

School Year 2017-2018



**Montana School
Breakfast Report**

MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK

About

This is the 2017 – 2018 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.

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 from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Also, we look at ADP for low-income students who participate in Free/Reduced Price (FRP) meals and differences in ADP between age groups. Note, our data may differ from Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) because we exclude preschools and meals served at non-school locations such as youth homes. To review the success of your school, district or county, visit MFBN.ORG/Breakfast.

The Need



In Montana, 1 in 6 children live in homes experiencing food insecurity, or the inability to access food in a consistent manner. Hunger negatively impacts children's physical growth, mental development and overall health, which impedes their ability to succeed in school. School breakfast ensures that all children have the nutrition they need to learn and thrive.

Yet, 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. In the following pages, we summarize important findings from Montana's School Breakfast participation data.

Benefits of Breakfast



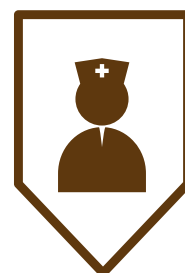
Higher Test Scores



Improved Dietary Intake



Fewer Absences/
Reduced Tardiness



Fewer Nurses Visits



Improved Student Success!

Key Findings

6,075,948

Meals served at K-12 schools through the School Breakfast Program during the 2017 - 2018 school year, including 4,669,283 Free/Reduced Price Meals to low-income children.

91%

Or 686 out 757 MT schools that offer the National School Lunch Program also participate in the School Breakfast Program, of which 36% now offer an alternative breakfast model.

158

Schools participated in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) in School Year 2017-2018. Through CEP **nearly 27,000** students had access to free breakfast and lunch, without the need for applications.

46%

Or 66,114 students at K-12 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 **34,721** students at K-12 schools eat breakfast everyday.



Free/Reduced Price Meals

Low-income children are eligible to receive free or reduced price (FRP) meals if their household's income is less than 185% of the federal poverty line (\$2,140 per month for a family of four), or they participate in other government programs like SNAP or TANF.

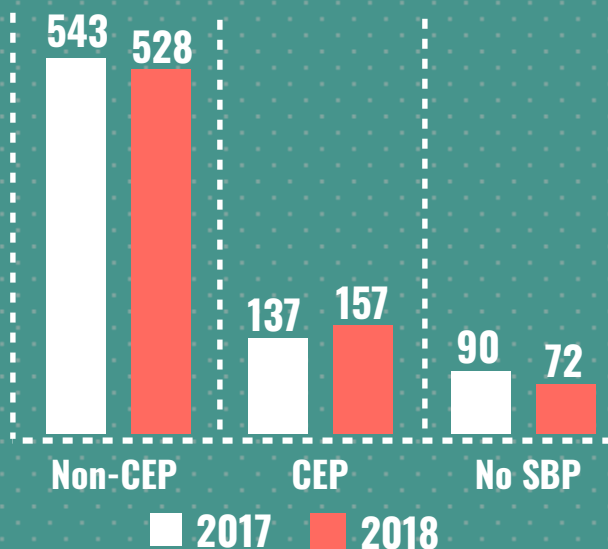
The adoption of CEP has increased School Breakfast participation in Montana tremendously, particularly at schools that also implement alternative serving models.



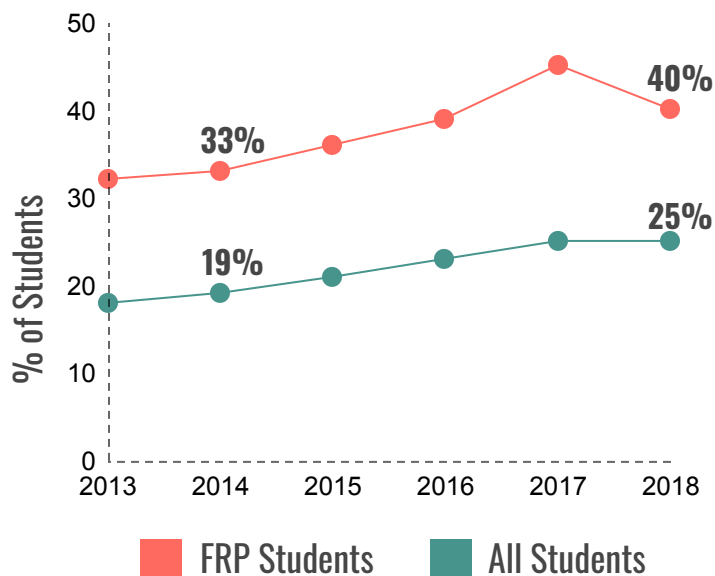
Community Eligibility Provision

Generally, schools or districts with more than 40% of students eligible for FRP meals through direct certification may qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which allows all students to receive school meals without the need for applications. In School Year 2017-18, 158 Montana schools across 55 districts utilized CEP, an increase of 20 schools from the previous year, resulting in 85% of eligible schools now participate in CEP.

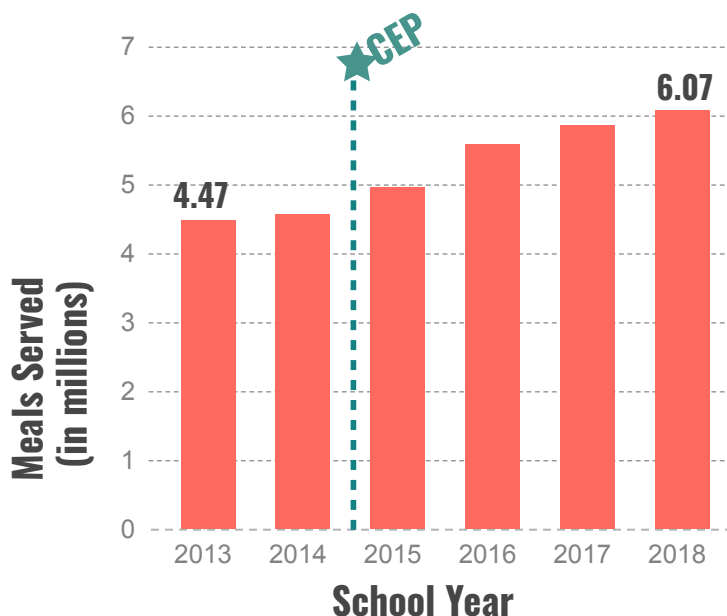
School Breakfast Programs



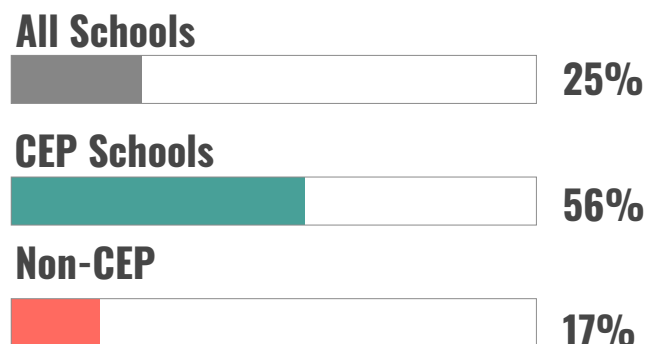
School Breakfast Participation



Breakfast Meals Served



% Student Breakfast Participation



CHALLENGES

Low Breakfast Participation

Breakfast participation continues to trail behind the rate of lunch participation. Across the state, for every 100 students who eat lunch, only 47 also eat breakfast each day. In School Year 2017-18, if all schools had adopted the school breakfast program and matched their lunch participation rates, Montana would have served 30,000 more students each morning, guaranteeing all kids had the nutrition they need to thrive in class. Nearly 20,000 additional low-income students, who were eligible for Free and Reduce Priced (FRP) meals could have received an extra meal each day, a critical support for struggling families trying to stretch limited resources.

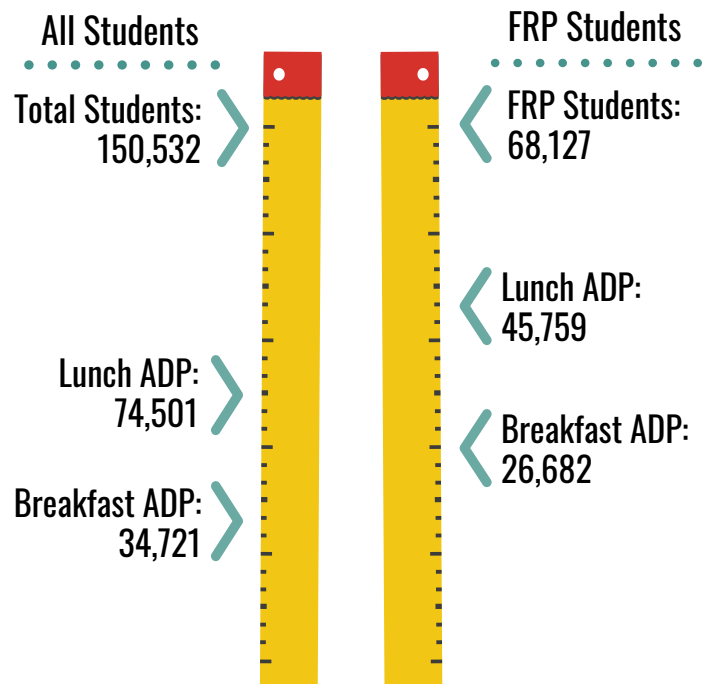
Underutilization of Alternative Breakfast Models

Montana schools rely predominately on the traditional breakfast serving model with 64%, or 435 schools, offering meals solely in the cafeteria before first period. Yet, the breakfast participation rate of these schools is much lower than the 95 schools offering breakfast entirely through an alternative model (20% vs 53%). For a description of alternative models see page 5.

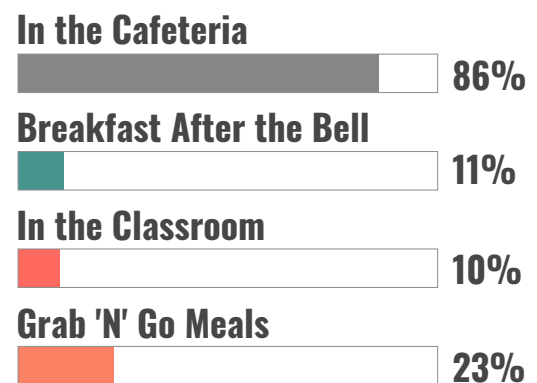
The utilization of alternative models does continue to grow, with more than 1 in 3 Montana schools (245) now offering an alternative breakfast option, alone or in conjunction with the traditional model. Grab 'N' Go is the most utilized alternative model (23%) across all schools.

CEP schools utilize alternative models at a higher rate (69%) than non-CEP schools (37%).

Average Daily Participation (ADP): Lunch and Breakfast

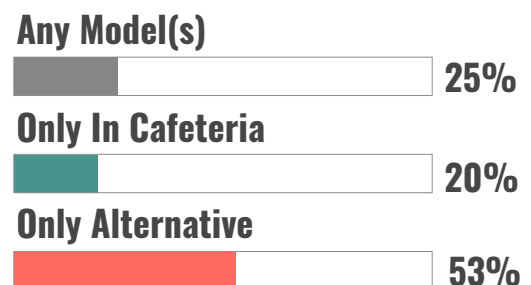


% of Schools Utilizing Breakfast Model Types*



*Schools may offer multiple models

Student Participation by Breakfast Model



Alternative Breakfast Models

A proven strategy to increase school breakfast participation is to serve breakfast using an alternative model and/ or after the start of the school day ("Breakfast After the Bell"). The traditional serving model for school breakfast -- before school in the cafeteria -- often misses children because of barriers such as rushed morning schedules and non-traditional work hours for parents; late buses; and social stigma, especially among middle and high school students, that the program is only for "poor kids."

Breakfast in the Classroom

Meals are delivered to the classroom and students eat at their desks during the first 10-15 minutes of a school day, typically when teachers take attendance, check homework, or review lessons. The effectiveness of this model is amplified when breakfast is offered free to all students regardless of income. This model 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 'N' Go Breakfast

Students pick up a bagged breakfast from carts located in a high traffic area and eat their meal at a school-approved location, making it a popular option for older students. Grab 'N' Go breakfast can be served first thing in the morning or at a mid-morning break. This model provides flexibility for schools, especially those that may find it difficult to deliver meals directly to classrooms.



Second Chance Breakfast

School nutrition staff serve breakfast after first period classes either in the cafeteria, from carts in the hallway, or other locations. This model works particularly well for secondary schools because older students are often not hungry early in the morning and high school students tend to arrive at school closer to the start of the school day.



For strategies to implement or improve an alternative breakfast program:

- USDA's "There's More Than One Way to Serve Breakfast": https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/toolkit_gettingstarted
- No Kid Hungry's Breakfast Guides: <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/school-breakfast>
- FRAC's Breakfast Expansion Strategies: <https://www.frac.org/programs/school-breakfast-program/school-breakfast-expansion-strategies>

Breakfast Successes

Bridger High and Middle Schools

In 2019, Bridger K-12 Schools utilized a mini-grant from MFBN to buy a cart, insulated carriers for hot and cold items, and a small refrigerator to start a Grab 'N' Go model in their high school and middle school. In the month prior to implementation of the alternative model, the schools served just over 100 meals to students. In the first month of Grab 'N' Go, the schools served over 770 meals. Because of this outstanding success, Bridger Schools received an Honorable Mention in the School Breakfast Champion Award category of the Montana First Lady School Nutrition Awards for efforts in increasing students' access to school breakfast.

"The students now have access to handy, healthy food where they never had it before. By bringing breakfast to them, we've ensured access for all. We polled the Middle and High School students and have only gotten positive responses back. Answers such as: 'I find it easier to concentrate', 'I'm not so cranky', 'I'm not so tired', etc. proved to us that this venture was everything we hoped for and more. We couldn't be happier or more proud." -Bridger Schools



Butte's West and Kennedy Elementary Schools

In School Year 2017-2018, Butte School District implemented Breakfast in the Classroom at West and Kennedy Elementary Schools after receiving mini-grant funding through MFBN and MT No Kid Hungry for new equipment such as insulated bags and carts. Prior to implementation, participation in breakfast for students eligible for FRP meals was just over 50% at both schools. After instituting the alternative breakfast model, participation grew to over 70%.

"Serving breakfast during the first 15 minutes of class has given children the opportunity to eat in a consistent, relaxed environment. Breakfast After the Bell also removes the stigma that only poor students eat breakfast. We're seeing more paid and reduced meal price students eating alongside their classmates who are served free meals." -Butte School District



How did your school do this year?

You can find out at:

mfbn.org/breakfast

Further Breakfast Resources:

USDA's SBP Toolkit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/program-operator>

Montana Office of Public Instruction: <http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Management-Operations/School-Nutrition>

FRAC's Breakfast Strategies: www.frac.org/programs/school-breakfast-program/school-breakfast-expansion-strategies

No Kid Hungry Guides: <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/school-breakfast>

Other School Programs:

BackPack Program: provides pre-packed weekend food bags for preschool/elementary aged kids

School Pantry: provides flexible weekend food options for middle and high school aged students

If you are interested in one of these private programs, MFBN can help! Please contact us for more information, 406.215.1772.



This report was created by the Montana Food Bank Network with data supplied by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. For more information, contact MFBN at 406.215.1771