

Breakfast: A Powerful Tool To End Childhood Hunger

Ending hunger means ensuring every child has reliable access to the healthy food they need. Research shows that the simple act of eating school breakfast can dramatically change a child's life.

OVERVIEW

1 in 6 kids in Montana live in families who struggle with hunger. This takes a profound toll on their health, their happiness, and their ability to find success in the future. School breakfast can help change that.



School breakfast can close the gap between kids who have enough to eat and those who don't. However, only 34 percent of Montana food insecure students that are accessing school lunch are also accessing school breakfast for a variety of reasons -- including arriving late to school, students wanting to play with peers before the bell, or the stigma associated with school breakfast being for low-income students.

When Montana schools offer school breakfast through innovative, effective models like Breakfast After the Bell, we find that more food insecure students are accessing breakfast. These models can be tailored to meet the needs of schools and students.

Through increased school breakfast participation, Montana school administrators and educators are seeing:

- ✓ Improved classroom and school culture.
- ✓ Improved student behavior.
- ✓ Decrease in disciplinary issues.
- ✓ Decrease in nurses' visits.
- ✓ Increase in test scores.
- ✓ Fiscal benefits for school districts.

Since the work of No Kid Hungry Montana began in 2014

1 in 6

The number of children who come from food insecure families. This number decreased last year from 1 in 5.

17%

Childhood food insecurity in Montana. It has decreased from 22.1%

23rd

Montana ranks 23rd in the country for steadily increasing school breakfast participation in food insecure children

295 of 818

The number of Montana schools that are increasing access to school breakfast through innovative models like Breakfast After the Bell.

Learn more at mt.nokidhungry.org

Breakfast Incentive Legislation

What Is the Purpose?

This legislation supports schools in increasing school breakfast access to food insecure students, ensuring that students are properly nourished and can reach their fullest potential.

How Does it Work?

This bill targets high need schools – schools with 40% of their student body qualifying for free and reduced priced school meals -- and encourages these schools to increase breakfast participation through a financial incentive. For each additional school breakfast served over the previous school year, schools receive five cents to put toward their school food and nutrition service program.

Fiscally Prudent

School breakfast is an existing program that is underutilized in many Montana schools. Low participation can result in food service budgets being in the red. As a result, districts tap into their general funds to make up the deficit. Increasing school breakfast participation can generate revenue to preserve district general funds that could be used for other district needs like staffing and curriculum materials.

Since 2014, Montana No Kid Hungry has provided privately funded grants to schools, but the need is far greater. This legislation will leverage the public and private partnerships in place to expand these efforts and reach all kids in need.

Incentive Is Good For Students, Good For Schools

For teachers to effectively teach, students' basic needs must be met. Just as students cannot do well in school without textbooks, they can't be expected to do well in school without the nutrition they need in the morning to fuel their brains and bodies. Ensuring that students receive daily nourishment positively impacts the Whole Child approach to education.



BY THE NUMBERS

39,000

The number of food insecure kids in Montana who could benefit from school breakfast.

460

Schools currently eligible to apply for incentive

\$250,000

Amount needed to support and sustain schools in increased breakfast access to income eligible students.