

# Breakfast After the Bell: Implementation Guide



## Program Overview

Colorado's [House Bill 13-1006](#) created the Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program in May 2013. The purpose of the program is to offer breakfast at no charge after the tardy bell to each student enrolled in a public school that has 70 percent or more students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program.

The Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program has five main objectives:

1. Increase the number of children eating breakfast on school days.
2. Increase the consumption of nutritious foods, making breakfast programs more effective.
3. Improve academic performance by preparing children to learn.
4. Improve the overall health of children in Colorado.
5. Generate additional revenue for school nutrition programs through federal and state reimbursements.

The Colorado Department of Education's School Nutrition Unit assists school food authorities with the implementation of this law by providing resources, training, and technical assistance. The School Nutrition Unit is also responsible for annual notifications to SFAs as to what sites are required to participate and monitors program compliance as part of the Administrative Review process.

## Eligibility Criteria

Beginning in School Year 2015-16, public schools participating in the NSLP with a free and reduced percentage from the prior year of 70% or greater, must offer a breakfast at no charge to each student after the tardy bell. Schools must implement the BABNP by the first day of the school year in which they are required to participate. *Note: In School Year 2014-15 the eligibility threshold was higher: public schools participating in the NSLP with a free and reduced percentage from the prior year of 80% or greater were required to participate.*

The following data considerations must be followed when determining schools required to participate:

1. Pupil membership (October count) data from the prior school year must be used to determine district enrollment and school free and reduced percentages. This data is typically available in January each year.
  - a. School food authorities must use pre-K-12 pupil membership data.
  - b. Districts must use pupil membership data published on CDE's website. Access current pupil membership data here: [www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrentschool](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrentschool).
2. Do not round the free and reduced percentage (e.g. if a school has a free and reduced percentage of 69.87% in School Year 2023-24, this school would not have to participate in School Year 2024-25 because this percentage is less than 70.0%).
3. If a public school falls below the 70% threshold for two consecutive years, it has the option to continue participating in the program but is not required to do so.

## Exemptions

- Public or charter schools who do not participate in the National School Lunch Program are not required to participate.
- School districts with less than 1,000 students are not required to participate.
- Public schools that have a free and reduced percentage less than 70% for two consecutive years,

- have the option to continue the BABNP but are not required to participate.
- If federal per-meal reimbursements for free or reduced school breakfast and lunch are decreased below the 2013 levels or eliminated, schools required to offer breakfast under the BABNP will be exempt.

## Time of Service

According to federal regulation, schools must offer breakfasts at or near the beginning of the school day. Under the Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program, breakfast must be offered after the tardy bell. Breakfast must be served after the time by which the student would be considered tardy. Schools cannot add a first bell before the tardy bell to meet the requirements of this bill (i.e. a zero bell is not allowed). A school that offers breakfast to students before the tardy bell may continue to do so. Schools with new breakfast after the bell programs may offer breakfast before the tardy bell to students arriving early. However, all schools must offer breakfast after the tardy bell to any student who does not receive a breakfast before the bell. School food authorities must accurately count, record and claim the number of breakfast meals actually served before and after the tardy bell to students by category (i.e. free, reduced price, paid) unless operating provisional programs, in which case meals should be claimed based on provisional program claiming instructions. Additionally, all breakfast meals, whether offered before or after the tardy bell, must be offered at no charge to each student.

There is no duration of time in which SFAs are required to offer breakfast after the tardy bell. The period of meal service is at the discretion of the school food authority. However, school food authorities must make breakfast after the tardy bell accessible to all students and allow students a reasonable amount of time to eat their meal. Keep in mind, the aim of the BABNP is to increase the number of children eating breakfast on school days and a longer serving period may help in obtaining this goal.

The time of breakfast service for each school required to participate will be reviewed annually when the application packet is submitted via the CDE School Nutrition online system and during the Administrative Review process.

Schools with 90 percent or more students riding the bus to school are allowed to offer breakfast under the BABNP on the bus. However, such a school must also offer a breakfast at no charge to students arriving late or by another mode of transportation after the tardy bell.

Schools that operate a state-licensed before school care program may offer breakfast under the BABNP during the before school program. However, such a school must also offer a breakfast at no charge after the tardy bell to students not participating in the before school care program.

School food authorities should follow district policy for offering breakfast on days when school starts late (e.g. late start days, snow delay, etc.).

## Breakfast Meal Pattern and Serving Model

Breakfast meals served under the Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program must meet federal and state [School Breakfast Program](#) rules and regulations including nutrition and meal pattern requirements. Local school boards, district administration or school administration may determine the breakfast model.

Different serving models may include but are not limited to: breakfast in the classroom, grab n' go, breakfast in the cafeteria after first period, breakfast at recess, nutrition breaks, breakfast in the halls and other creative methods to serve breakfast to students after the tardy bell.

Reach out to your [CDE School Nutrition point of contact](#) with any questions.

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