

Breakfast After the Bell

# BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

## QUICK GUIDE



LET'S CONNECT ON ALL THINGS BREAKFAST

Project Bread

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# WHAT IS BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM?



In the Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) service model, students eat at their desks at the beginning of the day or during a morning break. Breakfast can be served either hot or cold depending on the school's facilities. Service can either begin after the bell or before the bell continuing after the bell.

Breakfast only takes 10 to 15 minutes for students to eat. Many teachers use this time to take attendance, collect homework, deliver announcements, or begin the day's instruction. Often, they find that this is a valuable use of time and that students are more productive later in the morning after enjoying a healthy breakfast.



## BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM BENEFITS:

- When students eat school breakfast in the classroom, it removes the stigma for students who qualify for “free” meals and normalizes eating breakfast at school. Students will not go hungry because they are too embarrassed to go to the cafeteria for school breakfast or because their bus was late.
- BIC offers important time for teachers to check-in with their classroom while students develop interpersonal skills with their peers over breakfast.
- BIC provides the opportunity for school nutrition programs to reach their highest possible school breakfast participation.
- BIC provides nutrition closer to instruction time, which has been shown to improve academic performance.
- Children who eat breakfast are more likely to arrive on time to school, retain what they learn, behave better, and experience better health outcomes.

## PROGRAM INFO:

This quick guide, presented by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Project Bread, is intended to assist school nutrition directors and other breakfast advocates in launching and implementing Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) in order to increase participation in school breakfast.

The BIC Quick Guide is part of a Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit Series designed to help with the implementation of alternative breakfast models including Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab & Go, and Second Chance Breakfast.

View the entire series at [www.projectbread.org/resources](http://www.projectbread.org/resources).

For additional resources and technical support, please contact Project Bread at [cnop@projectbread.org](mailto:cnop@projectbread.org) or (617)-239-2543

# BIC CAN BE OFFERED IN SEVERAL WAYS:

- 1 Staff can deliver breakfast to the classroom.
- 2 Student representatives can go to the cafeteria to retrieve breakfast for their class.
- 3 Students can receive breakfast from staff off of a cart in the hallway and head into class, eating breakfast in the classroom.\*

\*Visit our other Breakfast After the Bell resources for more information on Breakfast in the Classroom: <https://www.projectbread.org/resources/batb>

## BUILDING A SCHOOL BREAKFAST COALITION:

**C**reating a coalition of supporters for BIC is the first step in successfully implementing a school breakfast change. Principals and superintendents are key champions as part of the coalition, but you should also consider the perspectives that teachers, custodians, school nurses, parents, and students themselves will offer in the planning process. When presenting the plan to teachers, make sure you are listening to their concerns and presenting answers and solutions as part of their training. If you are able to involve other stakeholders in the planning process and incorporate ways to ease their concerns as well, you are less likely to face resistance down the road.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

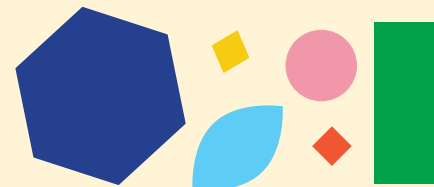
For further assistance with building your school breakfast coalition and communicating key messages to the various stakeholders, check out the resources accompanying this guide at: [projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources](https://www.projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources) and connect with Project Bread.



**“When we started offering Breakfast in the Classroom, we saw a huge increase in our breakfast participation. We love knowing that we are helping so many of our students have full bellies to stay focused at school!”**

**MELANIE WILK**

*Food Service Director,  
Chicopee Public Schools*



# HOW IT WORKS

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## PREP

School nutrition staff pack milk and breakfast items in coolers for each classroom.

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## DELIVER

School nutrition staff, teachers, or student ambassadors deliver breakfast to the classrooms.

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## DISTRIBUTE

Teachers use a roster to check off the names of students who take a meal. This can be done in conjunction with taking attendance.

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**“The Breakfast After the Bell program has saved our district financially. If we’re not serving breakfast we’re missing out on making our students lives better, and the districts are missing out on funding.”**

MICHAEL ONORATO

*Food Service Director, Pioneer Valley Regional School District*

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## TEACH

Teachers engage students in a lesson or activity while they enjoy their meal.

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## CLEAN UP

Teachers assist students in appropriately disposing of trash, partially-consumed food or milk, and all other waste. Students may also put any extra unopened food that they have taken into a designated share bin for other students to eat throughout the day.

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## REMOVE TRASH

Teachers or student ambassadors place the trash in the hallway. Custodial staff will collect all trash during the first few periods of the day.

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## RETURN COOLERS

All breakfasts not taken by students must be returned with the cooler. Teachers or student ambassadors may return the coolers along with the breakfast roster counts to the cafeteria once breakfast has ended.

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## CONTINUE THE LESSON

Students have a full belly and are now focused and ready to learn for the day!

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# BIC IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

## 3-4 MONTHS

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

Learn about successful Breakfast in the Classroom programs at other schools and see it in action!

- Contact Project Bread to set up a meeting by sending an email to [cnop@projectbread.org](mailto:cnop@projectbread.org).
- Visit a successful Breakfast in the Classroom program at another school. Speak with the staff members there about the challenges they faced and how they overcame them. Contact [cnop@projectbread.org](mailto:cnop@projectbread.org) to learn more about our Peer-to-Peer Initiative.
- Present the case and initial plan to the principal and superintendent.
- Invite them to provide feedback and contribute to the plan.
- Determine any equipment needs (coolers, refrigerators, etc.) and order equipment, applying for grants if necessary.

## 2-3 MONTHS

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

Check in with Project Bread to discuss any outstanding questions about BIC.

- Schedule a meeting with the principal, teachers, custodians, nurses, and school nutrition staff to discuss the model change.
- Meet with the custodial staff to discuss a waste removal plan.
- Schedule training meetings for teachers and school nutrition staff.
- Schedule an announcement at the next PTA-PTO meeting or Parent-Teacher Night.

## 4-5 WEEKS

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

- Order supplies for the classrooms (trash bags, additional waste bins, disinfectant wipes, etc.).
- Send a letter home to parents informing them about the new way breakfast is being served and promoting the benefits of the new BIC program.
- Explain the model change to students and promote the program.

## 2-3 WEEKS

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

- Finalize the waste removal plan with custodial staff.
- Conduct trainings for teachers and school nutrition staff regarding compliance concerns and meal counting.
- Try a practice run with teachers.
- Implement a monitoring system by appointing one member of the school nutrition team to serve as a liaison, exchanging feedback with teachers.
- Train students on how the program will work. If students will pick up coolers from the cafeteria, come up with a rotating schedule for each class.
- Refer to DESE's School Breakfast Program Integrity Guidebook: [projectbread.org/sb-integrity-guidebook](http://projectbread.org/sb-integrity-guidebook)

## 1 WEEK

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

- Remind parents about the new BIC program through a flyer or the school's phone/texting system.
- Promote the program with students to encourage excitement about the program.
- Check in with teachers and staff to answer any outstanding questions.

## 1 DAY

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

- Remind the students about the change over the morning announcements.

## 1 WEEK

AFTER ROLLOUT

- Continue to plan evaluation meetings with staff involved and make necessary changes to the program.

\* In February 2015, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued policy guidance that allowed Breakfast in the Classroom to be counted toward total instructional time.



# HEALTHY MENU PLANNING

Offering fresh, healthy BIC meals can seem logistically challenging. To assist you in offering the most nutritious breakfast options to your students, we have developed a one-week cycle menu that focuses on healthy breakfast options that can be used in alternative breakfast models. This cycle menu adheres to USDA regulations—promoting fresh fruit and whole grain-rich products—and offers recipes that students will want to eat.

We recognize that budgets vary across districts and factored total cost into our choices. We hope you will find this to be a useful guide for offering financially viable, healthy menu options for Breakfast in the Classroom.

## MONDAY

ASSORTED CEREALS (2 OZ = 2G)

BANANA (1 CUP = 1F)

1% OR SKIM MILK-PLAIN (1 CUP = 1 MILK)

\* BONUS: CHEESE STICK (1 OZ = 1MA)

## TUESDAY

BREAKFAST SANDWICH (2 OZ = 2M/MA, 1-2 OZ = 1-2G)

BANANA (1 CUP = 1F)

1% OR SKIM MILK-PLAIN (1 CUP = 1 MILK)

\* BONUS: CHEESE STICK (1 OZ = 1MA)

## WEDNESDAY

BREAKFAST BAR / ENGLISH MUFFIN (1 OZ = 1G)\*

SUNFLOWER SEEDS (1 OZ = 1MA)

SLICED APPLE W/ CINNAMON (1 CUP = 1F)

1% OR SKIM MILK-PLAIN (1 CUP = 1 MILK)

VISIT OUR RECIPE INDEX AT [PROJECTBREAD.ORG/RECIPES](https://projectbread.org/recipes)

## THURSDAY

WHOLE GRAIN PANCAKES (2.4 OZ = 2G)

FRUIT PUREE OR FRESH FRUIT (1 CUP = 1F)

1% OR SKIM MILK-PLAIN (1 CUP = 1 MILK)

\* BONUS: HARD-BOILED EGG (1 MEDIUM EGG = 1MA)

\* BONUS: SYRUP (1OZ PC)

## FRIDAY

GRANOLA (1/4 CUP OR 1 OZ = 1G)

GREEK YOGURT (4 OZ = 1MA)

RAISINS (1/2 CUP = 1F)

1% OR SKIM MILK-PLAIN (1 CUP = 1 MILK)

Working Together

## PEER-TO-PEER INITIATIVE

The School Breakfast Peer-to-Peer Initiative offers peer support for school breakfast stakeholders interested in implementing a new breakfast model, such as Breakfast in the Classroom, or enhancing an existing model. The Peer-to-Peer Initiative, offered by Project Bread and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, assists districts in increasing the effectiveness of school breakfast models by connecting them to peer advisors. Advisor and advisee districts are matched based on a specific model and other variables including grade level, enrollment size, proximity, and challenges faced. Peer-to-Peer support can vary in formality, providing anything from a quick phone connection to a site visit with stakeholders to the possibility of continued peer guidance.

To learn more about the Peer-to-Peer Initiative, please email: [cnop@projectbread.org](mailto:cnop@projectbread.org).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **Q: TEACHERS AT MY SCHOOL ARE CONCERNED THAT IMPLEMENTING BIC WILL INCREASE THEIR WORKLOAD. HOW CAN I ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS?**

A: During the implementation phase, teachers will spend a small amount of additional time introducing students to the new breakfast procedure. Teachers will have some new responsibilities—like counting the reimbursable meals—to ensure a successful program. Teachers often find, however, that this is time well spent since classroom management is often easier once BIC is underway. Many teachers report improvements to students’ behavior, focus, and attention when they have enjoyed a healthy breakfast. To ease teachers’ duties, you can bundle a reimbursable meal in a clear plastic bag or implement the serve-only method.

## **Q: WILL SERVING BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM TAKE AWAY FROM LEARNING TIME?**

A: No. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recognizes the advantages of breakfast on learning. In 2015, ESE issued policy guidance stating that serving breakfast in the classroom can be counted toward instructional time. Teachers can activate classroom time during breakfast by checking homework, integrating solo reading time, and beginning the day’s learning.

## **Q: WILL BIC LEAD TO ADDITIONAL FOOD WASTE?**

A: No. One concern with serving breakfast in the classroom is that school nutrition staff will have fewer menu options that are portable and can be easily consumed at a desk. For this reason, Project Bread has developed Let’s Prepare Healthy School Breakfast, a toolkit complete with healthy breakfast recipes for schools serving breakfast using alternative models.

When students are presented with diverse breakfast options and healthy, scratch-cooked meals, there will be less waste. Additionally, students can place any wrapped or whole food items they do not want to eat during breakfast in a “sharing bin” for other students in the class. “Sharing bins” must be approved by the local board of health. Refer to ESE’s School Breakfast Program Integrity Guidebook to ensure compliance.

## **Q: WILL BIC RESULT IN A MESSIER CLASSROOM?**

A. No. As long as you have established a trash removal plan with the students and custodial staff, BIC will not result in a messier classroom. Many schools choose to provide students with hand-held breakfast items that are easily eaten and produce little mess. By providing classrooms with placemats, wet wipes, and paper towels, teachers and students will be prepared in the event of a spill.

## **Q: WILL TRASH REMOVAL BECOME A BURDEN ON CUSTODIAL STAFF?**

A: No. Students can do the bulk of the cleaning up after breakfast is served in the classroom. All trash from breakfast should be placed in heavy-duty trash bags or rolling trash bins and left outside in the hallway for custodial staff to pick up within the first couple periods of the day. This is usually less work for custodians than the previous responsibility of cleaning the cafeteria after breakfast. Custodians should not need to spend extra time cleaning classrooms aside from their normal routines.

## **Q: BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM IS NOT FEASIBLE FOR ALL GRADE LEVELS AT MY SCHOOL. HOW CAN I STILL SERVE ALL STUDENTS?**

A: The best way to serve all students with different needs is to provide a hybrid Breakfast After the Bell model. This means that you can use the BIC model, and combine it with elements of a Grab & Go or Second Chance model in a way that uniquely fits each of your schools. For example, many schools prefer to serve Breakfast in the Classroom to elementary students, particularly pre-K through 1st grade, while providing meals for older students from Grab & Go kiosks or during a Second Chance passing period. For K-8 schools, using more than two different models to meet the needs of each age group may be necessary. The most robust breakfast programs are those that serve after the instructional day has begun, and that meet students where they are in terms of timing and location.

Contact Us

# LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO FEED MORE KIDS!

This guide is just one resource to help you launch your Breakfast in the Classroom program. Project Bread has more than 20 years of experience in launching Breakfast in the Classroom - and is only one phone call away.

Call Project Bread at (617)-239-2543 and also email us at [cnop@projectbread.org](mailto:cnop@projectbread.org) for guidance, materials, and further resources.

THERE ARE ALSO MORE RESOURCES ON OUR WEBSITE: [PROJECTBREAD.ORG/SCHOOLS](https://PROJECTBREAD.ORG/SCHOOLS)

Why This Matters

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST

According to the US Census Household Pulse Survey, in early April 2023, an estimated 21.3% of households with children are facing food insecurity in MA, a significant rise compared to 8.9% pre-pandemic. While these children and their families may not be hungry today or even tomorrow, the threat of hunger is a daily reality in their households. Federal nutrition benefits are a critical safety net that help keep family budgets in balance and minimize trade-offs between food, housing, medical care, and other critical needs.

For children living in food-insecure households, eating a healthy breakfast at home may not be possible. The School Breakfast Program is a federally-funded program that helps bridge this gap for families, providing nutritious meals at low or no cost to low-income students at schools throughout the country.

School breakfast providers here in Massachusetts are making great strides in increasing breakfast participation across the Commonwealth. School meals being free for all students since the COVID-19 public health emergency helped breakfast participation increase nearly 20% statewide compared to pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, with the passage of the state budget, Massachusetts made free school meals for all students permanent, securing a major victory for food access that will allow us to grow school breakfast participation even further. Together, we can ensure that all students in the state have access to nutritious meals that help them learn and thrive.

Learn More

## ABOUT OUR PARTNERSHIP

Project Bread partners with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office for Food and Nutrition Programs to work with local districts, schools, and communities across the state to increase participation in the School Breakfast Program.

Since 1994, Project Bread provides technical assistance and innovative solutions to support schools implementing and expanding school breakfast programs. Together, we strive to ensure that all children in Massachusetts start the school day nourished and ready to learn.

