



September 2018

Fueling Up: School Breakfast Promotes School Success

On May 30, 2018 Governor Phil Murphy signed into law a school breakfast bill ([S-1894/A-3506](#)) that promises to give tens of thousands more New Jersey students a healthy start to their school day.

The new law requires schools with at least 70 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals to serve breakfast during the school day, typically in the first minutes of the day. An estimated 500 schools educating nearly 308,000 students will be required to serve breakfast after the bell, according to an analysis of 2017 data by Advocates for Children of New Jersey.



Making breakfast part of the school day – just like lunch – is the most effective way to deliver the meal to the hundreds of thousands of New Jersey children who need this morning nutrition to be focused and ready to learn.

Key provisions of the legislation include:

- Districts with schools that must serve breakfast after the bell under the new law will be notified by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture in January 2019. (The department administers the program on a state level).
- By May 31, 2019, school districts must submit an implementation plan to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.
- The plan must include all grades in all schools where at least 70 percent of children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals as of Oct. 31, 2018.
- Breakfast after the bell must be implemented in all identified schools at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.

- School leaders can decide which method of service works best in their schools – classroom breakfast, grab-n-go or “second chance” in which a breakfast break is held during a morning break or homeroom, an approach that works well in many high schools.
- The state Department of Agriculture will provide a list of available resources to districts.
- Schools that served breakfast to at least 70 percent of low-income students in the preceding school year may apply for a waiver from these requirements from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. When requesting a waiver, a school district must provide any documentation the department needs to justify the request. Guidance on this process will be provided in January 2019.

Who pays for school breakfast?



The federal government reimburses districts for each meal served. When participation increases, so do federal dollars claimed. In fact, from FY 2010 to FY 2018, New Jersey schools more than doubled the amount of federal school breakfast dollars collected, as more and more schools implemented breakfast after the bell and fed more students. In FY 2019, districts are expected to receive \$110 million in federal school breakfast

reimbursements.

Most high-poverty schools can cover the full cost of free breakfast through these reimbursements. This new law has the potential to bring as much as an additional \$43 million into New Jersey schools to feed children, according to ACNJ’s analysis.

Each year, New Jersey spends billions of dollars on public education. Yet, when children arrive in the classroom hungry, they struggle to learn. This change will leverage New Jersey’s significant investment in public education, improve school success for thousands of low-income children and ensure New Jersey claims more of the dollars it already sends to Washington D.C.

For more information, contact Adele LaTourette, director, Hunger Free New Jersey at alatourette@cfanj.org or Lisa Pitz, outreach director, at lpitz@cfanj.org. For more information about the New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign, visit njfoodforthought.org or contact Nancy Parello at nparello@cfanj.org. This document was prepared by Hunger Free New Jersey. Visit hungerfreenj.org to learn more.

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