







The School Lunch/School Breakfast Programs

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was created 57 years ago by Congress "as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's children". It began after the government noted nutritional deficiencies in the men who responded to the draft and was enacted so that all children could have at least one healthful meal per day.

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) began in 1966 as a pilot program in recognition of the relationship between food, good nutrition, and children's ability to develop and learn. The SBP reaches needy children; around 80 percent of children eating school breakfast are low income. It raises the nutrition level of children, providing 1/4 or more of a child's daily nutrient requirements.

Hungry children are more susceptible to illness, are more likely to experience anxiety or depression, and have more disciplinary problems in school, according to a Kleinman and Murphy study published in *Pediatrics* in 1998. Children who have nourishing meals have the best chance for learning and success in school.

Each school day an average of 486,731 free and reduced price lunches, 594,974 full price lunches, 175,429 free and reduced price breakfasts and 48,429 full price breakfasts are served to Pennsylvania students.

 <p>Who can provide the service?</p>	<p>The National School Lunch and the School Breakfast Programs are entitlement programs. All public and nonprofit private schools and Residential Child Care Institutions can participate in these programs.</p>
 <p>How is it financed?</p>	<p>The federal government guarantees funding for all participating students. During 03-04 Pennsylvania received nearly \$243 million in federal funds for the two programs. Even full price meals received a small federal subsidy. Pennsylvania invests nearly \$26 million annually in school breakfast and lunch. It pays school districts 10 cents for each breakfast served and 10 cents for each lunch served. To encourage schools to offer the breakfast program, Pennsylvania pays an additional 2 cents per lunch if breakfast is offered in the school and an additional 4 cents per lunch if the school serves at least 20 percent of enrolled students.</p>
 <p>Who can receive this service</p>	<p>School breakfasts and lunches are either free, reduced-price, or full price. Children who are below 130% of poverty are eligible for Free Meals; students who are between 130 - 185% of poverty are eligible for Reduced-Price Meals. Other children can receive Full Price Meals. Parents must submit an application form to receive reduced price or free meals. At schools with a "Universal School Breakfast Program", all students receive school breakfast and no student pays for breakfast.</p>
 <p>What is provided?</p>	<p>School breakfast provides an average of at least 1/4 of a child's Recommended Daily Allowances. The guidelines list 4 components: milk; a vegetable or fruit or full strength vegetable or fruit juice; 2 servings of bread or cereal; and 2 servings of meat or other high protein food like peanut butter or eggs. School Lunch consists of 1/3 of a child's Recommended Daily Allowances. The traditional meal plan consists of 4 food components for lunch: meat or meat alternate; grains or bread (must be whole grain, enriched, or contain germ or bran); 2 vegetables or fruit; and milk.</p>
 <p>Contact</p>	<p>Sandy Souder at the PA Department of Education at 1-800-331-0129.</p>
 <p>Suggestions For advocacy</p>	<p>Pennsylvania ranks 38th nationally in school breakfast participation by low-income students. About 30 percent of Pennsylvania's schools do not have a breakfast program. If your local district does not offer breakfast, contact the district superintendent and the school principals and ask them to start serving breakfast.</p>