



Universal Breakfast

Universal School Breakfast refers to a school program that offers breakfast at no charge to all students, regardless of eligibility status.

Expanded availability and participation in the School Breakfast Program are some of the best ways to support the health and academic potential of students, particularly in low-income areas. Adequate nutrition and freedom from hunger are absolutely essential for good health and academic success, and yet these goals are not always achievable for families who are constantly on the go and possibly struggling to make ends meet.

Significant progress has been made in recent years to expand participation in the School Breakfast Program, however, there is ample opportunity for continued growth. Proven and effective strategies have emerged as more and more charter schools successfully increase participation in the School Breakfast Program.

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STRATEGY: Offer breakfast free to all students

Offering “universal” meals for free to all students is the ideal method to achieve maximum participation in your school. The traditional style of school breakfast (in which the meal is free, reduced, or the child pays) can sometimes create a sense among students that the program is just “for poor kids,” deterring participation by students from all income groups, including low-income students who most desperately need the school meal. This especially can be a problem in middle and high school as awareness of social or economic status grows. By offering breakfast at no charge to all students, universal breakfast ends the stigma, boosts participation, and eliminates the burden of collecting fees.

Schools with a high percentage of free and reduced-price eligible students - 75-80% and above – generally are able to make up any lost revenue from reduced cost or paid meals due to increased participation and resulting economies of scale. The “break-even” point for each school varies, depending on meal costs, school size, and reimbursement amounts.

The two most common methods that charter schools access in offering breakfast at no charge, include:

Complete No Cost: No fees are collected from students, while schools continue to receive federal reimbursements for the meals served..

Provision 2: This federal option is designed to reduce paperwork and simplify the logistics of operating school meal programs. Schools using Provision 2 do not have to collect and process school meal applications, keep track of meal categories, or conduct income verifications for at least three out of every four years. Provision 2 schools serve meals to all students at no charge, and use the significant administrative savings to offset the cost differential with federal reimbursements. Contact your CDE representative to see how to apply for Provision 2.

At Better 4 You Meals, we focus exclusively on food. We know it, we love it, and we're dedicated to making sure all of our schools have one important thing in common: eating outstanding meals, every single day.



To discuss offering Universal Breakfast at your school, contact us at:

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