

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL



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NEW STUDY: Small Investment in School Breakfast Would Have Major Payoffs for California's Schools and Economy

OAKLAND, CALIF., May 19, 2015 ... A 10 percent expansion of California's school breakfast program would generate \$42.7 million in economic activity while creating nearly 1,000 new jobs, according to a study released today by California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) and authored by Tim Gage, a former director of finance for the state of California and co-founder of the Blue Sky Consulting Group.

The study examined the economic impact of a 10 percent increase in participation in the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) among California students. While the initial cost to the State General Fund would be \$4.8 million, Gage shows that this expense is dwarfed by the federal government's contribution of \$40.2 million. What's more, the economic analysis shows that the state's contribution would be offset by \$2.7 million in additional state tax revenue.

According to Gage, for a small net investment of \$2.1 million, or about 11 cents per meal, California would receive over \$40 million in federal funds to spend on food, equipment and staff time. In addition to feeding over 200,000 students, the increase in participation would generate \$42.7 million in related economic activity, creating an estimated 1,000 jobs in school cafeterias, distribution centers and farms.

"It's rare for a small state expenditure to have such a positive economic impact," says Gage. "By leveraging a significant amount of federal funding, the expansion of school breakfast kills two birds with one stone. It feeds more hungry kids and results in a significant benefit to the state's economy."

A bill now working its way through the state Legislature, AB 1240, authored by Assemblymembers Rob Bonta (D-Oakland) and Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond), would require an estimated 5,000 schools to adopt Breakfast After the Bell programs that incorporate breakfast into the school day. Presently, a majority of schools serve breakfast before school begins, when many students have yet to arrive on campus. Another 20 percent don't serve breakfast at all. As a result, only 35 percent of low-income students eat breakfast at school, half the level that participate in school lunch programs. Increasing access to breakfast by offering it in more schools and serving it after the school day begins would boost participation rates statewide.

"Three out of four students in California miss out on the health and academic benefits of school breakfast, often because it's not served when and where kids are able to eat," says George Manalo-LeClair, executive director of CFPA. "But there are proven strategies to solve this problem. New Breakfast After the Bell programs in pioneering school districts like Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco are reaching over 80 percent of students. AB 1240 would bring these successes to schools across the state, while simultaneously helping our economy."

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AB 1240 is sponsored by California Food Policy Advocates, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing access to nutritious, affordable food, with support from the No Kid Hungry campaign. More information about AB 1240, which will next be heard and voted on by the State Assembly Appropriations Committee, is available at www.calbreakfast.org.

The study, "Good for Kids, Good for the State: The Economic and Fiscal Impact of Increasing Participation in the School Breakfast Program," was prepared by the Blue Sky Consulting Group for California Food Policy Advocates with support from the Orfalea Foundation. The full report can be viewed at www.calbreakfast.org.

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EDITORS NOTE: A full online pressroom that includes spokespersons' contact information, press kit materials, fact sheets and photographs is available at: www.calbreakfast.org.