meal is not universally free

- Students are in the same room at the start of each school day
- Busses arrive just before class begins
- There is no cafeteria available
- The cafeteria is not centrally located
- The breakfast meal is free to all students

### Grab 'n Go



- More flexibility in serving time and location
- More convenient for students
- Simply grabbing a bag results in meals served more quickly
- Prepackaged foods take less time to prepare than traditional meals
- Foods that are easy to eat or hand held are popular and more convenient

- Individual packaging may require additional labor and food cost
- Extra trash cans may be required to ensure trash is discarded properly
- Food safety concerns with students improperly storing food
- Need a point of service counting system that identifies students selecting multiple breakfasts from separate locations

- Cafeteria is crowded, not available at breakfast, or inconveniently located
- There is only a short amount of time to serve large numbers of students
- Busses arrive just before the start of class
- Teachers and custodial staff realize the importance eating breakfast has on learning
- Students rely on a la carte and convenience foods from outside the school for breakfast
- The breakfast menu can easily offer Grab 'n Go options

### Second Chance



- Allows for student who may not have felt hungry at the start of the day or ate breakfast very early to have a chance to enjoy a healthy meal
- Can be served in the cafeteria or Grab 'n Go in a convenient location

- If served outside of the cafeteria, may require additional considerations for trash disposal
- May impact instruction time
- Have to figure out point of service counting in multiple locations

- A milk break or other break in the morning already exists
- There is no time to serve breakfast before classes
- Students rely on vending machines for snacks in the morning
- School administration is supportive of breakfast and realizes its importance to learning

## BREAKFAST CARTS

Breakfast carts assist in alternate serving methods by allowing mobility for service and delivery. Schools find that bringing breakfast to students increases meal participation because students do not want to leave their friends to go get breakfast. Breakfast carts mean students do not need to choose between socializing and eating breakfast. They work best in school environments that support serving breakfast at school.

Grab 'n Go breakfast works great with breakfast carts since the general rule is the food has to be easy to grab. Schools typically put their carts in high traffic areas such as the main entrance, hallway, near the gymnasium, or wherever students hang out. Considerations need to be made for keeping milk cool, a point of service machine, depositing trash, and school rules on where to eat. Breakfast in the Classroom can benefit from a cart that allows for breakfast meals to be picked up at a convenient location or delivered to the classroom.

## OFFER VERSUS SERVE (OVS) WITH ALTERNATE SERVING METHODS

Providing food options for OVS is easily done in the traditional cafeteria serving location. However, offering options becomes more difficult when space is limited and meals are pre-packaged in a bag that can easily be grabbed. OVS can be successfully implemented outside of the cafeteria with some extra consideration. With Grab 'n Go, having a separate milk cooler allows students to select from a variety of milk. Also, pre-packaged bags can be color coded or labeled to indicate different food options. A separate bowl of fresh fruit allows for students to select the fruit they want to eat. Breakfast in the Classroom also requires that additional food choices be available. Ensuring that students take all the required items for a reimbursable meal can be a challenge to do in each classroom. If cafeteria staff is not present for service, teachers can be trained on OVS. Otherwise, pre-packaging considerations similar to Grab 'n Go may be helpful.



## Experiences Around Idaho

### SECOND CHANCE BREAKFAST

#### Lake Pend Oreille S.D. #084

Lake Pend Oreille found that their breakfast participation has more than doubled most days since adding Second Chance Breakfast. This Second Chance Breakfast is served as a Grab 'n Go meal. School administration was very supportive by extending the break between 1st and 2nd period by three minutes to allow students more time to access breakfast between classes. Teachers have expressed positive feedback about students being less distracted and disruptive and seem to be more attentive after eating breakfast. Some students arrive late to school and appreciate still having access to breakfast while other students simply enjoy having more time to socialize with friends in the morning and not having to eat before school starts. Some athletes who are burning extra calories and needing a greater nutritional intake choose to purchase both an early breakfast and a Second Chance Grab 'n Go breakfast to meet their energy needs. Challenges have mostly involved balancing the necessary time and staffing required for preparing and serving Second Chance Breakfast while simultaneously preparing for lunch service.

### GRAB 'N GO

#### Twin Falls S.D. #411

Twin Falls determined that they needed to increase breakfast participation and found Grab 'n Go breakfast to be a solution. In schools where they implemented Grab 'n Go and allowed students to take food to class, they identified student participation increases of at least 100 students.

### BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

#### Orofino Jt. S.D. #171

Orofino Joint School District began experimenting with alternative breakfast serving styles at one elementary school in 2008-2009. After a few years of figuring out what was effective, they now serve Breakfast in the Classroom district-wide. In SY 2008-2009 they were serving breakfast to 31.36% of their student body; in SY 2014-2015 they were serving 90%. This participation increase is directly related to serving Breakfast in the Classroom. School administration identified "change" as being the biggest challenge to this service style and suggests that training staff, students, and parents is key. School leaders were committed to doing what was best for their students and met to discuss ways to address the identified barriers. They met obstacles head-on and committed to the necessary adjustments. The food service manager provided training to teachers and staff on food distribution and clean up. Outdated classroom plumbing was replaced to handle milk and cereal being dumped down the sink drain. Additional cleaning supplies and large trash cans were purchased for each classroom. School start time was adjusted, and custodial staff schedules were modified to allow for breakfast trash to be picked up in the morning and for responding to emergency spills on classroom carpets. Students are responsible for getting breakfast to the classroom. They transport it via coolers that are picked up from and returned to the kitchen and look forward to this special assignment. Teachers agree that despite the added responsibility of set up, distribution, and clean up, it is worthwhile. They have observed an increase in achievement along with a reduction in students being hungry. They no longer have to worry about students missing breakfast

### FIGHTING THE MID-MORNING TUMMY GRUMBLES

*Some students leave home very early for school. If they eat at home, hunger may hit much earlier than for those students who had breakfast after arriving at school. Many teachers have reported that breakfast at school improves student learning in the hours before lunch.*



because they chose to stay on the playground or visit with friends before school. Linda Harrelson, Orofino Elementary School Kitchen Manager, said, “It is good to know that these children are eating breakfast and do not have to worry so much about what is for lunch so they can concentrate on their school work.” Parents are grateful for the time dedicated to ensuring their children are given an opportunity to eat. One parent said, “With many kids getting up and on the bus by 7 a.m. it leaves little time for them to eat before they leave the house. They ride the bus for at least a half an hour before they arrive at school, barely making it to class in time. With Breakfast in the Classroom our children are guaranteed a nutritious meal to help them start the day.”

## **BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM**

### **Wendell S.D. #232**

Wendell School District implemented Breakfast in the Classroom with the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and nearly tripled their breakfast participation. They had wanted to ensure they had the participation to cover the expense of CEP, so they increased the availability of breakfast for the students by serving it in the classroom. This combination has been good for public relations as it benefits the community. Parents have indicated they like the idea that they have one less thing to deal with in the morning and know they can drop their

children off at school and that breakfast will be served. Although some teachers worried about Breakfast in the Classroom interfering with teaching time, most have reported that they are glad to not worry about a student being unable to concentrate because of being hungry. Many teachers enjoy the opportunity to “check in” with their students while eating breakfast. One teacher said, “I love it, it gives me a chance to talk to the kids about their homework and things like that in a relaxed atmosphere.” Food service staff admits that preparing to deliver breakfasts to individual classrooms is a time consuming process, but they report they “love it” because of how much it benefits the students and that it has built a strong working relationship with teachers and community members. The biggest challenges have been related to messes in the classroom. There was more garbage being produced that had to be dealt with and the occasional spill. These challenges were overcome by providing small garbage bags and wipes for each classroom. Small drinking straws were also provided for the juice, so now instead of peeling the foil lid off of the containers to drink, students puncture the foil with the straw.

