



### Breakfast of the Classtronauts!

Have you considered serving breakfast in the classroom? Gadsden Independent School District in Sunland Park, N.M., saw school breakfast participation rates increase from 26% to 62% throughout the district (and 98% in its elementary schools!) when it offered a grab 'n' go, breakfast-in-the-classroom program. According to Demetrious Giovas, SNS, school nutrition district director, the students and parents have praised the breakfast service option, and school officials have noticed more alert students, reduced tardiness and absenteeism, as well as fewer visits to the school nurse. Classroom breakfast has proven so effective that the district now serves classroom breakfast in 11 of its elementary schools; at press time, Giovas was planning to expand it to all elementary schools.

Because each school is different, there's no one right way to implement this type of breakfast service. Many schools use pre-packaged or bagged reimbursable breakfasts, either cold or hot, depending on school facilities. In addition, school nutrition professionals can opt for commercially provided, shelf-stable, grab 'n' go breakfast kits.

Ways to overcome logistical concerns include advocating that teachers conduct minor educational activities during breakfast to get the students ready to begin the day; suggesting that teachers use the meal time to conduct administrative duties, take attendance, collect homework or deliver daily announcements; and using low-cost, recyclable garbage bags that retain liquid and have easy-to-seal openings for clean-up.

In short, classroom breakfast can help schools to increase breakfast participation rates, raise test scores and improve students' overall health. It's an idea so simple and effective, there's no reason not to do it!

Contributed by Tami Cline, SNS, RD, owner, Cline Consulting, LLC, Alexandria, Va.

### Fun Factoid

If your school breakfast operation qualifies for Provision 2, all the students can receive free meals, and you can collect applications once every four years, at most. The meals will be reimbursed, and you don't have to track the categories of meals served for at least three out of every four years.

Child Nutrition Foundation, with funding from the National Dairy Council®, provides answers in its new, improved Expanding Breakfast program, designed to give you proven strategies to expand breakfast service outside of the cafeteria, increase participation in your traditional breakfast service and see a better bottom line for your school meal operation.

The Expanding Breakfast program suggests bringing the meals to the customers, within the framework and time constraints of the school day. Toward that end, the program explores three, highly effective methods of alternate breakfast service. With **breakfast in the classroom**, participation can reach as high as 95-98% of enrollment. A **break after first period** can translate to a participation rate of 50% or more of the kids in your school. And the **grab 'n' go** approach can attract students during class changes or before school, in addition to the student customers who have the time and preference for your cafeteria setting.

Unsure whether you want to try one of these tactics? Instead of worrying that your efforts might fall flat, let the Expanding Breakfast program chart your trajectory to the stars! This program can help you find answers to

common questions, plan the logistics and evaluate your financial situation to determine which ideas might work best for your individual circumstances. You also will be guided through the step-by-step processes of developing an implementation plan and communicating that plan to students, parents and school officials. And a video demonstrates how other operators have implemented alternate breakfast services.

Worth two Continuing Education Units, the Expanding Breakfast program is now available at Child Nutrition U, [www.schoolnutrition.org/cnu](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/cnu), at a one-time price of \$20. If you have questions, please call the SNA Service Center at (800) 877-8822 or send an e-mail to [servicecenter@schoolnutrition.org](mailto:servicecenter@schoolnutrition.org).

### Houston, We Have Some Guidelines

While you're reaching new heights with your NSBW promotions, school breakfast could be sending your student customers into orbit! As an example of the potential benefits, the Expanding Breakfast course manual cites Maryland's Meals for Achievement Classroom Breakfast Pilot Program. In this pilot, child nutrition professionals offered school breakfast in the classroom at no charge—and discovered that it increased test scores and grades; decreased tardiness and behavior problems; improved student attendance; and increased students' attention spans. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Agriculture completed pilot projects in six states, concluding that universal school breakfast reduced breakfast skipping, significantly improved students' nutrition and, according to participating principals, decreased student tardiness, absenteeism and disciplinary problems.

Indeed, if you need compelling evidence to convince administrators, teachers and the community about the power of school breakfast, NSBW is an