



## Pennsylvania Department of Education

Dear Partner in Education:

After a great year of providing access to free school breakfast to Pennsylvania's students, I am pleased to announce that the second annual Governor's School Breakfast Challenge will begin in January!

Over the past school year, 91.4 million breakfast meals were served in schools, an increase of nearly 10 million since the 2022-23 school year. More than 7 million of those breakfasts were served to students at-risk for hunger or from low-income families.

Last year, 37 schools took the Challenge, and this year, we want to see that number grow! Goals like increasing student participation and building in healthy options will be on the menu for the three-month Challenge. The Department of Education will be reaching out to schools in the future with exciting updates on what's in store for schools that successfully complete the Challenge.

[Visit our website](#) for more information about the challenge and ways to participate.

Things to consider:

- Ensure that students have easy access to the meal. It is not always easy for a student to get to the cafeteria in a timely manner.
  - Alternative serving styles like breakfast in the classroom, grab and go breakfast, and breakfast after first period have all been shown to increase breakfast participation because they remove barriers for students.
  - Per [Basic Education Circular 24 P.S. §15-1504, Instructional Time and Act 80 Exceptions](#), time when students are eating breakfast during homeroom periods or during classroom instruction, **counts as pupil instruction time**.
  - Food waste is significantly associated with the amount of time students have to eat. It is recommended that students have at least 15 minutes of eating time for breakfast (20-25 for lunch).
- Reinforce the importance of a nutritious breakfast to school nutrition staff and students.
  - The School Breakfast Program has numerous nutritional requirements, but there are opportunities for School Nutrition staff to offer a breakfast that is even more nutritious.
  - It is also important to encourage students to make healthy choices.
  - Hot breakfast items tend to increase participation and can be more substantial and nutritious than cold breakfast items.
- Set the tone at the top. Educate the school community (principals, administrators, school board, teachers, counselors, coaches, students, and parents) on the importance of a nutritious breakfast to start the school day and the availability of free school breakfast.
  - Encourage students to participate in the School Breakfast Program and engage with school nutrition staff on their favorite nutritious breakfast meals.

- PDE has developed a [breakfast promotion toolkit](#) that contains messaging for parents, ideas for breakfast promotions with special guests, social media tag lines, etc. Use this toolkit to help spread the word!

The School Breakfast Program is a federal program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. All students in participating schools have access to a school breakfast, and schools are reimbursed for each student that receives a reimbursable meal.

Thank you for all that you do to ensure your students have access to a world-class education, healthy meals, and infinite possibilities of success!

Khalid N. Mumin, Ed. D.  
Secretary of Education