

BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM ROLES



Implementing a Breakfast in the Classroom program is a team effort. Everyone from the principal to teachers to the school nurse can help support this model change. Clearly communicating the various roles and responsibilities to each stakeholder from the outset of the process can help ensure a smooth implementation.

FOOD SERVICE STAFF

Food service staff are in charge of managing the day-to-day operations of the school breakfast program including preparation and transport.

BREAKFAST PREPARATION

Food service staff often begin preparation for the next day's breakfast in the afternoon. Non-perishable packaged goods can be counted and placed in crates in advance. Coolers can be packed with milk the night before and put in the refrigerator. The rest of the prep work for breakfast is completed in the morning before students arrive. Hot breakfast items can be kept warm by transporting them directly to the classroom in insulated bags. Warm, hand held items such as breakfast sandwiches and egg burritos are easy for students to eat in the classroom.

FOOD TRANSPORT

School building layout and the availability of kitchen staff will largely determine the method for transporting food to the classroom. Food service staff, teachers, or student ambassadors can deliver breakfast to each floor or classroom before class begins. Alternatively, student representatives from each class can pick up pre-packed meals from the cafeteria and deliver them to the classroom. Carts, crates, and/or coolers can be used to transport the breakfast items. In schools with multiple staircases and no elevators, administration, food service staff, and teachers may have to work together to figure out the best method of transporting breakfast from the kitchen to the classrooms. To prepare for BIC, food service staff can:

- Purchase coolers for breakfast transport. Ensure coolers can fit enough meals for each student in the class.
- Ensure coolers are identifiable by classroom. Consider labeling the teachers' names on colored tape or on a sign above the cooler staging area.

- Include a roster or other mechanism for counting reimbursable meals in the classroom.
- Supply teachers with fun prizes for students who participate in breakfast: erasers, colorful pencils, rulers, pencil cases, activity pages, breakfast posters or magnets.
- Employ additional food service staff on the first day of the new breakfast program to ensure BIC runs smoothly.
- Review weekly participation rates for each grade to gauge how the program is being received and readjust the strategy as necessary.

SUPERINTENDENT

Support from school leaders and administration is very important to the program's success. The superintendent can help lead the push to implement a model change or new program, as well as give insight into the state of hunger in the district and is critically important to getting principals, teachers, and other staff excited about the new breakfast model.

PRINCIPAL

As the head of the school, the principal should lead the charge in communicating breakfast changes to school staff, students, and families.

- The school principal should communicate with each stakeholder about the change to school breakfast prior to the change taking place. Stakeholders will be much more willing to work with the school on the change if their feedback is taken into account from the beginning.
- Principals should also promote Breakfast in the Classroom with parents at parent nights and through letters and flyers home.
- To show the impact of the program, principals should keep track of the number of students tardy or absent from school and the frequency of disciplinary issues before and after the change.

CUSTODIAN

If custodians are currently cleaning up the cafeteria after breakfast, moving breakfast to the classroom should be a change of responsibility, not an added one. Custodians can collect the trash bins during the time that would have otherwise been spent cleaning the cafeteria. Collecting the trash quickly after the end of breakfast will ensure that classrooms are kept clean and that there will be less of a potential for rodent problems.

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TEACHERS

Teachers are integral to making a BIC program successful. To help ensure the success of the program, teachers can:

- Make sure their classrooms contain a spray cleaner, sponge, hand-held broom, and paper towels in case of spills as well as a sturdy trash bin with a lid and heavy-duty trash bags.
- Assign two students to be breakfast helpers each week if using a “Student Breakfast Ambassador” model. These students will bring the breakfast coolers from the cafeteria to the classroom. They will also be responsible for returning them after breakfast.
- Place breakfast coolers on a table. Breakfast carrier containers must be at least 6 inches off the floor at all times.
- Use the roster that is sent to class with breakfast to check off the names of students as they take a meal. This can be done in conjunction with taking attendance or as students come into the classroom. Only teachers or paraprofessionals may check off students’ names. Students may not check off their own name, regardless of their age.
- Watch as children take their breakfast, making sure students take three of the four breakfast items offered (if using Offer vs Serve) or a unitized meal.
- Make use of the time during breakfast. Some teachers use this time to take attendance, collect homework, read aloud, pass out worksheets, practice math facts, or begin a lesson.
- Assist students in appropriately disposing of trash, partially-consumed food or milk, and any other waste.
- Inform students that they may save any non-perishable items to eat later. If available, students may also put any extra food (not milk) into a designated share bin for themselves or other students to eat if they are hungry during the day. Teachers should empty the share bin daily. Refer to [DESE School Breakfast Program Integrity Guidebook](#) to ensure compliance.

NURSE

School nurses see the direct health effects of hunger. They can communicate the importance of a healthy breakfast to students and encourage them to take part. To help increase breakfast participation, nurses can:

- Speak with students visiting their office about the importance of a healthy breakfast in the morning and the impact it has on students’ mental and physical well-being and academic success.
- Keep track of the number of students reporting hunger-related complaints.
- Inform students who come to the nurse’s office with hunger-related complaints of the opportunity to get breakfast in the classroom and see if anything may be standing in the way of them accessing the meal.
- Follow-up with students they see on a frequent basis or students who they know may be experiencing the impacts of hunger at home.

CONTACT US

Project Bread provides individualized support to any school or district in Massachusetts looking to start a school breakfast program, change breakfast models, or increase participation in an existing program.

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