



(Albany, New York)

Got Breakfast? We do at CSDA!

March 8, 2006

The City School District of Albany celebrated National School Breakfast Week this week, March 6 to March 10, with the national "Got Breakfast?" campaign.

According to Food Services Director J.W. Gayle, breakfast enables students to retain what they are taught in class, it reduces visits to the school nurse, and it can also reduce disruptive behavior throughout the day.

"The greatest benefit of breakfast is sound nutrition to start the day," Gayle said. "School breakfast provides a social setting to begin the day where students can talk and discuss homework, problems, visit and share experiences with their peers."

The mission of the "Got Breakfast" campaign is to get more students enrolled in the district's breakfast program. Currently less than 2,500 of the district's 9,000 students are enrolled in the program. Gayle said he would like to see about half of the student body in the program.

He said the School Breakfast Program is significantly under-utilized across the country, and New York State's schools are no exception. According to a recent report by the Food Research and Action Center, New York ranks 40th in serving breakfast at school to children who qualify for free and reduced price breakfast. The state has also failed to access nearly \$42 million in federal funding that could have been used to provide breakfast to children who qualify for free or reduced price breakfasts, the report said.

In the City of Albany School District, roughly 2,500 breakfasts are served daily, compared to the 6,000 to 7,000 lunches served every day.

In an effort to bring more children into the program, Albany schools in January added a new breakfast option, Breakfast Breaks, three times per month. They are a conveniently-boxed breakfast solution that, when combined with milk, contain everything children need for a balanced breakfast - cereal,

juice and a healthy snack. Students are drawn to the meals because they recognize the packaging, Gayle said.

He said the district, which serves breakfast at each of its schools, will serve Breakfast Breaks twice this week. Eggs, yogurt, bagels, and sliced apples are also being served.

For parents: For more information about City School District of Albany's school breakfast program, please contact the office of Food Services Director J.W. Gayle at 462-7322.