

Making Breakfast Part of the School Day

What’s the Right Alternative Breakfast Service Model for my School?

Schools across the country are finding that more children start the day with school breakfast when they move it out of the cafeteria and after the first bell, making it an integral part of the school day. These new service models make breakfast participation convenient by serving it in places where children can easily access the meal — in classrooms, from hallway kiosks, or even later in the morning.

Increasing school breakfast participation can alleviate childhood hunger, improve nutrition, and ensure children have a healthy start to their day. There are a number of ways that schools can integrate breakfast into the school day to achieve that goal. The first step is for schools to evaluate what service model would work best for their students and staff.

	Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC)	Grab and Go	Second Chance
Preparation and Service	School nutrition staff packs breakfasts into coolers or insulated bags to be transported to each classroom by school nutrition staff, designated students, or volunteers.	School nutrition staff packs breakfast meals in bags to be picked up from the cafeteria or kiosks in the hallway on the way to class.	Depending on the model used, students can eat in the cafeteria, similar to traditional breakfast, or take a bagged meal to be eaten in between classes or during the next period.
Timing	Students eat during the first 10–15 minutes of class during morning announcements or while the teacher takes attendance or reviews lessons.	Students pick up breakfast meals as they arrive at school and eat on the way to class or at their desks after the bell during the first 10–15 minutes of class.	Students eat after first period, during a morning nutrition break, either in the cafeteria or between classes.
Distribution of Meals	Teachers, school nutrition staff, volunteers, or students distribute meals to students at their desks or before they take their seats, and then record which, or how many, students eat breakfast.	School nutrition staff distributes meals and students are counted via the point of sale (POS) system in the cafeteria, or if using kiosks, through a wireless POS or on manual lists.	School nutrition staff distributes meals and students are counted via the POS system in the cafeteria, or if using kiosks, through a wireless POS or on manual lists.
Clean up	Students clear trash and wipe down desks. Breakfast trash can be placed in the hallway to be collected by custodial staff.	Students clear trash and wipe down desks. Breakfast trash can be placed in the hallway to be collected by custodial staff.	In the cafeteria, clean up is similar to traditional, before-school breakfast service. If serving from kiosks, schools should be sure to provide adequate trash cans in the hallways.
Works Best For...	BIC is ideal for lower-grade levels where children start the day in the same classroom with the same teacher each day, making delivery, counting, and claiming smoother for teachers and school nutrition staff.	“Grab and go” works well for schools that do not have the capacity to deliver food to each classroom or have infrastructure obstacles (e.g., multiple stories) that make delivery impracticable.	Second chance breakfast works particularly well for secondary schools because older students are often not hungry early in the morning and tend to arrive at school closer to the start of the school day.