

Running on Empty

**A report on the School Breakfast Program in
California**

Running on Empty

A report on the School Breakfast Program in California

Kumar Chandran

September 2007



California Food Policy Advocates is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious and affordable food.

As California's only statewide anti-poverty program with a focus on hunger and malnutrition among low-income people, CFPA employs a variety of strategies to develop and implement public policies that recognize the value of adequate nutrition and its fundamental contribution to good health and development, education, and productivity.

These strategies include:

- Research that demonstrates the scope and nature of hunger in California and the efficacy of public and private food programs in mitigating it.
- Development and promotion of strategies and programs to meet the nutrition needs of low-income communities and individuals.
- Public education and advocacy to ensure the inclusion of nutrition in the formation and implementation of sound public policy.
- Technical assistance, training, and support to low-income communities in their efforts to identify and overcome hunger and hunger-related deficiencies.
- Collaboration, through conferences, communication, and coalition-building, among food program providers and other community-based organizations throughout California to facilitate their working together to mitigate hunger and poverty.

Running on Empty: A report on the School Breakfast Program in California

September 2007

California Food Policy Advocates
116 New Montgomery Street, Suite 633
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: 415.777.4422
Fax: 415.777.7766
E-Mail: cfpa@cfpa.net

www.cfpa.net

Acknowledgements

This report was made possible by a grant from the Vitamin Cases Consumer Settlement Fund. Created as a result of an antitrust class action, one of the purposes of the Fund is to improve the health and nutrition of California consumers

This report was prepared with data provided by California Department of Education's Nutrition Services Division. We would like to thank the Nutrition Services Division for their gracious assistance and willingness to review drafts of this report. In addition, the author would like to thank the staff of CFPA in providing invaluable support and guidance during the writing of this report.

Any mistakes or inaccuracies contained herein are the sole fault and responsibility of the author.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	3
The Importance of Breakfast.....	4
School Breakfast in California.....	5
Options for Breakfast Delivery or Service.....	9
Recent State Policy Developments.....	10
Policy Recommendations.....	11
Appendix A – Breakfast Participation Data, by County.....	17
Appendix B – The School Breakfast Program.....	21
Appendix C – Provisions 1, 2, and 3.....	23
Appendix D – Methodology.....	25
Appendix E - Breakfast Delivery Options.....	26

Executive Summary

Although both the weight of academic research and the wise words of many mothers stress the importance of breakfast, many children in California are not able to reap the benefits of breakfast. For academic performance, proper nutrition, maintaining a healthy weight, and overall well-being, the regular consumption of a healthy breakfast is key. However, in California, every day, over one million children who eat lunch in school do not eat a school breakfast. In addition, more than 1500 schools with over 700,000 students (greater than 130,000 of whom are low-income) fail to even provide the breakfast program. Even of those schools offering breakfast, statewide participation is below the national average. In California, only 35 percent of students who eat a school lunch also eat a school breakfast. For low-income students, that percentage is slightly higher at 41 percent, but both statistics still underperform the national rate of 44.6. The federally-funded School Breakfast Program provides the means for children to get a breakfast in school every day. By achieving a participation rate closer to that for the school lunch program, California could provide a healthy school breakfast to over one million children daily and also bring in over \$300 million in federal reimbursements.

This report provides a number of policy recommendations for school districts, California Department of Education's (CDE) Nutrition Services Division (NSD), the State Legislature, and the US Congress to improve the School Breakfast Program. These recommendations, discussed in greater detail in the report, are that:

School Districts should:

- Implement breakfast programs in all schools, starting with "severe need" schools.
- Apply to the state for start-up and expansion grants with which to start or, using the service options, expand breakfast programs.
- Implement different breakfast delivery options, other than the traditional before-the-bell, cafeteria meal, to increase participation.
- Encourage active student and parent participation in meal design and service.
- Continue providing fresh fruits during breakfast despite the loss of California Fresh Start funds.

Nutrition Services Division should:

- Intervene with districts by providing resources and technical assistance to improve the breakfast program, particularly if a district's participation falls below the statewide average of number of students eating breakfast for every 100 who eat lunch.
- Review breakfast programs, adopting School Meal Initiative standards to breakfast.
- Work with districts to incorporate SHAPE menu-planning standards into breakfast menus.

The California Legislature should:

- Mandate all “severe need” schools to offer breakfast.
- Resume funding the California Fresh Start Program, which offers schools reimbursement for providing fresh fruit or vegetables with breakfast.
- Provide funding for and require that breakfast programs be regularly reviewed by School Meal Initiative regulations for enhanced nutrition standards with a focus on obesity prevention.
- Require that breakfast use SHAPE menu planning standards to improve nutrition quality.
- Appropriate \$5 million to provide start-up and expansion grants for breakfast with priority given to schools starting or improving different breakfast delivery options.
- Provide funding for NSD to intervene with districts to improve the breakfast program, particularly in districts with poor participation.

US Congress should:

- Create a separate federal commodity entitlement for the School Breakfast Program.
- Improve and simplify the process for districts to implement Provision 2.
- Eliminate the reduced-price tier.

Introduction

The old adage, “breakfast is the most important meal of the day” is tried, but nonetheless true. Numerous studies cite the importance of breakfast for improving academic performance, nutrition, and overall health. Yet, despite this demonstrated positive impact of breakfast, many children in California do not eat a regular breakfast. For a variety of reasons, including limited financial resources in the household, lack of time, lack of appetite early in the morning, or long, complicated commutes in the early morning, many children are not eating breakfast at home in the morning. As a result, many children arrive at school hungry rather than ready to learn. Still others become hungry in the early part of the school day, well before lunchtime. At the least, this hunger is distracting for children; for many, it can lead to poor academic performance and even poor health. Although the federally-funded School Breakfast Program (SBP)¹ can solve this problem, nearly two million children who eat a lunch in school do not eat breakfast in school – with over 1.3 million of these children coming from low-income homes. Additionally, over 700,000 students in California schools, including over 130,000 low-income children, are failing to benefit from the breakfast program because the schools they attend do not even offer the program. In schools that do offer breakfast, only about 18 percent participate.

In the 2006-2007 academic year, enrollment in California public schools was over 6.2 million with just over 50 percent (3,123,038) of these students enrolled in the Free or Reduced Price Meal (FRP) programs.² Because this number represents the number of students *enrolled* in the program, it is likely that many more are *eligible* but, due to stigma, family confusion about the application’s importance, or a host of other reasons, do not enroll. The school meals programs are important social safety nets with a strong and proven record of improving the academic performance as well as the nutrition, health, and food security status of low-income youth. However, despite the fact that 6,924 out of 8,438 schools³ (just over 82 percent) in California offer the School Breakfast Program, only about 18 percent of students eat a breakfast in school on any given morning. Given the benefits of breakfast consumption in the form of improved health and academic performance, it is a lost opportunity for so many children in California to miss out on a breakfast in school.

¹ For more information on the history and background of the School Breakfast Program as well as some of the rules governing the program, see Appendix B.

² From DataQuest, CDE, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

³ Including only public, K-12 schools

The Importance of Breakfast

Breakfast and Academic Performance

Aside from improved nutrition and health status, studies are showing that students who eat breakfast do better at school. Common sense and personal experience tell us that a hungry child will have difficulty focusing and thus have compromised learning. A growing body of research adds academic and scientific authority to this hypothesis. Among children, research links breakfast consumption with improvements in academic performance, psychosocial functioning, and cognition.⁴ An evaluation of a universally free school breakfast program found a significant improvement in academic performance and a reduction in school absenteeism, while also decreasing hunger.⁵ Breakfast consumption has also been reported to have a positive effect on mood, alertness, and contentment.⁶

Breakfast and Health

Numerous studies demonstrate the health benefits of breakfast consumption. These studies indicate that, when compared to their breakfast skipping peers, breakfast eaters have significantly higher intakes of fiber, calcium, iron, and other micronutrients. Overall, studies demonstrate that breakfast eaters exhibit superior nutritional profiles to breakfast skippers. Importantly, studies also found that children and adolescents who skip breakfast also do not, on average, compensate for nutrition deficiencies from missing breakfast at other meals of the day.⁷

Studies also demonstrate an association between breakfast consumption and more healthful food choices and diet habits, such as greater consumption of vegetables and a lower intake of soft drinks. Those who consume breakfast also consume a higher quality diet as measured by the USDA's Healthy Eating Index. With obesity being a major current public health concern, particularly among children, consuming a healthy breakfast may also be an anti-obesity strategy. There is a growing body of evidence supporting an association between regular breakfast consumption and healthy weight maintenance. Moreover, studies also demonstrate that overweight or obese children and adolescents are more likely to skip breakfast than their normal or underweight peers.^{8,9}

⁴ Affenito SG. (2007). "Breakfast: A Missed Opportunity". *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Vol. 107, No. 4.

⁵ Kleinman RE, et al. (2002). "Diet, Breakfast, and Academic Performance in Children". *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism*. Vol 46, Supp. 1.

⁶ Rampersaud GC, et al. (2005). "Breakfast Habits, Nutritional Status, Body Weight, and Academic Performance in Children and Adolescents". *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Vol. 105, No. 5.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Affenito SG. Op. Cit. Note 4.

School Breakfast in California¹⁰

During the 2005-2006 academic school year, students in California consumed over 188 million breakfasts in school, with low-income children¹¹ comprising over 88 percent of the total breakfast consumption. On any given school day, just over a million breakfasts are served, with over 925,000 of these going to low-income children. While these numbers sound large, there is still much work to do to ensure that California's children are able to enjoy the benefits of regular breakfast consumption – both in improved academic performance and in enhanced health and nutrition.

By contrast, during the same academic year, students in California ate over 538 million lunches, with almost three-quarters of these lunches going to low-income students. This means that for every 100 students who participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), only 35 participate in the School Breakfast Program. California underperforms the nation in this respect; nationally, this ratio is 44.6 children participating in SBP for every 100 who participate in the NSLP.

Limited participation in SBP represents missed opportunities for low-income children, their families, and school districts. Not only do the children lose out on a free breakfast, but their families can also benefit. If previously spending limited household resources on their child's breakfast, children's families can now use that money for other expenses. Because the federal government provides reimbursement for each breakfast consumed, school districts lose out on potentially large sums of federal dollars with each student not participating in the program. If all children who currently eat a school lunch also ate a school breakfast, California could bring in over \$333 million in federal reimbursements.¹² While California can, and should, strive for this level of participation, a reachable interim target (also used by the national anti-hunger group, the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)) is to have 70 students participate in SBP for every 100 students who participate in NSLP. Using this target percentage, the state can expect over \$233 million in federal reimbursements.

Table 1. Schools Serving/Not Serving Breakfast in California^{13,14}

	Severe Need	Statewide
Schools Serving Breakfast	5902	6924
Schools Not Serving Breakfast	611	1514
Total K-12 Public Schools	6513	8438

¹⁰ Refer to Appendix A for a chart with the data discussed in this section.

¹¹ For the purposes of this report, low-income children are defined as those qualifying for the Free or Reduced Price Meal program.

¹² See Appendix X for the methodology behind these calculations.

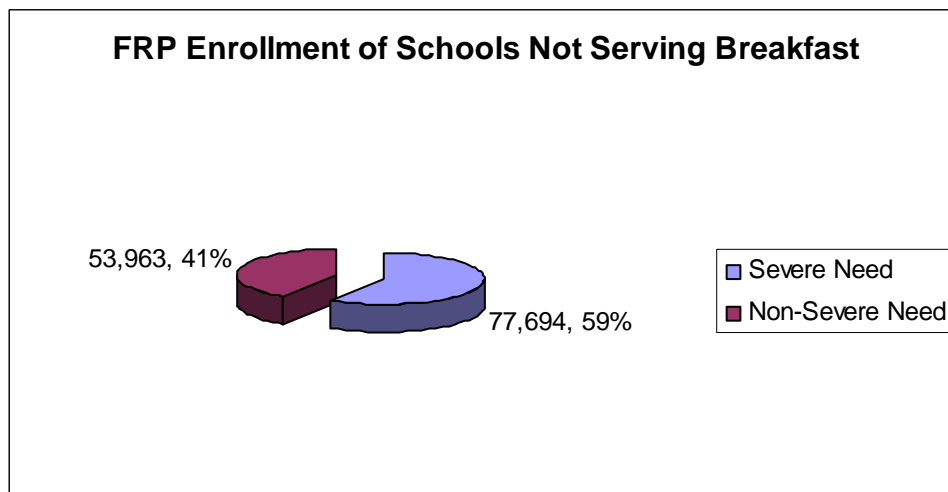
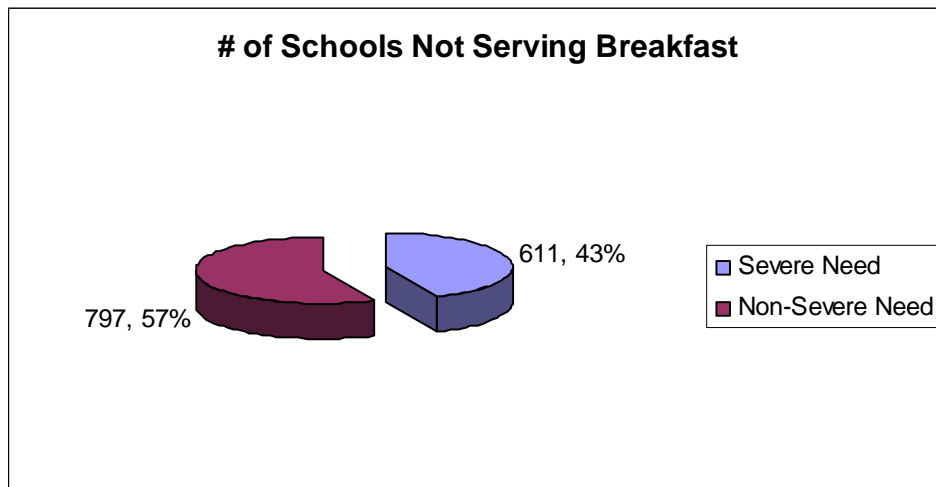
¹³ Total numbers of schools and enrollment in this report may not always be consistent when comparing different sub-groups due to inconsistencies in the data sets. As more data become available, the author will update these charts.

¹⁴ Numbers of severe need and non-severe need schools may differ from official state numbers due to the calculations being based on different data sets. Schools may stop or start breakfast programs and/or schools may gain or lose severe need status. The state's number of severe need schools not serving breakfast is approximately 520.

However, to reach this goal, California must ensure that all students have access to the SBP. Although the majority of schools across the state offer breakfast, *all* schools in California should provide the opportunity for students to participate in this program. Of particular concern are those schools with large numbers of low-income children, referred to as “severe need” schools. Severe need schools are those in which 40 percent or more of the lunches served two years earlier are consumed by students qualifying for free or reduced price meals. Severe need schools qualify for a higher level of reimbursement from the federal government.

Table 2. Schools Not Serving Breakfast, by "Severe Need"

Schools Not Serving Breakfast			
	#	Total Enrollment	FRP Enrollment
Severe Need	611	261,911	77,694
Non-Severe Need	797	442,095	53,963
Total	1,408	704,006	131,657



Across the state, over 700,000 children attend over 1400 schools that do not offer a breakfast. Of all schools not serving breakfast in the state, forty-three percent qualify as severe need. Moreover, of the over 130,000 low-income children eligible for the FRP program but enrolled in schools without a breakfast program, almost 60 percent are in severe need schools. These schools with significant numbers of the most vulnerable students have much to gain by offering them a chance to eat a healthy breakfast and to improve their academic performance. One policy action the state can take, discussed in greater detail below, is to ensure that all schools that qualify as severe need offer SBP to its students. Below is a list of the ten schools with the highest numbers of low-income students who would be affected by such a policy action.

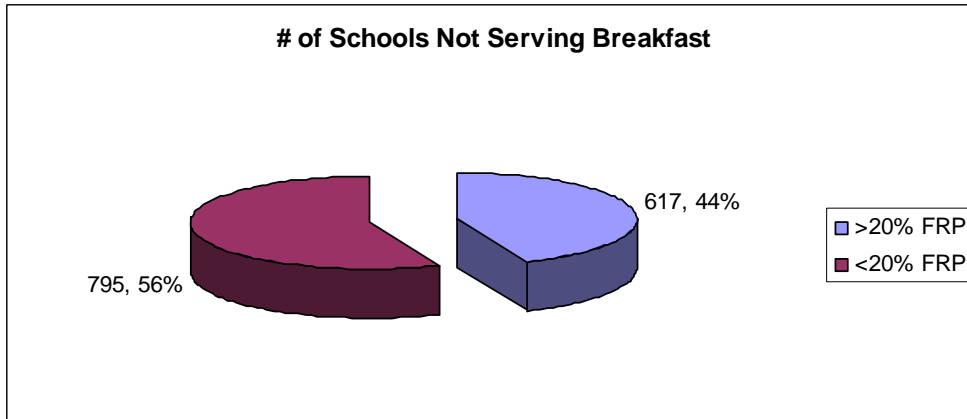
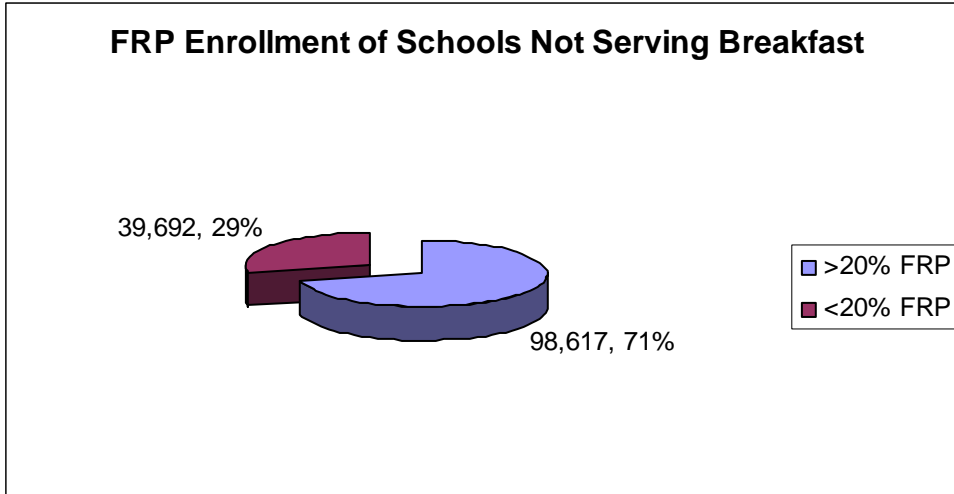
Table 3. Top Ten Severe Need Schools w/o SBP, by FRP Population

Top Ten Severe Need Schools Not Serving Breakfast, by Highest # of FRP Students			
Agency Name	Site Name	% FRP Lunches Served	FRP Population
MERCED CO OFFICE OF ED	ATWATER HIGH SCHOOL	81	1221
LOS BANOS UNIFIED SD	LOS BANOS HIGH	69	932
MERCED CO OFFICE OF ED	RUDOLPH RIVERA MIDDLE SCHOOL	67	721
TEMPLE CITY UNIFIED SD	TEMPLE CITY HIGH	88	684
SAN JOSE UNIFIED SCHOOL DIST	WASHINGTON MIGRANT EDUCATION	57	604
MERCED CO OFFICE OF ED	MITCHELL SENIOR ELEMENTARY	80	602
CHICO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	CHICO SENIOR HIGH	92.5	599
CAJON VALLEY USD	EMERALD MIDDLE SCHOOL	85	587
RIM OF THE WORLD USD	RIM OF THE WORLD SENIOR HIGH	76	584
KING CITY UNION SD	KING CITY HIGH	81.54	579

To help schools begin to improve their breakfast programs, the state offers start-up or expansion grants to schools with 20 percent or greater FRP populations. The tables and graphs below give a sense of the numbers of these schools in the state. In California, forty-four percent of schools not serving breakfast qualify for these grants. In addition, over 70 percent of low-income students in schools not offering breakfast attend schools that qualify for these grants. With such a large portion of schools (and students attending these schools) qualifying for state grants, it is a missed opportunity for schools not to take advantage of this funding source. And it is a missed opportunity for the Legislature not to provide more funds for these grants. This most recent year, the \$1 million state funding translated into about 100 grants (at an average of \$10,000 per grant), but almost \$3 million of requests (about 300 proposals) were denied this past year simply because funding was so limited. These small state grants are an excellent investment for the State: they prime the pump for federal breakfast reimbursement to flow into communities in the state for years to come.

Table 4. Schools Not Serving Breakfast, by 20% FRP population

Not Serving Breakfast	#	Total Enrollment	FRP Enrollment
≥20% FRP	617	262,927	98,617
<20% FRP	795	491,476	39,692
Total	1,412	754,403	138,309



Options for Breakfast Delivery or Service

Methods of delivering breakfast to children in school vary. The traditional breakfast in the cafeteria prior to the school day is the image one has of school breakfast, yet this model is often the reason districts suffer from poor participation in the breakfast program. A recent report by the Food Research and Action Center found that using different methods of serving breakfast is what differentiated districts with high participation from those with low participation.¹⁵ Districts and schools throughout California and across the country are using innovative methods of serving breakfast to maximize the school day and instructional time requirements. Some of these breakfast delivery options include:

- Classroom Breakfast – served in the classroom at the beginning of the school day
- Grab ‘n’ Go – a portable meal served as students arrive at school, during passing periods, or during a morning recess
- Second Chance Breakfast – provides students a second chance at the traditional, before-the-bell morning meal during a morning recess
- Breakfast on the Bus – served on the bus, en-route to school. Ideal for students with long commutes

Appendix E offers more details on each delivery option. Visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKQAYb1gWgw> for an excellent brief video demonstrating how the breakfast options work and why they are so successful.

¹⁵ *School Breakfast in America's Big Cities*. Food Research and Action Center, August 2007.
<http://www.frac.org/pdf/urbanbreakfast07.pdf>

Recent State Policy Developments

Improved Nutrition Standards, Increased Reimbursements for School Meals

During the 2007 legislative session, the Legislature and Governor agreed to an increase in meal reimbursements, for both breakfast and lunch, of about six cents per meal from \$0.1563 to \$0.21 – the first significant boost in many years. Along with this reimbursement came nutrition standards relating to unhealthy fats and oils. Specifically, the legislation prohibits schools from

- serving foods fried by the school or school district
- serving foods containing artificial *trans* fat
- serving foods fried in unhealthy oils, such as tropical oils or lard

This reimbursement increase and the standard improvements are very welcome. The Governor and the Legislature should be commended for making progress in these areas. Local advocates can build upon this progress by:

- Ensuring that the reimbursement increase does not just improve lunch but breakfast as well.
- Ensuring that the increases in reimbursement help to ensure that breakfast contains fresh produce, given the loss of the Fresh Start Program (see below).
- Continuing to seek other nutrition standards and improvements at the state and local levels, such as the inclusion of whole grain standards and the elimination of frying at all locations.

“Severe Need” Schools and Breakfast

In the fall of 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Assembly Bill 569 (Garcia) into law, directing the California Department of Education's (CDE) Nutrition Services Division (NSD) to undertake an immediate study to determine the precise number of California schools that qualify for “severe need” reimbursement under the federal School Breakfast Program. During the current legislative session, Assembly Member Garcia again introduced a breakfast-related bill, AB 92, to build on the study commissioned by AB 569. AB 92 would have mandated all schools qualifying as severe need to serve breakfast. Unfortunately, this bill will not pass in the current legislative session.

California Fresh Start Program

In 2005, the Governor signed into law Senate Bill 281 which established the California Fresh Start Program. The program was a pilot program to provide an extra 10 cents for fruits and vegetables to be included in school breakfasts. Preliminary findings from an evaluation conducted by UC Berkeley's Center for Weight and Health found that offerings of fresh produce rose by almost 300 percent with much of the produce coming from California. Nonetheless, continued funding for this program has not been included in the budget.

Policy Recommendations

School Districts

Implement Breakfast Programs in All Schools , Particularly in “Severe Need” Schools

All school districts in California should offer breakfast at **all** their schools. Approximately 1,500 schools in California currently fail to offer breakfast to their students. Many of these schools contain significant populations of low-income students; in more than 500 schools, known as severe-need schools, well over 40 percent of the students participating in the school’s lunch program are from low-income homes. Federal reimbursement for breakfast served in severe need schools is 26 cents higher than the regular reimbursement rate. This higher rate for severe need schools helps to ensure the financial feasibility of breakfast programs. The benefits of breakfast – for academic performance, health and well-being -- are too important to be withheld from these children.

Continue California Fresh Start at the District

School breakfast delivers many nutrition benefits. Calcium from the milk may be the most conspicuous, but other nutrients provided by breakfast are essential to good health, as well. Fresh fruit, for example, is widely acknowledged to be an excellent obesity-prevention strategy in addition to its other healthful properties. California Fresh Start has brought the benefits of fresh fruit to many school districts, but now the Legislature has withheld funding for the program’s continuation. Until state funds resume, districts should continue to provide fresh fruit in their breakfast menus, relying upon the savings from eliminating servings of juice as a source of at least most of the additional fruit – a nutrition win-win.

Implement Breakfast Options to Expand Participation

A recent report by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), *School Breakfast in America’s Big Cities*, confirms that the districts that make breakfast a part of the school day, such as by serving breakfast in the classroom or during a mid-morning break, have the highest participation rates. Conversely, districts that only offer breakfast in the cafeteria before school struggle to serve sufficient numbers of students.¹⁶ All schools should identify and implement the appropriate option for their circumstances – classroom breakfast, second chance breakfast, grab ‘n go, breakfast on the bus, or some other variation – designed to appeal to the most students.

All these various breakfast options operate much more easily when the meal is universally free. In addition, as the recent FRAC report indicates, expansion of participation almost always requires that the meal be universally free. For these two reasons, school districts should carefully consider implementing Provision 2.

¹⁶ *School Breakfast in America’s Big Cities*. Food Research and Action Center, August 2007. <http://www.frac.org/pdf/urbanbreakfast07.pdf>

Apply for State Start-Up and Expansion Grants

All schools starting a breakfast program and all schools implementing a breakfast option to expand participation should apply for state start-up and expansion grants at each site. School districts should avail themselves of CDE's \$15,000 per site startup and expansion grants to make sure they have the right equipment and do the right marketing to start a new breakfast program or to implement one of the breakfast options.

Encourage Active Student and Parent Participation in Meal Design and Service

Consumer/student participation has repeatedly been shown to be indispensable to successful school meal participation. Given the conspicuous underutilization of the breakfast program, advice, guidance and buy in from students and parents are particularly important to close the participation gap. The best way to do this is for districts to survey parents of elementary students and directly survey middle and high school students to identify their dietary habits and preferences for menu items. This is only one of the recommendations contained in CDE's *School Nutrition By Design*¹⁷ – an excellent compilation of strategies to improve nutrition quality in school food – and, of course, local school wellness policy committees provide a tailor-made forum for this sort of student/parent involvement in meal planning an service.

Nutrition Services Division (NSD)

CDE's Nutrition Services Division has undertaken an ambitious training program including numerous workshops across the state on breakfast's role in closing the achievement gap. These efforts should be supported and sustained. Among the recommendations listed in the next section for the State Legislature is one to increase funding for many of the activities NSD undertakes to work on breakfast. The following recommendations in this section for NSD keeps this recommendation in mind.

Intervene in Poor Performing Districts

NSD should work with districts to start-up and improve breakfast by providing resources and technical assistance. Of particular concern should be those districts not serving breakfast and those with breakfast participation below the statewide average of number of students eating breakfast for every 100 who eat lunch. The experience of districts in California and around the country demonstrates that increasing participation is contingent upon incorporating breakfast into the academic day. The use of the various breakfast options tailored to each district's unique demographics and circumstances is necessary to ensure increased participation. NSD can offer trainings, materials, and other forms of technical assistance to districts to improve breakfast.

¹⁷ Available at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/schnutrtn071206.pdf>

SMI Review

In 1995, USDA launched the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) to improve the nutrition quality of school lunches and breakfasts. SMI nutrition standards require school meals to comply with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for children over two. The SMI regulations enhance the existing nutrition requirements for these programs and provide schools with a variety of alternatives for planning menus.¹⁸ In addition, SMI includes programs and resources to support schools and school food authorities (SFAs) in their efforts to improve school meals.

NSD should evaluate breakfast programs using School Meal Initiative regulations - regulations that represent stricter nutrition standards than are currently in place. In addition to conducting these reviews regularly, the results should be made available for public information and use.

SHAPE Menu Planning

Shaping Health as Partners in Education (SHAPE) is a menu planning system that places a greater emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains. With this emphasis, SHAPE also falls in line with the Dietary Guidelines as well as with recommendations arising from the preponderance of academic research. NSD should continue their current activities of working with districts on breakfast by incorporating SHAPE menu planning standards into breakfast.

California Legislature

Breakfast Mandate for “Severe Need” Schools

“Severe need” schools are those with the greatest percentage of low-income students. Because low-income children are already more likely to under-perform academically, to be overweight or obese, and to suffer worse health outcomes than their wealthier peers, these students stand to gain the most from breakfast – in terms of improved academic performance, enhanced nutrition, and better health. Children attending severe need schools deserve the opportunity to consume a nutritious breakfast to start their school day off right. Not only do students benefit from access to school breakfasts, schools and school districts can raise their test scores and can bring in potentially large sums of federal and state reimbursement. The federal government reimburses severe need schools \$1.61 and \$1.31 per free or reduced price breakfast served, respectively – 26 cents higher than the non-severe need school meals. This reimbursement is in addition to the state’s providing \$0.21 for every free and reduced-price breakfast (with the recent passage of SB 80.)

By mandating breakfast in all severe need schools, California can take a big first step in closing the achievement gap. However, safeguards, such as waivers or exemptions, should be put in place for those unique situations where some schools, despite the higher reimbursements and start-up funds, still cannot make breakfast work financially. Another option is to stagger implementation so that

¹⁸ *The Road to SMI Success*. Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, January 2007. http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/smi_intro.pdf

larger districts implement first, followed by medium sized districts, and finally by small districts. With staggered implementation, smaller districts can learn from the practices of larger ones.

Resume Funding for the California Fresh Start Program

In 2005, the California Legislature authorized the California Fresh Start Program as a pilot to provide \$18.2 million to increase fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in school breakfasts. This pilot program provides an extra ten cents in reimbursement per meal to schools for offering fresh produce. Preliminary versions of an evaluation being conducted by the Center for Weight and Health, at the University of California, Berkeley, found that the program was successful in increasing fresh fruit offerings - by nearly 300 percent – and in increasing breakfast participation in pilot schools by 10 percent. Moreover, many of these offerings were California grown. However, the legislation which authorized this program did not guarantee continued funding and the Legislature did not reauthorize funding for the 2007-2008 academic year. A testament to the popularity of this program is that many school food service directors around the state are going to attempt to continue providing their students with additional servings of fresh fruit despite the lack of continued funding.

With growing concerns around overweight and obesity in children, this program can have a profound impact on influencing the dietary habits of California's children. By providing students with the means to eat healthfully, school meals can make great strides to improving their nutrition and health. A recent literature review found that increased fruit and vegetable consumption has consistently been demonstrated by academic research to help combat obesity and maintain a healthy weight.¹⁹

Although the recent increase in reimbursements resulting from SB 80 might be thought to compensate for the loss of funds from Fresh Start, there is no guarantee that these higher state reimbursements will be spent on fresh fruits and vegetables. With Fresh Start, there is a stream of funding dedicated to providing healthy options for children. The Legislature should resume funding for Fresh Start at the earliest possible time.

Requiring SHAPE Menu Planning

Because the SHAPE menu planning system places a greater emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains, the meals resulting from this system should adhere better to the Dietary Guidelines as well as with generally accepted dietary recommendations from nutrition experts. Therefore, the Legislature should require NSD to develop SHAPE standards for breakfast and require school districts to implement SHAPE.

¹⁹ Ritchie LD, et al. "Preventing Obesity: What Should We Eat?". *California Agriculture*. Volume 61, Number 3, 2007.

Expand Funding for Start-Up and Expansion Grants

The state should appropriate more funding for start-up and expansions grants to schools for breakfast programs. NSD should be directed to accord priority to schools that plan to start a new breakfast program, with priority to severe need schools, or implement a breakfast option.

Require SMI Review for Breakfast

California should require that SMI reviewers evaluate school breakfasts and that reviewers incorporate obesity prevention criteria into their screenings of meals. These reviews should be released for public use at regular intervals. In order to accomplish this, the Legislature should appropriate sufficient resources for planning and conducting these reviews.

Congress

With the reauthorization of many child nutrition programs in 2009, the federal government has the opportunity to review and improve the School Breakfast Program. Congress should consider the following recommendations.

Federal Commodities for the School Breakfast Program

Federal commodities provide much-needed resources for many school food service directors around the state to complete their menus. School food service directors find commodities indispensable to maintaining fiscal solvency. Although schools can currently use commodities for both breakfast and lunch, the amount of funds schools receive to purchase commodities is based on participation in lunch, and the funding makes it difficult to spread the commodities over both meals.

Congress should establish a separate commodity entitlement for the breakfast program, with food items appropriate for that meal, with an emphasis on fresh fruit and vegetables, which might be acquired through the DOD Fresh program. By establishing separate commodity entitlements for breakfast and lunch, directors will be better able to use federal commodities for both programs allowing many districts to be able to begin or sustain breakfast programs while also remaining financially responsible.

Provision 2

Provision 2 is a financing option that allows school districts serving all students at no charge to avoid keeping track of free, reduced-price, and paid student categories in order to claim meal reimbursement. This administrative streamlining is particularly useful in making classroom breakfast and second chance breakfast easy to operate. One complaint with Provision 2 has been that the base year is difficult and costly: schools are required to serve all their students without charge, but federal and state reimbursements are low until meal applications are submitted and students are certified for free or reduced-price reimbursement. In addition, schools are burdened by unusually

heavy costs in the base year because they customarily have to actively solicit students and their families to complete and submit meal applications. To promote classroom breakfast and the other options that expand participation, Congress should encourage schools to implement Provision 2 by providing one-time-only grants to schools to cover these base-year costs.

Eliminate the Reduced-Price Tier

Districts around the state and around the country have been eliminating the reduced-price category for school meals. By eliminating the reduced-price level, districts can expand eligibility for free meals to children in families earning less than 185 percent of the FPL. This results in a win-win situation for students and their families and for school districts. For many cash-strapped families, even the minimal reduced price charge can represent too high a hurdle to participate in the program. Moreover, the reduced-price charge may pose a perceived (and sometimes real) barrier to participation in the meal programs. By removing the reduced-price fee, districts can encourage greater participation in the free program. For school districts, the advantage lies in increased federal reimbursement as well as a reduction in the administrative and paperwork burdens of administering the three-tiers of pricing (free, reduced, and paid).

Universal Classroom Breakfast

Experiences across the country confirm that the best route to increasing participation in breakfast programs is to incorporate breakfast into the academic day. By providing a quick, convenient, and nutritious breakfast in the classroom, students are able to consume a healthy meal while not disrupting their usual academic schedule. Federal grants and technical assistance should be provided to states and districts for scaling up classroom breakfasts to achieve universal classroom breakfast. When combined with Provision 2, universal breakfast is a feasible option for many districts.

Appendix A - Breakfast Participation Charts, by County

Participation Data, by County

ADA – Average Daily Attendance, ADP – Average Daily Participation

	Total Bkfst Served Per Year	FRP Breakfasts	ADA	ADP of Breakfast (% of Students Eating Breakfast)	ADP of FRP Brkfst	ADP of FRP Lunch	% of Low Income Students Eating Lunch Who Also Eat Breakfast
Alameda	3,613,769	3,126,137	194,058	20,076 (10.3)	17,367	51,554	33.7%
Alpine	7,042	4,695	174	39 (22.4)	26	61	42.6%
Amador	36,354	28,737	4,542	202 (4.4)	160	885	18.0%
Butte	974,943	866,598	29,306	5,416 (18.5)	4,814	11,248	42.8%
Calaveras	162,662	129,735	6,093	904 (14.8)	721	1,358	53.1%
Colusa	182,052	171,345	4,303	1,011 (23.5)	952	2,256	42.2%
Contra Costa	3,149,323	2,764,459	155,566	17,496 (11.2)	15,358	37,245	41.2%
Del Norte	245,620	207,685	3,802	1,365 (35.9)	1,154	1,611	71.6%
El Dorado	375,102	290,067	26,735	2,084 (7.8)	1,611	3,928	41.0%
Fresno	8,779,065	7,695,058	171,133	48,773 (28.5)	42,750	92,549	46.2%
Glenn	237,920	206,031	5,502	1,322 (24.0)	1,145	2,609	43.9%
Humboldt	654,829	559,883	16,122	3,638 (22.6)	3,110	5,833	53.3%
Imperial	1,238,151	1,045,586	34,175	6,879 (20.1)	5,809	17,354	33.5%
Inyo	60,752	48,436	2,930	338 (11.5)	269	756	35.6%
Kern	6,468,659	5,840,234	157,088	35,937 (22.9)	32,446	79,571	40.8%
Kings	1,476,151	1,254,857	23,082	8,201 (35.5)	6,971	11,858	58.8%
Lake	496,023	429,785	9,326	2,756 (29.6)	2,388	4,287	55.7%
Lassen	78,603	68,090	4,364	437 (10.0)	378	1,266	29.9%
Los Angeles	68,327,303	61,598,330	1,545,594	379,596 (24.6)	342,213	730,738	46.8%
Madera	1,010,035	912,400	26,030	5,611 (21.6)	5,069	13,369	37.9%
Marin	396,017	342,297	26,911	2,200 (8.2)	1,902	3,816	49.8%
Mariposa	26,650	23,155	2,238	148 (6.6)	129	545	23.6%
Mendocino	683,480	598,367	12,346	3,797 (30.8)	3,324	5,809	57.2%
Merced	2,255,711	1,977,788	52,808	12,532 (23.7)	10,988	27,952	39.3%
Modoc	70,621	60,044	1,619	392 (24.2)	334	797	41.9%
Mono	39,275	35,436	1,651	218 (13.2)	197	479	41.1%
Monterey	2,236,837	1,897,159	64,693	12,427 (19.2)	10,540	28,725	36.7%
Napa	569,234	377,443	16,726	3,162 (18.9)	2,097	4,695	44.7%
Nevada	75,452	66,934	10,205	419 (4.1)	372	1,507	24.7%

	Total Bkfst Served Per Year	FRP Breakfasts	ADA	ADP of Breakfast (% of Students Eating Breakfast)	ADP of FRP Brkfst	ADP of FRP Lunch	% of Low Income Students Eating Lunch Who Also Eat Breakfast
Orange	10,266,968	9,145,951	481,463	57,039 (11.8)	50,811	144,099	35.3%
Placer	598,418	410,718	57,378	3,325 (5.8)	2,282	7,762	29.4%
Plumas	88,085	79,949	2,537	489 (19.3)	444	753	59.0%
Riverside	10,749,920	9,507,734	370,673	59,722 (16.1)	52,821	143,010	36.9%
Sacramento	6,943,691	6,335,513	212,465	38,576 (18.2)	35,197	89,137	39.5%
San Benito	98,261	92,661	10,907	546 (5.0)	515	3,139	16.4%
San Bernardino	11,348,367	10,212,328	392,050	63,046 (16.1)	56,735	161,857	35.1%
San Diego	11,783,021	9,985,933	437,539	65,461 (15.0)	55,477	150,677	36.8%
San Francisco	1,040,246	991,499	51,832	5,779 (11.1)	5,508	19,813	27.8%
San Joaquin	3,470,554	2,998,651	122,619	19,281 (15.7)	16,659	49,437	33.7%
San Luis Obispo	1,051,297	854,312	33,261	5,841 (17.6)	4,746	8,040	59.0%
San Mateo	1,230,049	1,016,117	78,964	6,834 (8.7)	5,645	18,639	30.3%
Santa Barbara	1,919,814	1,659,946	61,890	10,666 (17.2)	9,222	23,337	39.5%
Santa Clara	5,384,486	4,613,167	238,238	29,914 (12.6)	25,629	64,186	39.9%
Santa Cruz	661,019	581,647	33,422	3,672 (11.0)	3,231	10,716	30.2%
Shasta	981,129	830,747	25,793	5,451 (21.1)	4,615	9,499	48.6%
Sierra	11,606	8,450	549	64 (11.7)	47	95	49.4%
Siskiyou	219,029	184,002	5,828	1,217 (20.9)	1,022	2,154	47.5%
Solano	1,458,936	1,246,262	64,424	8,105 (12.6)	6,924	17,308	40.0%
Sonoma	1,449,831	1,243,243	62,884	8,055 (12.8)	6,907	16,688	41.4%
Stanislaus	3,161,066	2,789,790	95,315	17,561 (18.4)	15,499	37,512	41.3%
Sutter	735,089	601,452	16,262	4,084 (25.1)	3,341	6,951	48.1%
Tehama	461,812	374,253	10,359	2,566 (24.8)	2,079	4,508	46.1%
Trinity	126,097	100,774	1,881	701 (37.3)	560	842	66.5%
Tulare	4,245,515	3,765,821	86,569	23,586 (27.2)	20,921	46,605	44.9%
Tuolumne	176,191	137,710	6,686	979 (14.6)	765	1,853	41.3%
Ventura	3,828,332	3,246,323	134,330	21,269 (15.8)	18,035	42,725	42.2%
Yolo	518,219	470,504	27,632	2,879 (10.4)	2,614	9,097	28.7%
Yuba	692,893	568,577	11,786	3,849 (32.7)	3,159	6,530	48.4%
Statewide	188,659,640	166,712,869	5,744,658	1,048,109 (18.2)	926,183	2,241,807	41.3%

Potential Reimbursement, by County

	Potential Federal Reimbursement if All Kids Who Ate Lunch Ate Breakfast	Potential Federal Reimbursement if 70% of Kids Who Ate Lunch Ate Breakfast
Alameda	\$8,940,237.21	\$6,258,166.05
Alpine	\$9,081.87	\$6,357.31
Amador	\$204,062.49	\$142,843.74
Butte	\$1,626,383.70	\$1,138,468.59
Calaveras	\$173,647.11	\$121,552.98
Colusa	\$322,620.33	\$225,834.23
Contra Costa	\$5,806,861.92	\$4,064,803.34
Del Norte	\$110,341.77	\$77,239.24
El Dorado	\$665,701.95	\$465,991.37
Fresno	\$12,411,932.70	\$8,688,352.89
Glenn	\$369,322.68	\$258,525.88
Humboldt	\$691,387.62	\$483,971.33
Imperial	\$2,872,410.87	\$2,010,687.61
Inyo	\$126,631.29	\$88,641.90
Kern	\$11,762,740.02	\$8,233,918.01
Kings	\$1,249,743.15	\$874,820.21
Lake	\$479,142.36	\$335,399.65
Lassen	\$236,474.01	\$165,531.81
Los Angeles	\$96,756,981.18	\$67,729,886.83
Madera	\$2,042,002.32	\$1,429,401.62
Marin	\$533,057.34	\$373,140.14
Mariposa	\$106,025.10	\$74,217.57
Mendocino	\$617,627.10	\$432,338.97
Merced	\$4,181,689.89	\$2,927,182.92
Modoc	\$117,854.49	\$82,498.14
Mono	\$71,260.59	\$49,882.41
Monterey	\$4,394,670.24	\$3,076,269.17
Napa	\$649,566.18	\$454,696.33
Nevada	\$301,655.10	\$211,158.57
Orange	\$24,244,029.60	\$16,970,820.72
Placer	\$1,713,549.42	\$1,199,484.59
Plumas	\$86,864.25	\$60,804.98
Riverside	\$22,586,079.72	\$15,810,255.80
Sacramento	\$13,738,673.82	\$9,617,071.67
San Benito	\$652,776.99	\$456,943.89
San Bernardino	\$26,326,698.21	\$18,428,688.75

	Potential Federal Reimbursement if All Kids Who Ate Lunch Ate Breakfast	Potential Federal Reimbursement if 70% of Kids Who Ate Lunch Ate Breakfast
San Diego	\$24,385,701.51	\$17,069,991.06
San Francisco	\$3,476,306.70	\$2,433,414.69
San Joaquin	\$8,459,730.30	\$5,921,811.21
San Luis Obispo	\$877,197.93	\$614,038.55
San Mateo	\$3,347,561.91	\$2,343,293.34
Santa Barbara	\$3,567,353.07	\$2,497,147.15
Santa Clara	\$10,181,423.22	\$7,126,996.25
Santa Cruz	\$1,867,472.82	\$1,307,230.97
Shasta	\$1,285,905.24	\$900,133.67
Sierra	\$13,179.63	\$9,225.74
Siskiyou	\$296,295.51	\$207,406.86
Solano	\$2,788,371.51	\$1,951,860.06
Sonoma	\$2,493,104.16	\$1,745,172.91
Stanislaus	\$5,556,945.24	\$3,889,861.67
Sutter	\$912,194.10	\$638,535.87
Tehama	\$618,368.19	\$432,857.73
Trinity	\$72,266.97	\$50,586.88
Tulare	\$6,389,230.62	\$4,472,461.43
Tuolumne	\$296,883.42	\$207,818.39
Ventura	\$6,483,382.56	\$4,538,367.79
Yolo	\$1,628,122.77	\$1,139,685.94
Yuba	\$862,954.71	\$604,068.30
Statewide	\$333,039,173.73	\$233,127,421.61

Appendix B - The School Breakfast Program

Program History

Established in 1966 as a two-year pilot project, the School Breakfast Program (SBP) originally provided categorical grants to schools for serving breakfasts to “nutritionally needy” children. At the time, the legislation stipulated that primary consideration for program implementation be given to schools located in poor areas or in areas where children had to travel a great distance to school. A variety of changes occurred over the following decade, most notably that a system of per-meal reimbursements replaced the categorical grant reimbursement structure. In 1975, Congress permanently authorized the program declaring that breakfast “be made available in all schools where it is needed to provide adequate nutrition for children in attendance.” Moreover, the legislation continued to emphasize participation by schools with “severe need” and to provide higher reimbursement to these schools.²⁰ While the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees the program nationally, in California, the California Department of Education (CDE) administers the program.

Program Operation

Operating similarly to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program is available to public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions. Participating schools in SBP receive a cash reimbursement from USDA and CDE for each meal they serve. Meals must meet Federal and State nutrition requirements and they must offer free or reduced price breakfasts to income-eligible children. The following chart provides the Federal reimbursement for breakfast for the 2007-2008 academic year.²¹

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM	Non-Severe Need	Severe Need
Paid	0.24	0.24
Reduced Price	1.05	1.31
Free	1.35	1.61

Note: Severe Need Breakfast is for approved sites that served 40% or more free and reduced-price lunches in 2004-2005

Currently, CDE adds \$0.1563 in reimbursement to both free and reduced price breakfasts served by schools. This rate will soon increase to 21 cents per meal as a result of Senate Bill (SB) 80, the budget trailer bill, passed by the California Legislature in 2007.

²⁰ “School Breakfast Program”. USDA. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/AboutBFast/ProgHistory.htm>

²¹ Ibid.

Eligibility

Children in households earning less than 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) qualify for free meals. Those in households earning less than 185 percent of FPL qualify for reduced price meals. All children in households receiving Food Stamps, Kin-Gap, or FDPIR benefits or children whose families are recipients of CALWORKS are automatically eligible for free meals.²² A reduced price breakfast can cost no more than \$0.30²³ while a school district can determine the price of a full price breakfast.

Nutrition Requirements

School food authorities may choose one of several menu planning options for breakfast. The menu planning system for breakfast need not be the same as that chosen for lunch. The menu planning options include:

- Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning
- Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning
- Nutrient Standard Menu Planning
- Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning
- Shaping Health As Partners in Education (SHAPE) Menu Planning²⁴

In general, these menu planning options require school breakfasts to meet one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, and specific levels of calories as well as comply with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA). In compliance with the DGA, school breakfasts can provide no more than 30 percent of calories from total fat and less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. Nutrition standards apply for the average of meals offered over the course of a week.

The “Offer versus Serve” system requires that at least three menu items be offered. Senior high students and, at the discretion of the SFA, students below senior high may be permitted to decline a maximum of one item offered. A breakfast must include milk and at least two additional menu items in the planned serving sizes.²⁵

²² “School Breakfast Program”. FRAC. http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sbp.html

²³ Code of Federal Regulations. Part 220 – School Breakfast Program.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations/7CFR220.pdf>

²⁴ For more information on the specifics of the various menu planning options, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smisummary.asp>

²⁵ “School Meals Initiative Summary”. CDE. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/smisummary.asp>

Appendix C - Provisions 1, 2, and 3

As a means to reduce paperwork and administrative burdens, three alternative provisions exist within the National School Lunch Act for annual determinations of eligibility for free and reduced price school meals and daily meal counts by type (free, reduced price and paid meals.)

Provision 1

Provision 1 (P1) reduces application burdens by allowing free eligibility to be certified for a two year period in schools where at least 80 percent of the children enrolled are eligible for free or reduced price meals. All other households must be provided a meal application and are allowed to apply for meal benefits each school year. There is no requirement to serve meals at no charge to all students. Schools must continue to record daily meal counts of the number of meals served to children by eligibility category as the basis for calculating reimbursement claims.

Provision 2

Provision 2 (P2) is a claiming option in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs that streamlines school food service paperwork. In a “base year,” schools collect meal applications from students. For the next three years, they do not have to collect or process any new applications or keep track of participants’ FRP category on a daily basis. The same percentages of free, reduced-price, and paid students will be used when calculating their federal reimbursement (unless the school chooses to start over.) In exchange, the school must feed all students for free; in other words, they no longer collect the reduced-price or full-pay co-payments. If a school’s enrollment varies by 5% or more from year to year, its base year calculation might not reflect the true student population over time making P2 potentially less useful for the school.

In schools with high-enough levels of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the increase in participation and reduction in paperwork more than make up for the lost income. Although a high FRP makes P2 an attractive option, statewide statistics demonstrate P2 is financially sound even if their FRP rate is in the low seventies – and in some cases even lower. Districts with a high FRP at some schools and a low FRP at others can “balance” the schools for successful and financially sustainable P2 implementation district-wide. Provision 2 is best for districts or individual sites that have growth in ADA (Average Daily Attendance) from year to year and can be adjusted for increased participation. P2 works best with Direct Certification. California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) has created a feasibility tool to see if P2 would work for a district or school.

Provision 3

Provision 3 (P3) allows schools to receive the same level of Federal cash and commodity assistance each year for a four year period. Schools must serve meals to all participating children at no charge for a period of four years. Rather than making additional eligibility determinations, these schools receive the level of Federal cash and commodity support paid to them in a base year. For each of the

four years, the level of Federal cash and commodity support is adjusted to reflect changes in enrollment and inflation. Provision 3 is best for districts or individual sites that have very little growth in ADA from year to year and very stable participation.²⁶

²⁶ “Provision 1, 2, & 3”. FNS USDA. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/prov-1-2-3/provision1_2_3.htm

Appendix D – Methodology

To calculate potential federal reimbursement, the number of free, reduced, and paid breakfasts served were subtracted from the same number of those lunches served. This difference was multiplied by the reimbursement rates for each level of pricing. This product was the potential federal reimbursement at full participation. By taking 70 percent of each level, the potential reimbursement at 70 percent was calculated. This method assumes that similar proportions of free, reduced, and paid meals would exist at higher levels of participation. It also does not include higher reimbursements for severe need schools.

Appendix E - Breakfast Delivery Options

Classroom Breakfast

Classroom breakfast is a simple, successful method of delivering morning meals to students. All children are offered a breakfast at their desk at the start of the school day. Depending on the demographics of the school, this breakfast can be offered at no charge. Meals are usually delivered on carts with coolers and insulated bags for cold and hot items, respectively. Students may even enjoy volunteering to wheel the carts from the cafeteria to the classroom. Schools can decide on the menu, but simple, nutritious, and convenient choices include fresh fruit (in child-friendly sizes), low- or non-fat milk, whole grain cereal, low-fat yogurt, breakfast burritos, or breakfast sandwiches. Students can volunteer to bring the meal on familiar, little red wagons from the cafeteria to the classroom. Students can select their meal and take it to their desks, or can be served where they are sitting, and quickly eat the meal.

While the students are eating, the teacher can take roll, deliver daily announcements, and use the remaining time for a variety of activities, such as incorporating the breakfast items into a short nutrition education lesson, reading a poem or a story, or allowing the students free time to complete homework or other exercises. After the meal is finished, the teacher and students can quickly clean up – the trash goes outside the classroom door, and the untouched food is returned to the cafeteria. Within 10 to 15 minutes, all the students are able to eat a healthy breakfast and are prepared to learn.

Past experiences with classroom breakfast demonstrate that this delivery option for breakfast can more than double participation in the program, with some districts reaching near 100 percent participation. Increased participation decreases unit costs and brings in more state and federal reimbursements. A successful classroom breakfast program can even produce resources for the lunch program.

One commonly raised issue with respect to classroom breakfast is whether the program will impinge on instructional time. By law, school districts must provide a set amount of “instructional time” for students. The law defines instructional time as classroom learning time plus explicitly permitted “non-instructional instructional time” activities, such as taking roll, noting which students are participating in school meals, other administrative activities, and passing periods. Teachers in schools with successful classroom breakfast programs generally perform these administrative activities or start the day’s lesson as students are eating their breakfast—usually a period of no more than 10 to 15 minutes total.

Classroom breakfast is particularly amenable to elementary schools because students consistently go and stay in the same classroom each day. This format allows classroom breakfast to coincide with each morning’s administrative activities as well as the first lessons. In addition, more and more high schools have developed strategies for implementing classroom breakfast. Schools that use Provision

2 (P2)²⁷ with a 80 percent FRP population or above will find it easier to implement classroom breakfast. Because P2 allows all students to eat for free, it reduces the paperwork and tracking demands for school food service and teachers. Higher income schools can also have successful classroom breakfast programs. For example, some sites within Hawthorne Unified have seen SBP participation increase since implementing a classroom breakfast program.

Where is it Happening?

Classroom Breakfast is most popular in elementary schools where the students most often stay in their homeroom. Special classes also do well with classroom breakfast, and some secondary schools are happy with this model as well. Classroom breakfast programs are running in counties and districts across the state, such as West Fresno Elementary SD, Orange USD, San Diego USD, and more. State-funded breakfast expansion grants are available to fund many of the equipment costs associated with initiating classroom breakfast.

Grab 'n' Go

Grab 'n' Go is a great way to bring school breakfast program to busy students. Grab 'n' Go is a healthy, reimbursable breakfast, typically served in a bag from carts stationed at school entrances and other places that students rush by on their way between first period and second period. Students can consume the meal in the hall between classes, quietly at their desks, or on a break later in the morning. It is an attractive delivery method in settings where students can only eat a morning meal if it is available in a variety of places.

Grab 'n' Go can be served before the bell and/or afterwards as a Second Chance Breakfast (see below). The usual breakfast options with Grab 'n' Go are cold foods wrapped and placed in a bag or can be divided into categories on a cart where "offer versus serve" options are offered. These carts are positioned around the campus, including where buses drop students off in the morning, to reach the largest number of students as they enter the school or move from class to class during the morning. With PINs, swipe cards, or tickets, students are quickly processed at the point-of-sale kiosk or cart, and then they consume the meal while walking to class. Many teachers also permit students to finish eating quietly at the beginning of class. When combined with Provisions 2 and 3 and depending on the demographics, all children can eat for free, thus eliminating the need for processing at the kiosk or cart. Use of student identifiers, either punched in or by means of a swipe card, ensures that each student eats breakfast only once. For many schools, Grab 'n' Go is a simple and convenient method of delivering a nutritious breakfast.

The Grab 'n' Go meal is a meal that must comply with the standards for USDA reimbursement. Items can often resemble those for classroom breakfast – fresh fruit, cold cereal and milk, bagels, breakfast sandwiches, or other healthy convenient breakfast options.

²⁷ For more information on Provisions 1, 2, and 3, please refer to Appendix C.

Where is it Happening?

Grab 'n' Go is most popular in secondary schools, particularly in schools with relatively large numbers of students who enter at different times from different entrances and for whom the cafeteria may be remote or too small. School food service can benefit by serving significantly more reimbursable meals each day. Cutler-Orosi, for example, has increased its participation enormously by introducing Grab 'n' Go service in its middle and high schools, turning its financial picture around in the process. Other districts implementing this option including Duarte in Los Angeles, Lodi in San Joaquin, and Elk Grove in Sacramento. State-funded breakfast expansion grants are available to fund many of the equipment costs associated with initiating breakfast service from carts around the campus.

Second Chance Breakfast

Second Chance Breakfast (2CB) is an excellent strategy for making sure that every student has an opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast at school. 2CB is particularly effective with adolescents whose bodies often do not want food early in the morning. 2CB is also an attractive option for schools in which the students do not have a homeroom in which to serve classroom breakfast. When bus schedules do not permit sufficient time for riders to eat before the bell or if students are late to school, 2CB ensures those kids have a healthy meal available at recess.

Exactly as the name suggests, 2CB is a second breakfast service during morning recess or snack break, usually sometime between 9AM and 10AM. While the conventional breakfast service in the cafeteria before school starts can be maintained, most districts eliminate the pre-bell breakfast and serve only later in the morning during the 10AM break. Use of student identifiers, either punched in or by means of a swipe card, ensures that each student receives only one school breakfast – either before school or during 2CB.

Because the meal is a second chance at what was previously served, the meal can duplicate the menu from the earlier cafeteria breakfast served before school. Alternatively, it could be a Grab 'n' Go-type meal service (see above.) As opposed to the typical unhealthy snack options, such as cookies, chips, or doughnuts, served during morning recess, 2CB replaces those choices with a healthier meal conforming to USDA standards.

Where is it Happening?

Second Chance Breakfast is most popular in secondary schools. However, many elementary schools do well with 2CB. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, about half of all schools offer 2CB. In fact, in high schools, 2CB appears to be the more popular serving time with very few high school students eating the traditional, before-the-bell school breakfast. Implementation of 2CB has occurred at most middle and high schools in the district with substantial expansion of participation and increased federal and state revenues. Other districts implementing this option include Sanger and Caruthers in Fresno County, Oakland, Salinas, and Fontana and Redlands in San Bernardino County.

Breakfast on the Bus

Breakfast on the Bus is another breakfast delivery option that can be attractive to certain districts. In this model, breakfast is distributed brown bag style to students as they step on the bus in the morning. Hand-held foods are the best type of food for this model. School Food Service must coordinate with bus drivers about routes and schedules as well as establishing a means to monitor sales and distribution. One option is for the bus driver to simply check names off a list as students enter or for students to drop off a ticket or swipe a card upon entering the bus. Students throw out trash upon leaving the bus.

For Breakfast on the Bus to work, the bus ride must be at least a 15 minute ride to school. For this reason, Breakfast on the Bus could be particularly attractive for rural districts or those where students face long bus rides in the morning. If students must wake up early to get on the bus, it may be even more likely that they will skip breakfast in the morning. These students who ride the bus for long periods of time are able to get the nutrition they need with this model of breakfast service. Hand-held food items also allow the kids to save something for a mid-morning snack between classes if they cannot finish their breakfast in the morning.

Where is it Happening?

Although no districts have yet implemented this option in California, some are considering and planning to do so. Schools in other states, such as Florida and Wisconsin, have used this option.