

Breakfast After the Bell

GRAB & GO BREAKFAST

QUICK GUIDE



LET'S CONNECT ON ALL THINGS BREAKFAST

Project Bread

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Projectbread.org/schools



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WHAT IS GRAB & GO BREAKFAST?



In a Grab & Go Breakfast model, students can pick up breakfast from serving carts or kiosks located in easily accessible locations in the school—often at entrances or other high-traffic areas. Many schools choose Grab & Go because of the flexibility of location, time, and food selection that this model allows. Breakfast can be served as students enter the building before classes begin or between classes later in the morning, which can be an attractive option for older students. Schools determine where breakfast can be consumed, in locations such as playgrounds, hallways, the cafeteria, and classrooms. Breakfast menus are designed for students on the go, with prepackaged items allowing students to easily eat outside the cafeteria or save breakfast for when they are hungry.

GRAB & GO BENEFITS:

- Grab & Go works well for schools that do not have the ability to deliver breakfast to each classroom due to conflicting class schedules or infrastructure obstacles. Instead, meals are delivered to a few key locations that are convenient both for students and for school nutrition staff.
- This model is the most flexible in terms of service time and location, which makes it a good choice for schools that serve a large number of students.
- Serving breakfast after the bell in high-traffic areas rather than the cafeteria increases accessibility, reduces serving time, and often results in increased breakfast participation.
- Grab & Go Breakfast often works well for middle and high school students because older students enjoy the flexibility and choice this model provides. Students can select a clear bag at the beginning of the line and easily choose from the items available to create a reimbursable breakfast, which food service staff can easily check while maintaining the offer versus serve mandate for high schools. Another option is for the food service staff to pre-pack the bags with all meal components.
- In the Grab & Go model, school nutrition staff retains the meal counting responsibility, ensuring more accurate meal counts with less administrative burden than Breakfast in the Classroom.
- Older students may not be hungry first thing in the morning and may prefer to eat later. Grab & Go can be an effective model in providing

a breakfast opportunity later in the morning in addition to when students first enter the building (see following section on hybrid models).



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 Grab & Go Breakfast.

The Grab & Go Quick Guide is part of a series of Breakfast After the Bell quick guides 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.

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

HYBRID GRAB & GO BREAKFAST MODELS:

You can combine Grab & Go breakfast with another alternative model to provide a more comprehensive “hybrid” model to make sure all of your students have access to breakfast. Grab & Go models are extremely flexible and are easily modified to fit into a hybrid model. For example, you can use your kiosk(s) or cart(s) in the morning at the entrances of schools and then put them out again during a “Second Chance” period to provide older students who weren’t necessarily hungry earlier with a chance to eat breakfast. Also, you can choose to provide different age groups with different models, even within the same school, to best accommodate their needs in your programming. Perhaps you can package up some grab and go breakfasts and send them to certain classrooms to offer

Breakfast in the Classroom, and then provide Grab & Go for the rest of the students. In these “hybrid” models, you can tailor your BATB program to best fit your school community and provide breakfast access for all.

BUILDING A SCHOOL BREAKFAST COALITION:

Creating a coalition of supporters for Grab & Go 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 and other staff, 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/resources and connect with Project Bread.

HOW IT WORKS

PREP

School nutrition staff prepare breakfast for the students that is easy to consume on the go. Elementary and middle schools may choose to have school nutrition staff prepackage complete reimbursable meals for students to take.

DELIVER

About 10 minutes before service starts, move the serving carts or kiosks to their stations in high-traffic areas of the school. Be sure to provide adequate means to store and serve perishable items to maintain proper temperatures.

DISTRIBUTE

Use a wireless point of service device to keep track of which students eat breakfast. Schools operating CEP or Universal Breakfast should consult ESE's School Breakfast Program Integrity Guidebook to read more about their options for meal counting and claiming.

EAT

Students can consume breakfast in the cafeteria, hallways, classrooms, or other settings that work for your school.

CLEAN UP

Place additional waste and recycling bins in designated locations where students are allowed to consume breakfast. If students are allowed to eat breakfast in their classrooms during the beginning of class, place the classroom trash in the hallways for the custodial staff to pick up during the first few periods of the day.

BREAK DOWN

If you begin serving Grab & Go before the start of school, stay 5-10 minutes after the bell to allow late students to pick up breakfast. After that time, return the meals to the cafeteria and move the serving carts to their storage location if necessary.

“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

GRAB & GO IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

3-4 MONTHS

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

Learn about successful Grab & Go Breakfast 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.
- ☐ Visit a successful Grab & Go Breakfast program at another school. Speak with the staff members there about the challenges they faced and how they overcame them. Contact 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.
- ☐ Do a walkthrough of the building to determine best location(s) for a cart and any additional storage locations needed to increase efficiency.

2-3 MONTHS

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

Check in with Project Bread to discuss any outstanding questions about Grab & Go.

- ☐ Schedule a meeting with the principal, teachers, custodians, nurses, and school nutrition staff to discuss the model change.
- ☐ Work with this group to develop guidelines outlining where students will pick up their breakfast and when and where they can eat it.
- ☐ 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 Grab & Go program. Sample letters can be found at projectbread.org/resources.

- ☐ Explain the model change to students, including expectations for proper disposal of trash and any limitations on where food can be eaten.

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.
- ☐ Refer to DESE's School Breakfast Program Integrity Guidebook: projectbread.org/sb-integrity-guidebook for more information.
- ☐ Engage with student representatives to help remind students about the start of the program and expectations. Develop signage or posters that explain the guidelines, including where and when students can eat breakfast.

1 WEEK

PRIOR TO ROLLOUT

- ☐ Remind parents about the new Grab & Go program through a flyer or the school's phone/texting system.
- ☐ Promote the program with students to encourage excitement.
- ☐ 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.



HEALTHY MENU PLANNING

Offering fresh, healthy Grab & Go 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 Grab & Go Breakfast.

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)

SEASONAL FRESH FRUIT (1 CUP = 1F)

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

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)

FIND MORE GRAB & GO BREAKFAST RECIPES AND TRAININGS AT:
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 Grab & Go Breakfast, 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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: WILL SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF SPEND MORE TIME PACKAGING BREAKFASTS FOR THE GRAB & GO MODEL?

A: School nutrition staff can prepare most of the meals the day before. This can actually take less preparation time in the morning compared to serving breakfast in the cafeteria. High schools do not pre-package breakfasts for students, as they are mandated to follow offer versus serve. For more information about this, consult DESE's School Breakfast Program Integrity Guidebook to ensure compliance. Regardless of whether schools choose to serve a complete pre-packaged breakfast or choose the offer versus serve model, all schools should take into consideration the need for extra staff to operate the serving kiosks or carts.

Q: WILL IT BE DIFFICULT TO KEEP TRACK OF WHICH STUDENTS TAKE BREAKFAST IF WE ARE SERVING MEALS OUT OF STATIONS OR KIOSKS RATHER THAN IN THE CAFETERIA OR THE CLASSROOM?

A: By using a wireless point of sale application through your current provider, students enter their pin after the nutrition staff has confirmed they took a reimbursable breakfast. If you find that there are too many students taking breakfast at once and it is difficult to keep track of each student, consider adding an additional serving cart at another high-traffic area in the school such as an entrance or outside the area where students congregate before school starts. Schools operating CEP or Universal Breakfast should consult DESE's School Breakfast Program

Integrity Guidebook to read more about their options for meal counting and claiming.

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

A: No. Good planning and engaging school stakeholders in the process leads to a smooth transition. Engaging the custodial staff in the change can result in an exchange of one custodial duty for another rather than adding an additional burden. Custodians swap out cleaning the cafeteria after breakfast service for picking up trash barrels around the school.

Engaging students in setting and implementing the school's expectations for cleanup can ease the transition process as well. By making students aware of the clean-up process and placing trash cans in areas where they will be eating, students can take care of the bulk of cleanup. If students are allowed to bring breakfast to their classrooms to consume during the beginning of class, all classroom trash should be placed in heavy-duty bags and left outside in the hallway for custodians to pick up within the first couple periods of the day. This creates an efficient system, usually with less work for custodial staff. If your school is concerned about cleanliness throughout the school, consider asking students to eat in one or two designated locations.

Q: I ONLY HAVE ENOUGH SPACE/STAFF FOR 1 KIOSK LOCATION, AND I AM CONCERNED MY GRAB AND GO PROGRAM WON'T FEED ALL MY STUDENTS. HOW CAN I PROVIDE AN ACCESSIBLE BREAKFAST FOR ALL?

A: If you are struggling to meet the needs of all of your students with just the grab and go program, then you can combine it with another alternative model to provide a more comprehensive "Hybrid" model to make sure all of your students have access to breakfast. Grab & Go models are extremely flexible and are easily modified to fit into

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

a hybrid model. For example, you can use your kiosk(s) or cart(s) in the morning at the entrances of schools and then put them out again during a “Second Chance” period to provide older students who weren’t necessarily hungry earlier with a chance to eat breakfast. Also, you can choose to provide different age groups with different models, even within the same school, to best accommodate their needs in your programming. Perhaps you can package up some grab and go breakfasts and send them to certain classrooms to offer Breakfast in the Classroom, and then provide Grab & Go for the rest of the students. In these “hybrid” models, you can tailor your BATB program to best fit your school community and provide breakfast access for all.

Q: WILL OUR BREAKFAST MODEL BE LIMITED BY SERVING BREAKFAST ON THE GO RATHER THAN IN THE CLASSROOM OR IN A CAFETERIA? HOW SHOULD I ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF PARENTS WHO THINK THIS ON-THE-GO FOOD MIGHT NOT BE AS HEALTHY?

One concern with serving breakfast on the go is that school nutrition staff will have fewer healthy menu options that are portable and can be easily consumed on the go. For this reason, Project Bread Chefs have developed “Let’s Prepare Healthy School Breakfast,” a menu planning tool complete with healthy, budget-friendly breakfast recipes for schools serving breakfast using alternative models.

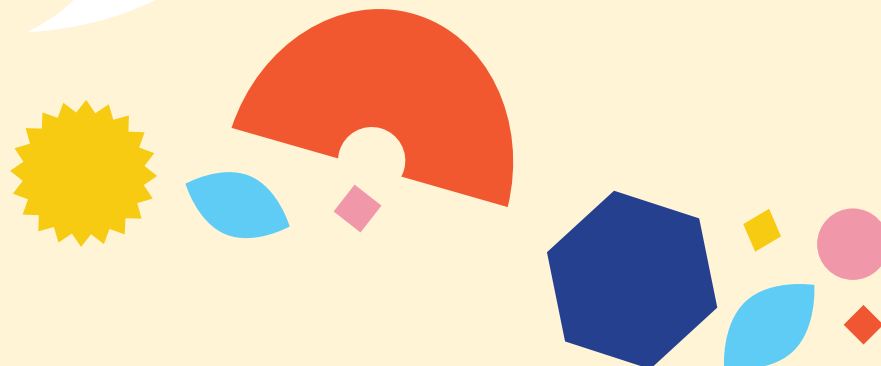
It is important to present nutritional information to parents, as they may be unaware that food served at school must meet federal

nutritional guidelines. Provide samples of your school’s breakfast food at parent meetings and be open to any recommendations that parents may have. This will allow parents to feel more confident in the food being served to their children. As you strive to offer the most nutritious options to your students, look for items that are low in sugar and sodium, as well as high in dietary fiber.

“We have been doing Breakfast After the Bell for the past 2 years, when we were in school, and found it hilariously effective. Breakfasts are up 300% in all schools, possibly because of universal free, but definitely because it is served in the hallway. We have carts out at every school near the doorway and love it.”

MATTHEW LILLIBRIDGE

*Director of School Nutrition, Southwick-Tolland-Granville
Regional School District*



Contact Us

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO FEED MORE KIDS!

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.

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 for guidance, materials, and further resources.

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.



GRAB AND GO



FREE

BREAKFAST

FREE BREAKFAST FOR
YOUR FULL DAYS

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**FUEL YOUR**  **MORNING**  
**MUSIC CLASS**  **SECOND**  
**PERIOD**  **PRE-LUNCH**  
**DEBATE**  **POP QUIZ**  
 **TIK TOK CHALLENGE**  
**WALKS WITH FRIENDS**   
**GOALS**  **AND DREAMS**

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