

2016 - 2017 School Year

# Montana School Breakfast Report



MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK



# Introduction

This is the 2016 – 2017 Montana School Breakfast Report, created by the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) using data obtained from the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI). The report examines access to and participation in the School Breakfast Program across schools in Montana. Through data analysis, we were able to discover trends and identify areas for program improvement. Additionally, school and district level data is available online at our new data portal <https://mfbn.org/school-breakfast-program>.

Breakfast is important for every student, every day. For that reason, we focus our analysis on the average daily participation (ADP) in breakfast programs at each school. Also, we look at ADP for low-income students who participate in Free/Reduced Price (FRP) meals and differences in ADP between age groups.

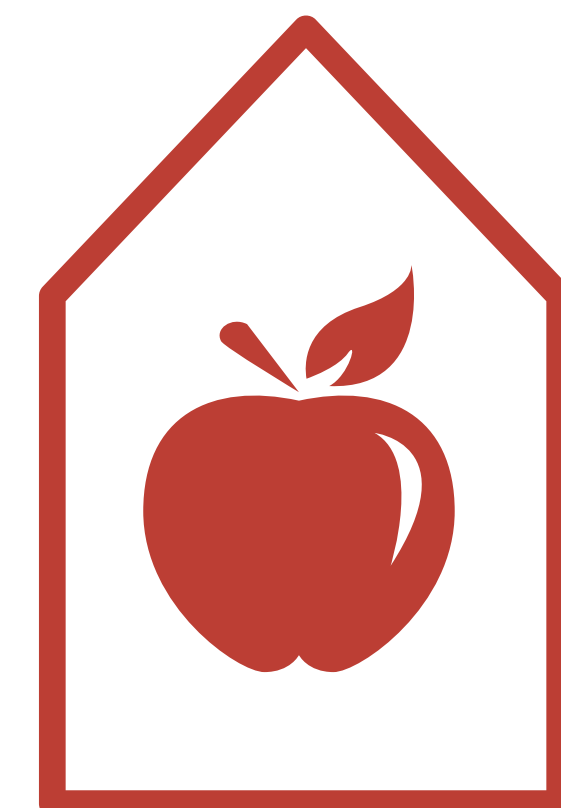
Since the 2015 – 2016 school year, the School Breakfast Program has served 5% more meals, feeding an average of 1,494 more students per day. However, **only 1 in 4 students utilize the School Breakfast Program in Montana**. This presents an opportunity for schools to enhance their breakfast programs and reach more students who could benefit from this program. In the following pages, we summarize important findings from the data.



## Benefits of Breakfast



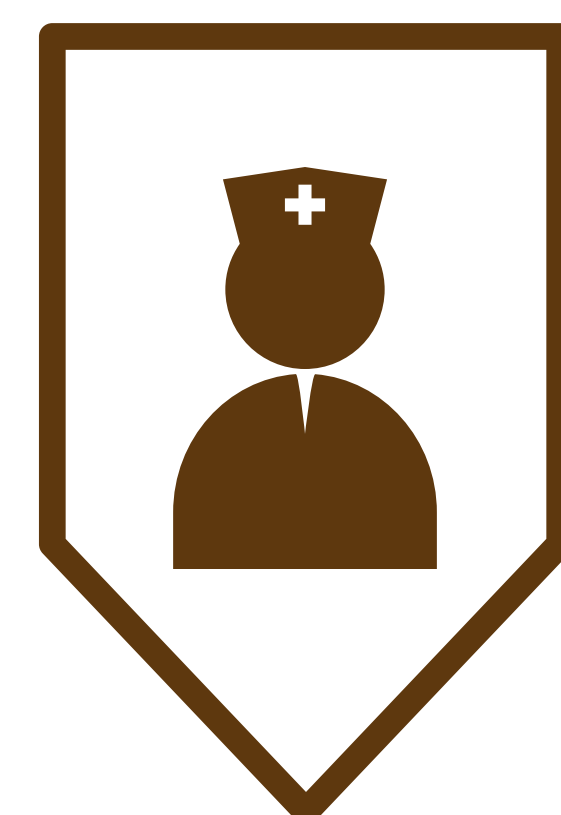
Test  
Scores



Dietary  
Intake



Absences/  
Tardiness



Nurses  
Visits



Improved  
Student  
Success!



# Key Findings

5,851,620

Meals served through the School Breakfast Program during the 2016 - 2017 school year. An **increase of 5% (277,580 meals)** from the previous school year.

90%

Of all schools that offer the National School Lunch Program also participate in the School Breakfast Program.

138

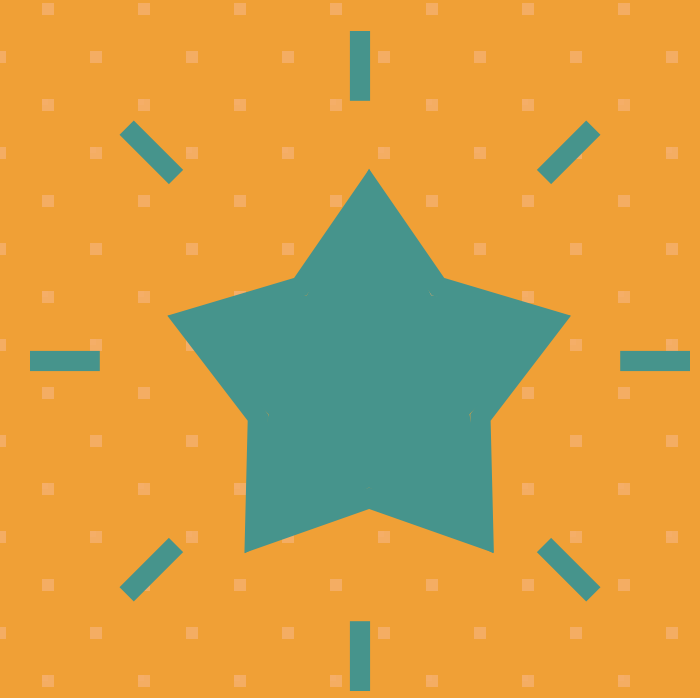
Schools that participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This is **80%** of all eligible schools with **11** joining since the prior school year. Meaning **23,431** students have access to free breakfast and lunch, without the need for applications.

41%

Of students at schools offering the School Breakfast Program in Montana qualify to receive Free/Reduced Price meals.

1 in 4

Students at schools offering school breakfast participate in the program daily. That means an average of **33,238** students eat breakfast at school everyday.



# Community Eligibility Provision

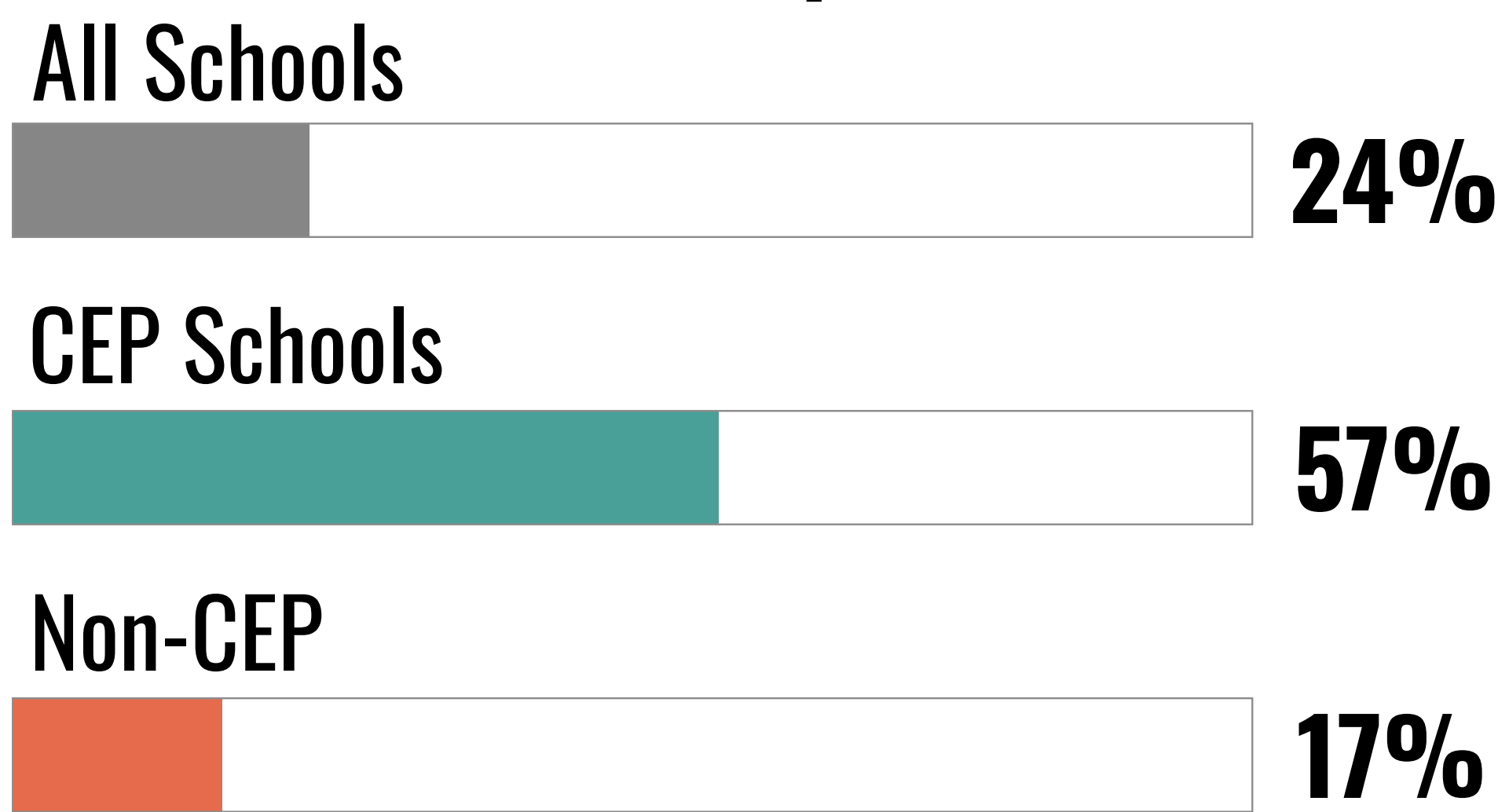
Schools qualify for CEP through their Identified Student Percentage (ISP). A school's ISP is based on the number of students who are directly certified for free school meals through participation in another means-tested program such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Schools or districts with an ISP of at least 40% can participate in CEP.

Because CEP schools no longer collect Free/Reduced Price meal applications, they no longer have traditional Free/Reduced Price (FRP) rates. The FRP rate of a CEP school or district is estimated using their ISP rate multiplied by 1.6, the established factor used to translate an ISP rate to an estimated FRP rate. This allows us to approximate FRP breakfast participation at CEP schools.

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) has allowed for tremendous growth in School Breakfast Program utilization at Montana schools. As of the 2016-2017 school year, there are 138 schools participating across 53 districts in Montana. This is an increase of 11 schools from the previous year and encompasses 80 percent of all eligible schools.

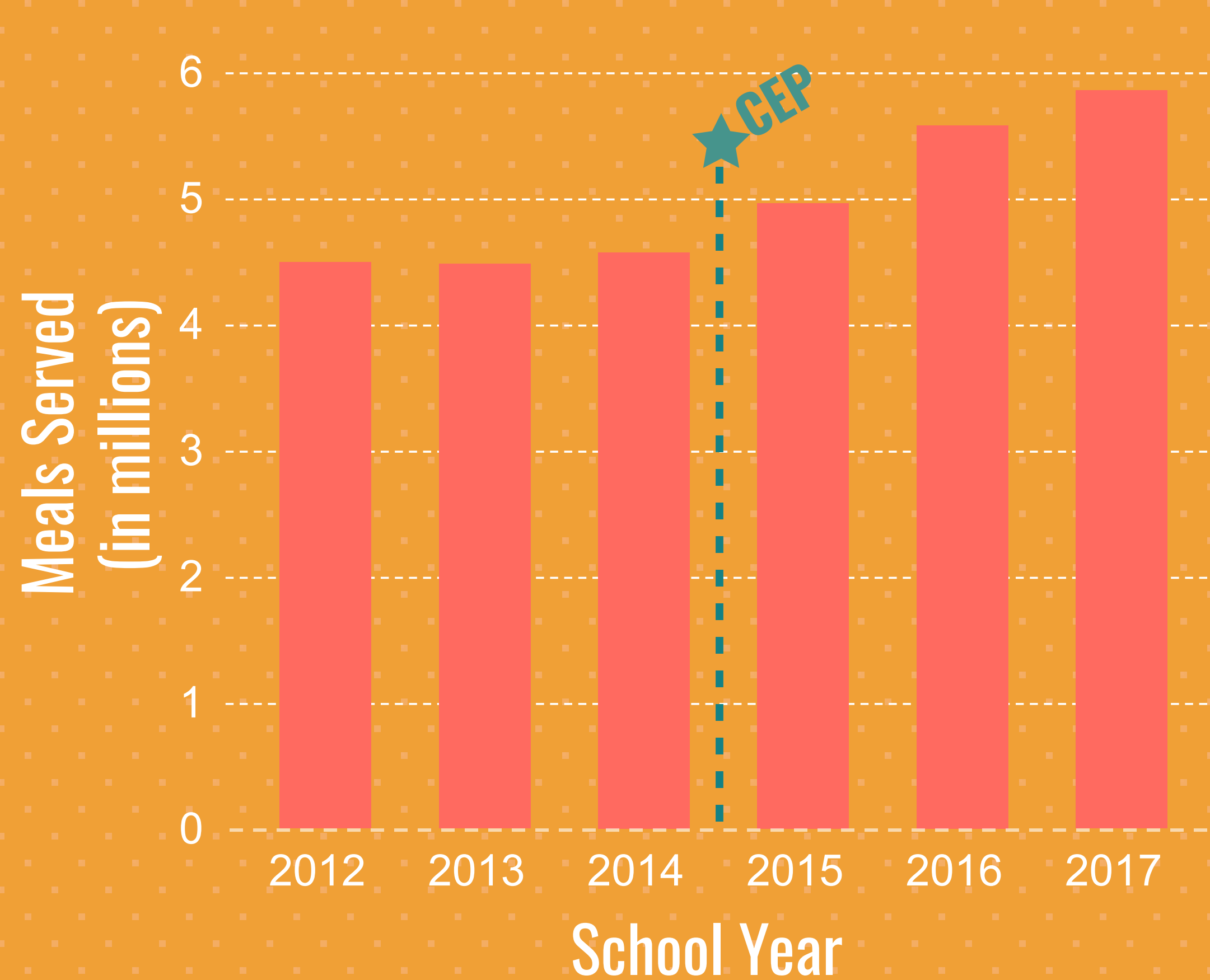
CEP allows high poverty schools to serve meals at no charge to all students. This process streamlines administration for schools, reduces paperwork for parents, and makes meals more accessible for all students.

## % Student Breakfast Participation

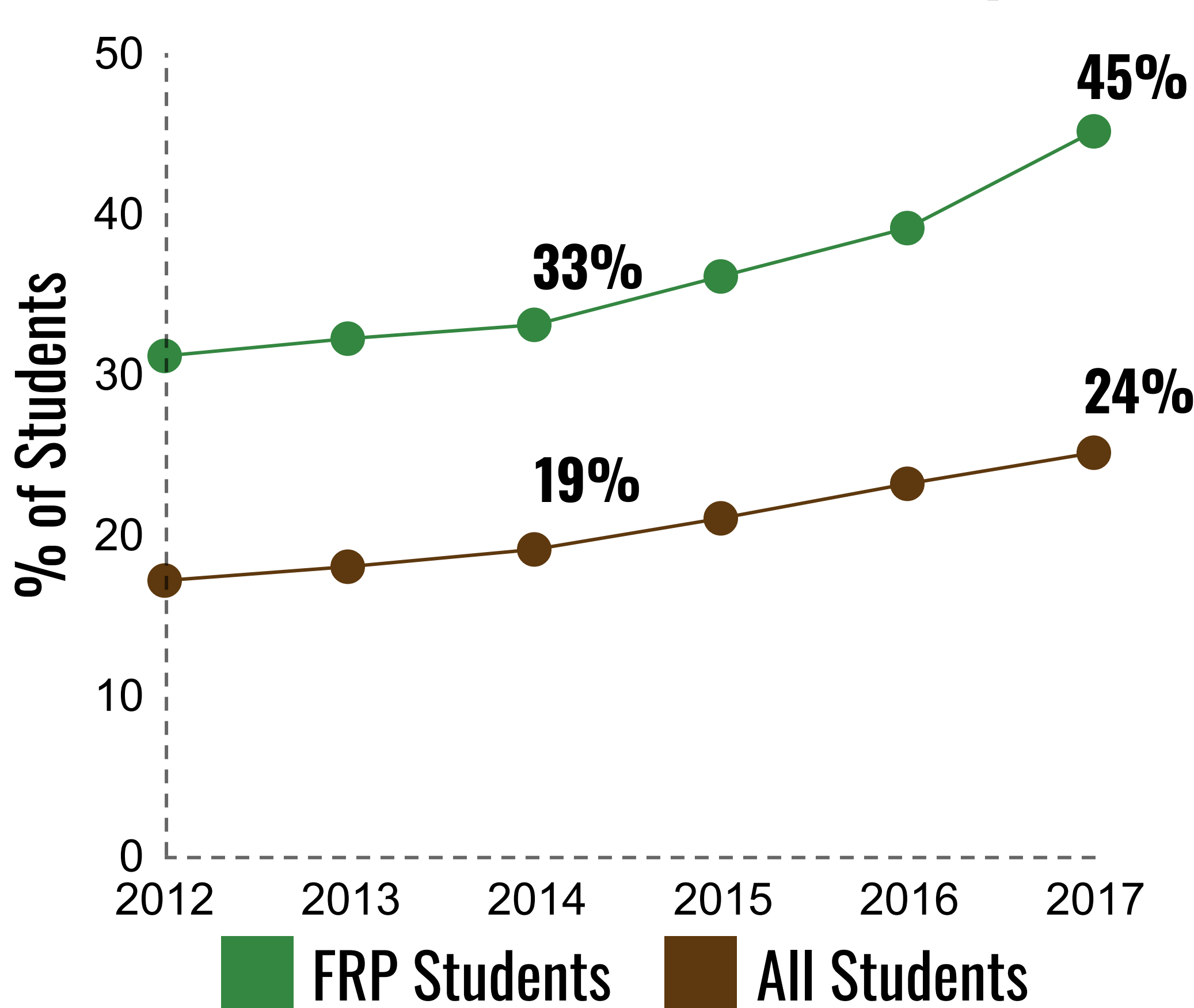


The adoption of CEP has increased School Breakfast participation in Montana tremendously, particularly at schools that implement alternative serving models in conjunction with CEP.

## School Breakfast Program



## School Breakfast Participation





# The Breakfast Age Gap



## What's Happening?

Research shows middle and high school students feel more stigmatized by participating in the School Breakfast Program than elementary students. Older students are more likely to express dissatisfaction about the breakfast options, lack of morning hunger, and not having enough time as reasons for not utilizing breakfast programs.

## After the Bell

- Served in between classes or at a break.

## Grab & Go

- Gives students more flexibility on when and where they eat.

## In the Classroom

- Students eat during morning announcements/check-in

## What can schools do?

Making breakfast more enticing and convenient for older students is key. Using social marketing, increased diversity in offerings, and alternative serving methods can increase participation.



# Breakfast in the Classroom

While traditionally an effective serving model for younger students, Breakfast in the Classroom is also a successful alternative serving model for increasing participation among older students. The junior high and high school in Troy, MT have found that switching from a before school serving schedule has given more students the chance to eat breakfast each day. Overall participation nearly tripled, from 24 percent to 68 percent after changing their serving model.

The principal of both schools, Dr. Jake Francom, led the charge to offer Breakfast in the Classroom three years ago when the district implemented the Community Eligibility Provision. “Before,” says Dr. Francom, “we were offering breakfast in the morning prior to their first class. Now we have it integrated with their homeroom period.” Students have more time to arrive at school and get to eat breakfast with their classmates before starting their day. Additionally, there is no loss of instructional time since teachers are doing attendance, going over announcements, providing homework help and checking-in with students while they eat.



Every morning, food service staff Penny and Terry get breakfast cooked and packed in coolers. Each meal typically includes a hot item such as a breakfast burrito, along with cereal, freshly sliced fruit, juice and milk. After the first bell, a student from each homeroom heads to the cafeteria to pick up her classroom’s meals. Back in the classroom, students get to choose their meal for the day from the coolers.

Teachers track how many students take a meal and then send that information digitally to a business clerk. In order to ensure the counts are accurate, Penny also tracks counts of meals made and meals returned in the cooler after breakfast to double check the totals.

As with any change impacting a classroom, getting teacher buy-in was key. When Dr. Francom first brought up the idea of Breakfast in the Classroom, there were a number of teachers that didn’t like the idea. Concerns ranged from not wanting to use their morning time in this manner to dealing with food mess.



# Troy Public Schools

In general, the response since implementing breakfast in the classroom has been positive. Both teachers and students have enjoyed the change. Students are responsible for cleanup and teachers get to check-in with their class before the day starts. Students like this model because they don't have to arrive at school early to get breakfast anymore. With breakfast before school, sometimes buses would arrive too late for kids to get breakfast. Now everyone gets a chance to have breakfast, ensuring full stomachs for the start of the school day.

When asked what impact there has been on the students, Dr. Francom says, "We've seen a large reduction in suspensions. We have data to support that." He also notes that while it is hard to measure the effect of breakfast specifically on factors like improved test scores, attendance, and student behavior, the impact has been positive. School breakfast ensures that kids have the nutrition needed to succeed in school. Yet breakfast is more than just food. "Several other factors come into play with the breakfast in the classroom model," says Dr. Francom. "It's more than just providing a meal to the students. We sit and talk to each other. We check in and shoot the breeze. Many of these students don't get that at home. I really believe it's all about building those relationships."



Given the success they have seen, Dr. Francom doesn't see why more high schools don't serve breakfast this way. Troy has become a high poverty community since timber and mining jobs have left the area. "There is a lot of need in the community. If the students don't eat breakfast here, then many don't eat at all." Troy Public Schools have made it a priority to ensure that all of their students have access to a nourishing meal to start the school day. Their breakfast program is an encouraging example for schools looking to change their serving model to one that reaches more of their students and helps them thrive.

To learn more about the implementation of breakfast in the classroom at Troy Public Schools, contact:

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How did your school do this year?

Visit our new data portal

[mfbn.org/school-breakfast-program](https://mfbn.org/school-breakfast-program)

