

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL



Case Study

2015 **PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (PSUSD)**: Stephanie Bruce, *Nutrition Service Director*



2015 DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

27 K-12 Traditional Public Schools¹
16 K-6 elementary schools
5 middle school
4 high schools
5 continuation or alternative schools

20,299 Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price School Meals²

23,154 Students Enrolled³

“We started doing this because our students were coming to school hungry. Many were being dropped off as the bell rang and were not getting food until lunch several hours later.” –Stephanie Bruce

FOOD QUALITY

PSUSD opened a central kitchen in 2012, allowing them to serve more scratch cooked items like muffins and breakfast breads. These items are whole grain rich and sweetened with applesauce to lower the sugar and fat content.

The district uses USDA commodities to provide canned and/or dried fruit, and the DOD Fresh program to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at lower cost.

BREAKFAST MODELS



Before BAB service models: PSUSD schools served traditional breakfast in the school cafeteria before the first bell.

Breakfast in the Classroom: Classroom Breakfast is offered at three elementary schools and two middle schools

Nutrition Break/Second Chance Breakfast: Second Chance breakfast is offered at one elementary school. After attendance is taken students enjoy a physical activity break outside and then end in the cafeteria for breakfast before returning to class.

BEHAVIORAL AND ACADEMIC IMPACTS

After BAB implementation

- ➔ “The best benefit is that students are nourished and ready to learn. They aren’t distracted by a growling tummy, or nodding off because they are not properly nourished.” - *Stephanie Bruce*
- ➔ “Classroom Breakfast helps the students get settled while the teacher is taking roll, teaches them to be responsible and work together in picking up the food, handing it out and cleaning up afterward.” - *Stephanie Bruce*

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy

In 2008, PSUSD decided to implement Breakfast After the Bell gradually, beginning with a Classroom Breakfast model at the district's highest-need school, Agua Caliente Elementary, where 90% of students receive free or reduced-price meals. From 2008-11, the district expanded BAB to 6 additional schools, and by 2016, 9 schools offered BAB either through classroom breakfast or the Nutrition Break model.

Hurdles

Some teachers, principals, and Nutrition Services staff were concerned about the program's potential to increase workload. Principals were reluctant to direct teachers to support the shift to BAB.

Solutions

PSUSD Nutrition Services identified supportive teachers to deliver messaging and training at newly implementing schools.

- ➔ The district decided to increase Nutrition Services employee hours to accommodate the larger workload resulting from the increase in breakfast program participation.
- ➔ PSUSD offers universally free breakfast, which helps eliminate the stigma sometimes felt by low-income students participating in the school breakfast program.



PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Before BAB implementation

Those sites that still only offer before the bell breakfast serve 20% of students.

After BAB implementation

- ➔ Schools offering breakfast in the classroom or during the mid-morning nutrition break serve 85%-90% of students.

"We offer universally free breakfast because it is the right thing to do for our students."

—Stephanie Bruce

Program Finances

PSUSD applied for and received grants to cover initial start-up costs.

- The increased participation provides the stability to maintain the program.
- Increases in program participation and revenue are directly related to the new after-the-bell models of service. These models help sustain the universally free breakfast program district-wide.
- Extra revenue is reinvested into the program to enhance food quality, introduce new items, increase labor if needed, and replace or upgrade equipment.

PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT

- Reaction of major stakeholders within the school community has been positive.
- "Our students love it because they are not hungry anymore." - *Stephanie Bruce*
- "Most of our parents appreciate that we are providing a meal, as their lives are so busy and hectic, it is difficult sometimes to find the time to get everyone fed before running out the door." - *Stephanie Bruce*
- "The community and Mayor love the program. Palm Springs is dedicated to wellness in the community and supports our efforts." - *Stephanie Bruce*

NOTES & REFERENCES

CFPA thanks Stephanie Bruce for her time and insights into the school breakfast programs at Palm Springs Unified School District.

¹Traditional, non-charter K-12 schools that were active in the 2014-15 school year. This excludes sites such as continuation schools, virtual schools, and independent study schools. Source: California Department of Education (CDE) School Directory at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/sd/>

²⁻³Students certified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals in traditional, non-charter K-12 schools during the 2014-15 school year. Source: CFPA analysis of the FRPM student poverty data file available from CDE at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filessp.asp>