

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL



Case Study

2015-16 ALUM ROCK UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT (ARUSD): Mary Fell, *Director, Child Nutrition Services*



DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

23 K-8 Traditional Public Schools¹
14 K-5 elementary schools
2 K-8 elementary/middle schools
7 6-8 middle schools

9,330 Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price School Meals²

10,896 Students Enrolled³

FOOD QUALITY

Classroom Breakfast features both hot and cold entrees, including waffles, pancakes, and breakfast burritos.

At Second Chance Breakfast, schools offer cold cereal and milk as the entree.

The ARUSD Child Nutrition Services department uses the USDA Foods Program for about half of the ingredients in its breakfast items.

BREAKFAST MODELS



Prior to Breakfast After the Bell (BAB) service models: ARUSD schools served traditional before-the-bell breakfast in the school cafeteria.

15 years ago (2001): ARUSD began serving Second Chance Breakfast at 5 middle schools.

12 years ago (2004): Five elementary schools began serving Classroom Breakfast.

“Parents really like Classroom Breakfast and Second Chance Breakfast because the programs give students a chance to receive a meal if they didn't eat at home.”

– Mary Fell, *Director, Child Nutrition Services*

BEHAVIORAL & ACADEMIC IMPACTS

- ➔ Teachers report fewer disruptions in class due to student complaints about being hungry before lunch.
- ➔ School Health Aides report fewer student complaints about headaches and stomachaches.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy

ARUSD began offering Second Chance breakfast at five middle schools in 2001, in response to Health Aides' reporting a high number of students complaining about hunger in the mid-morning hours. In 2004, the district adopted Provision 2⁴ and implemented BAB at five elementary schools whose principals were interested in offering Classroom Breakfast or Second Chance Breakfast.

Hurdles

There was initial resistance from some custodians and teachers. These stakeholders had concerns about attracting pests, creating mess, and increasing workloads. There were also concerns that if Second Chance Breakfast was offered too close to lunch time, kids would be full and skip lunch.

Solutions

- + Second Chance Breakfast is timed to allow a substantial break before lunch service.
- + Health Aides had identified classrooms where teachers were reporting disruptions in class due to students complaints of hunger. Focusing implementation efforts on those classrooms helped win over principals and in turn overcome the initial objections from some teachers and custodial staff who didn't immediately recognize the benefits to students.



PROGRAM FINANCES

- BAB start-up costs were covered by the district's cafeteria fund.
- Start-up costs included spending for additional refrigeration, transport bags, and additional labor.
- The revenue from increased breakfast participation (meal reimbursements) has more than covered additional costs of operating BAB models. It also helps offset lower district-wide school nutrition revenue due to declining enrollment.

“Breakfast After the Bell is great for the students. They get time to play before class and are in the classroom on time.”

– Mary Fell, Director, Child Nutrition Services

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Before BAB implementation

Participation among all students averaged about 25% at schools offering traditional before the bell breakfast.

After BAB implementation

- ➔ Participation at schools serving Second Chance Breakfast is 35%-40%.
- ➔ Participation at schools serving Classroom Breakfast has increased to about 75%.

PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT

- Parents and students have been supportive of BAB.
- Some teachers and custodial staff have been slower to express support for BAB. Positive input from principals was key to winning over those who initially expressed some opposition to the change.
- Child Nutrition Services staff enthusiastically support BAB and would like to see it expanded to more schools.

NOTES & REFERENCES

CFPA thanks Mary Fell for her time and insights into the school breakfast programs at Alum Rock Union 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>

⁴ Provision 2 is a federally authorized option used in high-poverty schools to serve universally free meals. http://cfpa.net/ChildNutrition/ChildNutrition_Legislation/LCFF-Provision2-Factsheet-2014.pdf