



BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PREP

Recognizing the importance of school breakfast in ensuring student health, well-being and academic success, schools across the country are increasingly making breakfast a part of the school day. Although Breakfast After the Bell programs can increase participation, school revenues and student performance, implementing such programs can also present some initial challenges. 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. Each school has its own unique needs, and adaptability during early implementation can help you refine and improve your program. In preparing to implement a Breakfast After the Bell program in your school, there are several important steps discussed below.

ASSEMBLE A SCHOOL BREAKFAST TEAM

Assemble a team of stakeholders in the school and/or district that can help plan the Breakfast After the Bell implementation. The team may include teachers, principals, food service staff, wellness coordinators and custodians. Engaging stakeholders provides an opportunity to educate them about the importance of expanding access to school breakfast, address concerns, and inform them about how the new model may alter their morning routine. You can convene the team regularly or on an ad hoc basis to facilitate planning, troubleshoot and manage expectations of the breakfast program. Team members can also be powerful advocates for promoting the program to their peers.

IDENTIFY AND PURCHASE NEEDED EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

Using input from the School Breakfast Team, create a list of any equipment and supplies that your school or district will need to successfully implement the program. Different breakfast models will require different equipment. Consider key factors such as whether you are delivering meals directly to the classroom, serving from stations throughout the school, implementing offer versus serve and if you will need a point of service machine. If you expect large growth in breakfast participation, you may need additional storage space or more frequent food deliveries. Consulting with other schools that have implemented a similar breakfast

program can be very valuable. This [Equipment Guide](#) from The Lunch Box may also provide helpful guidance.

While Food and Nutrition Services Directors typically report that increased revenue can cover program costs, schools may want to seek funding for equipment and other startup costs. Check our [Grant Opportunity Page](#) for more information.



DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Using input from the School Breakfast Team, create a timeline for the various stages of implementation:

- Prep work – procuring all necessary equipment and supplies
- Training – training and educating all stakeholders about the change in breakfast
- Breakfast service delivery – creating a minute-by-minute schedule that will be used to ensure timely prep, delivery, and clean-up
- Post-rollout assessment – assessing the new breakfast program 1-3 weeks after the rollout to determine what adjustments need to be made regarding logistics, messaging or stakeholder training

Many schools find it helpful to have a “dress rehearsal” day where they can practice a morning breakfast service the day or week before the launch date is scheduled. The rehearsal can help to identify any unexpected issues and give stakeholders additional time to troubleshoot. Schools may also opt to stagger the roll out, implementing in a few classes or grades during the first week before expanding school-wide.

The Los Angeles Unified School District’s [Breakfast in the Classroom Pre-Launch Checklist](#) is a great example of an implementation timeline, and includes a checklist for each stakeholder, a description of the roles stakeholders will play and a form for monitoring the program after the first and sixth month of operation.

CONNECT WITH OTHER SCHOOLS TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES

Schools that have already implemented a Breakfast After the Bell program have a wealth of information they can share. Connect with schools in your area that you can visit to observe how their program operates. Talk with stakeholders in the school and learn about their implementation roll out, what their best practices are and how they address issues that come up. The No Kid Hungry campaign, your state School Nutrition Association or state agency staff who oversee school meals programs can help connect you with model programs.

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) in Orange County, VA launched Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) at one of its elementary schools, but struggled with classroom issues, such as messiness and teacher push-back. OCPS reached out to Louisa County Public Schools (LCPS) in Mineral, VA to gain insight and learn from its successful BIC programs. The FNS Director of LCPS, along with a teacher from LCPS, spoke at a faculty meeting at the elementary school in OCPS about BIC, the logistics and how important BIC has been in their district. That peer-to-peer interaction was enough to motivate OCPS to adopt some of LCPS's best practices and helped the teachers at OCPS think more positively about BIC.

PROMOTE YOUR BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Create a plan for raising awareness about the program.

- Create a strategy for informing and engaging parents. Activities could include sending fliers home with students, placing ads in the local newspaper or making announcements at school events, such as Back to School Nights or PTA meetings. Additionally, invite parents to eat breakfast with their children in the classroom or during second chance breakfast. This gives parents an opportunity to experience school breakfast and see first-hand the benefits of Breakfast After the Bell.
- Promote the program to the student body. Your students are your customers, so it's important to get them excited about the program, let them know what is on the menu and seek their ongoing input.

USDA's [Marketing Strategies for Stakeholders Page](#) provides marketing strategies for multiple stakeholders, including parents, students, administrators and communities.

PROVIDE TRAINING

It is important to train staff who will be directly affected by the change in breakfast. Depending on your model, training could include cafeteria staff, teachers, custodians and students. Appropriate training enables teachers and food service staff to have the necessary support they need during the start-up phase of implementation and ensures program integrity. As the implementation process rolls out, additional training may be necessary.

- *Logistics:* Teachers, including substitute teachers, need to be sufficiently trained in the logistics of serving and monitoring Breakfast in the Classroom so that the process is efficient, does not take up too much classroom time and adheres to USDA reporting requirements. School districts that are implementing



widespread Breakfast After the Bell models should develop and implement training and follow-up support as needed. When the Los Angeles Unified School District rolled out Breakfast in the Classroom, they provided training and developed [resources](#) for principals, teachers, custodians and students in elementary and secondary schools.

- *Meal Collection:* Cafeteria staff should be trained on meal collection and the importance of ensuring students receive the appropriate meal components so meals can be claimed for federal reimbursement. If schools are implementing a Breakfast in the Classroom model, teachers may need to be trained on meal collection as well, depending on whether students chose their meal components in the classroom or whether all breakfast components are already packaged in a bag.
- *Student Involvement:* Many schools assign roles to students to assist with the breakfast process every morning, such as bringing breakfast to the classrooms and helping with trash clean-up.



Socorro Independent School District in El Paso, TX created a student breakfast club where the students assist in administering the breakfast program every morning. Students arrive to school early and wear vests to show they are part of the breakfast team. As a reward for their service, the district awards a trophy to the students and throws them a pizza party at the end of the school year.

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION CHECK-LIST

DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Assemble a team of stakeholders prior to implementation to get their buy-in and feedback.
- Identify a Breakfast Champion within the school who will advocate for school breakfast and be the lead in implementing Breakfast After the Bell programs.
- Identify and purchase needed equipment and supplies.
- Develop a detailed timeline for implementation that includes an opportunity to assess effectiveness 1-3 weeks following implementation to make necessary adjustments to processes.

CONNECT WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

- Identify schools in your area that have already implemented a Breakfast After the Bell program.
- Learn from other schools' best practices and adopt best practices that are applicable to your school.
- Visit other schools to observe their Breakfast After the Bell programs.

PROVIDE TRAINING TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Identify stakeholders who will be responsible for any part of the program logistics, including meal preparation and delivery, record keeping and clean up.
- Develop and provide training for each stakeholder.
- Hold a practice run prior to implementation and/or pilot with a few classes or grades for the first week(s) to give time to refine processes.
- Obtain feedback 1-3 weeks after implementation from the School Breakfast Team to identify the need for further stakeholder training.

DEVELOP A PLAN FOR PROMOTING THE PROGRAM

- Promote the breakfast program through the school newsletter, robo calls or information sent home to parents.
- Schedule time to discuss the program at Back to School Night, PTA meetings or during other school events.
- Decide how you will promote breakfast to your student customers and let them know what will be on the weekly menus through morning announcements, websites or other accessible venues.
- Identify school staff, such as the principal, a coach or FNS staff who will actively encourage breakfast participation as kids enter the school.