Breakfast Questions & Answers

**Q:  How will breakfast for elementary students be addressed?**

A:  We are able to provide all DMPS elementary students breakfast at no cost through the federally funded, school breakfast program. We will use an innovative approach called Breakfast in the Classroom that helps ensure that all of our elementary students have access to – and eat – breakfast each day. We found that when breakfast is offered to students in the classroom, participation increases significantly, to approximately 80% of students. With all the positives about breakfast in the classroom, we wanted to extend these benefits to as many students as possible.

**Q: Why is this so important for DMPS?**

Children who more regularly eat school breakfast as a result of a school breakfast program at no cost to all students, show greater improvements in math scores, attendance, punctuality, depression, anxiety and hyperactivity than children whose participation remains unchanged or decreases. (Murphy, J.M, Pagano, M., & Bishop, S.J., 2001)

Students attending schools that offer breakfast at no cost to all students are more likely to consume a nutritionally substantive breakfast and to consume significantly more calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, fruit and dairy products at breakfast, when compared to students from schools with traditional means-tests school breakfast programs. (Crepinskey, M. K., Singh, A., Bernstein, L.S., & McLaughlin, J.E., 2006)

**Q: What does this look like?**

A: Each morning, before students go to their classroom, they stop at the cafeteria or kiosk station to pick up a reimbursable breakfast to take with them. Students enjoy the nutritious breakfast with their classmates at the beginning of the day. During this time teachers can take attendance, and have their morning meeting. Some teachers may choose to give assignments for students to work on as they finish their breakfast.

**Q: Will classroom breakfast cut into instructional time?**

A: Instruction time is defined as classroom learning time plus explicitly permitted “non-instructional” activities, including certain administrative activities like taking roll. Teachers in schools with successful Breakfast in the Classroom programs generally perform these administrative activities or start the day’s lesson as students are eating their breakfast. From service to clean up, Breakfast in the Classroom usually takes 10 – 15 minutes.

**Q: What is the purpose of students eating in the classroom?**

A: By eating breakfast in the classroom, the barriers of cafeteria-based breakfast are eliminated. Research has shown the “Breakfast in the Classroom” program is the best way to increase school breakfast participation. It creates a better learning environment for teachers and students and by eating a meal together, the climate of each classroom can positively change. There is ample research that demonstrates that eating breakfast in a classroom setting has many positive impacts on student learning and achievement.

**Q: What research is there behind Breakfast in the Classroom?**

A: The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) has said that there is a large body of research on the strong links between school breakfast consumption and favorable dietary, healthy and educational outcomes among children and adolescents.

In studies of school breakfast programs in Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, and Rhode Island, scientists found that students who eat breakfast at school have better attendance records, are less likely to be tardy, and exhibit fewer behavioral and psychological problems.

Other benefits of eating breakfast at school include improved academic achievement, especially in vocabulary, math and standardized tests and improved concentration, alertness, comprehension, memory and learning.

**Q: Are other DMPS schools already using Breakfast in the Classroom?**

A: Yes, and with much success! Principals in DMPS report similar findings as the national research. They have seen increased attendance, decreased tardies, decreased referrals to the office, increased participation in classroom activities and higher test scores. Nurses also report fewer students needing to visit their office because of “tummy aches” that result from hunger.

**Q: How do kids feel about Breakfast in the Classroom?**

A: They think it is exciting to come to school and have a morning meal. It is one less thing they have to do at home and don’t feel rushed. They feel a sense of community with their peers and teachers and learn responsibility and teamwork.

**Q: Is there increased trash with Breakfast in the Classroom?**

A: A little, but not much. Each classroom is given a trash can specifically for Breakfast in the Classroom. After breakfast is finished, all the trash will be placed into the trash can and rolled into the hallway for custodians to pick up.

**Q: What about spills?**

A: We provide sanitizing wipes, as well as “plates” which are shaped as Frisbees for items that could easily spill to be placed on. Before and after breakfast each day, students wipe up their desks to ensure they are eating on a clean environment. Custodial staff has been very helpful in cleaning up any major spills.

**Q: I provide breakfast for my child already at home. Do I have to eat at school?**

A: No, just like at lunch, a family can choose if they are going to participate in school breakfast. We encourage your child to try it or remember it as an option on mornings when they don’t have time to eat at home.

**Q: Can I pack a breakfast at home and bring it to school to eat?**

A: Since the meals are brought into the classroom to eat versus the cafeteria, packed breakfasts from home will not be allowed, due to food allergy concerns.

**Q: Is school breakfast healthy? What type of items are on a typical Breakfast in the Classroom menu?**

A: The School Breakfast Program follows the USDA Dietary Guidelines. The breakfasts served provided ½ or more of the key nutrients children need each day, and contain no more than 30% of their calories from fat and 10% of calories from saturated fat. We offer yogurt, grahams, string cheese, egg burritos, breakfast boats, cereal, muffins, fruit, juice and milk. There is one menu choice per day.

**Q: What does a reimbursable meal look like?**

**School Breakfast** must offer the following 3 components:

We must offer:

* Milk
* Juice/fruit or vegetable
* Grains or breads / meat/meat alternate (entrée)

**Students must select 3 food items with one being a ½ cup fruit or juice.**

**Q: Can my child just have milk?**

A: The child would be charged the a la cart price for milk, $0.50. To receive a breakfast at no cost, each child must take a reimbursable meal.

**Q: What if my child has food allergies?**

A: We have considered food allergies when planning a menu with this program and will continue to work closely with parents, students and schools to ensure all children are safe. To alter the menu for your child, we need a menu substitution form signed by a medical professional. Please contact your school nurse or Anita Turczynski, DMPS Dietician, at 242-7636 or anita.turczynski@dmschools.org for the menu substitution form and more information.

**Q: Do late students receive breakfast?**

A: It would depend on the building and how late they are. Students who arrive late may receive a breakfast from the cafeteria, and may take their breakfast to the classroom unless otherwise directed by the principal.