

Alternative Breakfast-Serving Models – Getting Your Program Started

Under the Healthy Schools Act, D.C. Public Schools and public charter schools must serve breakfast through “alternative serving models” if more than 40 percent of students in the school qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Alternative breakfast models include:

- *Breakfast in the Classroom:* Breakfast is delivered to the classroom and eaten in the classroom during homeroom, announcements, or other morning activities.
- *Grab-and-Go Breakfast:* Breakfast is packaged into bags, which are available at a convenient spot in the school for students to “grab” on the go. Students pick up breakfasts before school or just before homeroom or first period, and eat in the classroom, hallway, or other location in the school.
- *Second Chance Breakfast:* Breakfast served after first period between classes and finished during 2nd period or during a break.

All three models are flexible and can be adapted to fit the schedule, physical space, and other needs of each school. Schools even can create hybrid programs that combine elements of several different models. Alternative breakfast models include the same amount of food and nutrition that breakfast served in the cafeteria contains.



Breakfast in the Classroom

Required for: Elementary schools where **more than 40%** of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals

Encouraged for: Middle and high schools where **more than 40%** of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, and any school where **40% or less** of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals

Why serve Breakfast in the Classroom? Breakfast in the Classroom yields the highest participation rates and ensures that students who want to eat can eat. It is a great model that reaches students who live in households struggling with hunger, who do not have time to eat before school, or who are not able to get to school early enough for breakfast served before the start of the school day.

How does Breakfast in the Classroom work? Students eat Breakfast in the Classroom at the beginning of the school day, in homeroom, or during morning break time. Breakfast in the Classroom is very easy to set up! Follow these step-by-step instructions:

1) Preparation. Breakfast in the Classroom begins with food service workers. The food service staff pack individually-wrapped breakfast meal items into easy-to-carry insulated bags. In each bag, there are enough breakfast meals to give one to each student. Some schools purchase pre-packaged breakfasts from vendors. Breakfasts can be either hot or cold, depending on a school’s facilities.

Breakfast in the classroom is the best way to bring the benefits of school breakfast to all the students. Once you bring the food to the children, just about every child eats.

Children can look forward to a good breakfast in the comfort of the familiar surroundings of their classroom.

If the cafeteria is too small, crowded, or in use, breakfast served in class allows more students to eat.



Additionally, each day the food service workers place a current student classroom roster into the breakfast bag. The roster makes it easy for classroom teachers to check off which students take a breakfast.

2) *Delivery.* Next, the breakfast bags are delivered to each classroom. Breakfast should be delivered before class (or homeroom) begins. Anyone can deliver breakfast—food service staff, students, parent volunteers, or other members of the school community. In addition to the insulated bags, breakfast can be transported on carts or in boxes.

3) *Eating.* The Breakfast in the Classroom only takes 10 to 15 minutes for the students to receive and eat. Each student who chooses to eat must take one of every breakfast component. (The school only gets the federal reimbursement when a complete meal is served.) Teachers simply check off on a class roster the names of students who take all three breakfast meal components.

In the classroom, students can take each breakfast item directly out of the bag, or a student or class helper can first spread all the items out on a table. Each student takes her meal back to her desk and eats there. To help keep desks clean, some schools provide disposable trays or placemats for students to eat on.

During breakfast time, teachers can take attendance, collect homework, deliver announcements, read to the class, or share current events. Alternatively, students can listen to announcements, complete their homework, read silently, work on individual exercises, or talk quietly with each other.

4) *Clean-up.* Everyone helps with a quick clean-up. Each student puts breakfast trash in bags outside the classroom door for custodial staff to collect. Uneaten food and unused trays are returned to the delivery bag. Following breakfast, students or staff can return the bags to the cafeteria.

Suggested Equipment and Supplies for Breakfast in the Classroom:

- Insulated food bags with carrying handles or rolling wheels
Tip for purchasing: a Google search for "insulated food bags" will return a number of online stores selling appropriate bags.
- Trash bags—e.g., one per classroom or one per hallway
- Trash cans—e.g., one per hallway
- Desk wipes / hand wipes
- Placemats or disposable trays
- Name tags or badges for student breakfast helpers
- Class rosters / meal attendance record sheet

See It In Action!

- Friendship Public Charter School has a very successful Breakfast in the Classroom program. Read about it here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/15/AR2009111502535.html?hpid=moreheadlines>
- School for Arts In Learning (SAIL) Public Charter School is happy with its Breakfast in the Classroom program, too. Learn more here: http://www.dchunger.org/pdf/sail_breakfast_program.pdf.

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Grab-and-Go Breakfast

Option for meeting requirement for: Middle and high schools where **more than 40%** of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals

Encouraged for: Any school where **40% or less** of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Grab-and-go breakfast works particularly well in the middle and high schools because older students enjoy the flexibility of this model. Grab-and-go also works well in schools where students arrive just before the start of classes.

Why serve a grab-and-go breakfast? Grab-and-go breakfasts make it very convenient and flexible for students to eat breakfast. Grab-and-go breakfasts also are convenient for food service staff also, because they can take less time to prepare than traditional breakfasts. Due to the ease and efficiency of grabbing breakfasts in this model, schools are able to serve breakfasts more effectively by reaching many students very quickly.

How does a grab-and-go breakfast work?

1) Preparation. Grab-and-go breakfasts are packed by food service staff into paper or plastic bags, boxes or trays. Preparation can take place either the day before or before school in the morning. Alternatively, schools can purchase prepackaged breakfasts from vendors. Grab-and-go breakfasts are usually cold; however, with a little bit of preparation in the morning, they can include hot items as well. The general rule is that the breakfast items must be portable.

2) Pick-up. Breakfast can be served from carts or tables located in the hallway, school entrance, cafeteria, or other high-traffic areas at the school. The carts are operated by food service staff or other school personnel or volunteers.

To keep track of the number of meals served, the carts can have a computer with software to count the number of breakfasts served, or a simpler system, like a school roster where students (or a food service employee, volunteer, or teacher) check off themselves that they have taken breakfast.

Students pick up their breakfast first thing in the morning before homeroom or first period and are able to eat it when and where they want, within school guidelines.

3) Eating and Clean-up. Students can take the breakfast and eat it outside, in the hall, in class, or in the cafeteria, depending on what the school decides is appropriate. This aspect is flexible and can be adapted depending on the school's needs and the school's policies as to where and when students can eat.

The students are responsible for disposing of trash in appropriate places.

Suggested Equipment and Supplies for Grab-and-Go Breakfast

- Wheeled carts or tables for serving breakfast
- Insulated bags, coolers, or other containers
 - Tip for purchasing: a Google search for "insulated food bags" will return a number of online stores selling appropriate bags.*
- Napkins/wipes
- Trash bags & trash cans
- Paper bags (if breakfasts are packed into individual meals)

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Second Chance Breakfast

Option for meeting requirement for: Middle and high schools where more than 40% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Encouraged for: Any school where 40% or less of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

This model is also known as breakfast after first period, or "nutrition break." Breakfasts can be served in a grab-and-go fashion, often offered from mobile carts or tables located in high-traffic areas after school has begun, usually after first period. It also can be served in the cafeteria. Breakfasts can either be hot or cold.

Why serve a second chance breakfast? Many schools already offer a break from classes in the morning, and by serving a breakfast meal at this time, students who were not hungry first thing in the morning or missed the "regular" breakfast time still have a chance to eat. These reimbursable meals also provide a healthy option over what students may otherwise obtain from nearby convenience stores or á la carte options.

How does second chance breakfast work?

1) Preparation. Preparation for second chance breakfast is much like preparation for grab-and-go breakfast. Breakfasts are packed by food service staff into bags or boxes or onto trays. Preparation can take place either the day before or before school in the morning.

Second chance breakfasts are usually cold. Hand-held, easy-to-eat foods work best. Schools can purchase prepackaged breakfasts from vendors.

2) Pick-up. Like grab-and-go breakfasts, second chance meals are served from carts or tables stationed at high-traffic areas—ideally, areas where students pass through between classes. To keep track of the number of meals served, the carts can have a computer with software to count the number of breakfasts served, or a simpler system, like a school roster where students check off themselves that they have taken breakfast.

Students pick up their breakfast between classes, or at a mid-morning break.

3) Eating. The school can choose the locations—e.g., in the cafeteria, multi-purpose room, or designated classrooms—where students can eat breakfast. After picking up their meals, students take the food to approved locations.

4) Clean-up. Students are responsible for throwing away their trash. Extra trash cans in the eating areas, and other areas where students congregate between classes, helps to minimize trash.

The Healthy Schools Act allows schools to develop “hybrid” breakfast programs that incorporate alternative breakfast models with traditional breakfast. For example, a school required to use an alternative breakfast model could serve traditional breakfast (before school, in the cafeteria) and offer second chance breakfast.