



‘Breakfast in the Classroom’ Myths

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but too many hungry kids in the U.S miss a morning meal. Schools that offer breakfast in the classroom at the start of each day are able to provide more kids with the healthy food they need to learn. Despite a growing trend of schools successfully making breakfast part of the school day and seeing improved academic and behavioral outcomes, some myths persist.

1

It takes away from instructional time.

Research shows that on average, teachers say eating breakfast in the classroom takes about 15 minutes. Teachers spend that time constructively on classroom activities. Some teachers report they have actually gained instructional time due to fewer disruptions such as visits to the school nurse, tardiness, and absenteeism.

Before starting Breakfast in the Classroom, my teachers were concerned about lost instructional time due to students arriving late to class. As it turns out, after moving Breakfast in the Classroom, teachers gained more instructional time with students! The students are concentrating, they are attentive, they are focused, and they are engaging.

*Sonya Shaw, Principal
Miles Jones Elementary School
Richmond, VA*

2

It places an unnecessary burden on teachers.

Three out of four educators whose students eat breakfast in the classroom are fans of the program.¹ Teachers find breakfast has a calming effect and sets a positive learning atmosphere for the day.

We are willing and able to be flexible to meet the needs of our students. Our students depend on us!

*- Pam Heath, Superintendent
Martinsville City, VA*

3

It makes a mess.

Many teachers and principals say that any mess or trash issues can be overcome with a smart system. It might take some tries to get that system right, but at the end of the day, it's worth trying. Schools that start breakfast in the classroom rarely turn back, since they see many positive benefits.

When students in Henry County were first given the opportunity to eat in the classroom, teachers and custodians were concerned about the mess. As it turns out, these concerns were overblown; with the necessary cleaning supplies and appropriately packaged food, students are able to avoid spills and clean up after themselves.

*Marci Lexa, School Nutrition Director
Henry County, VA*

4

The food is unhealthy.

All school meals must meet *federal requirements*, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Decisions about which specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made at the local level, but all school breakfasts must follow guidelines for including vitamins, include a whole grain; fruit, vegetable or 100% juice; and milk.

5

Kids are eating breakfast twice.

There has been no conclusive research that school breakfast encourages overeating, and certainly no data that would justify denying food to children whose families are food insecure. J. Michael Murphy, a Harvard Medical School professor, expressed to the NY Times that “he considered obesity to be only a minor concern with such programs.”

In the schools where we have implemented Breakfast in the Classroom, our principals have reported noticeable improvements in behavior.

*Dr. Scott Brabrand,
Superintendent
Lynchburg, VA*



“Kids cannot be hungry to learn if they are just plain hungry.”

*Dorothy McAuliffe,
First Lady of the Commonwealth*