



ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

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Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

To access past issues, go to
<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/take5/index.html>.

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This Month's Focus- *School Nutrition - What's New?*



Photo Courtesy of USDA

As Washington students returned to their schools this month, they faced changes in the food provided by the school nutrition program. Starting in the current 2014-15 school year, all foods sold during the school day need to meet nutrition standards. Also, changes to school breakfast went into place, although some schools implemented changes last year. In the 2012-13 school year, changes to school lunch went into effect. The big idea behind most of these changes, whether they are regulatory changes or local programs, is to help kids have access to healthy food at school and reduce their risk for overweight and obesity. School meals are a vital part of the food safety net for children, particularly vulnerable ones in food-insecure households.

For nutrition educators eager to keep abreast of these changes, but who perhaps may not have recent exposure to school nutrition programs, this issue of the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* provides some answers to some frequently asked questions. We interviewed Washington experts for their responses, and are particularly grateful to Linda Stone and Donna Johnson for their valuable expertise.

Why and how did school lunch start?

After World War II, General Lewis Hershey, director of the Selective Service System, testified before Congress that more than a third of rejected draftees suffered from poor nutrition. This spurred the creation of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Congress passed the *National School Lunch Act of 1946* to protect national security, safeguard the health of children, and encourage the consumption of domestic agricultural commodities. The *Child Nutrition Act of 1966* and legislation passed over the next five years resulted in the creation of a national School Breakfast program and the Summer Food Service Program to address hunger among children in summer months when they are not in school. The next major revolution is happening now. Advocates of organics and sustainable food, like Alice Waters of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, CA, began to criticize school lunch nutritional guidelines and work with local school districts to improve meals. This effort culminated in a Congressional request to the Institutes of Medicine for recommendations on changing school meal standards to reflect current knowledge about child nutrition. The *2010 Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act*

mandated new guidelines which went into effect in the 2012-13 school year for lunch and the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years for breakfast. (Source: Linda Stone, Food Policy Director, Children's Alliance, www.childrensalliance.org, 509-644-1314, Linda@childrensalliance.org.)

What does "free and reduced" mean?

Federal guidelines state household income limits for free and reduced-price school meals. In Washington State, students who qualify for reduced-price meals also receive free school breakfast. Reduced-price eligible students in grades K-3 also receive free school lunch. These qualifications matter in other ways: school meal eligibility data is frequently used to allocate other school funding, including Title 1 funds and state class size funding. (Source: Linda Stone)

Why are school meals for kids who cannot afford to buy them or bring them from home important from an academic standpoint? In other words, how do school meals help kids perform better in school? There are many, many adverse effects among kids who skip breakfast that affect their ability to do well in the classroom. Research has shown that hungry kids can't learn. And the converse is true as well. Studies reveal that positive outcomes associated with school meals, particularly for those who are nutritionally at-risk, include less tardiness and absenteeism, improved math and reading scores, better attention, better concentration, fewer visits to a nurse's office, fewer behavioral problems, improved memory, and fewer visits to the nurse's office. Some of these benefits are specific to school breakfast, others to lunch as well.

References on school meals and academic performance include:

- FRAC's publication, *Breakfast for Learning*, Spring 2014, at <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/breakfastforlearning.pdf>
- GenYouth publication, *Academic Success and Healthy School Environments*, starting on page 9, at www.nationaldairycouncil.org/ChildNutrition/Documents/Wellness%20Impact%20Report.pdf
- Harvard Research Analysis, *Impact of School Breakfast on Children's Health and Learning*, www.sodexofoundation.org/hunger_us/Images/Impact%20of%20School%20Breakfast%20Study_tcm150-212606.PDF

(Source: Donna Johnson, RD, PhD, Nutritional Sciences Associate Director, Center for Public Health Nutrition, University of Washington, 206-685-1068, djohn@u.washington.edu)

Do school meals really make a difference in kids' nutritional status?

In addition to improving success at school, school meals have a positive effect on overall nutrition. Students who eat breakfast consume more key nutrients than those who do not eat breakfast. Later in the day, breakfast-skippers do not make up for the missed nutrients with other meals. For many kids, school meals account for more than half of a child's daily calorie intake, which is especially important for **children with limited resources** in public schools. Students who participate in the school lunch are more likely to have adequate intakes of key nutrients and are less likely to consume energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods at school. (Source: Donna Johnson)

What's the extent of child hunger in our state?

According to the most current data, one in four Washington kids live in a household that struggles with hunger. (Source: Linda Stone)

Why is Washington so low in its breakfast participation?

Although 95% of Washington schools offer breakfast, participation lags behind. Last year, the Children's Alliance conducted a survey of Child Nutrition Directors and asked their view of their school's breakfast participation: 65% said their participation was "good" or "great". In contrast, actual participation rates showed only 45% were actually good or great. Part of the problem of the difference between the perceptions documented in the survey and the actual participation percentages may be that schools do not see the need to take action to improve participation. (Source: Linda Stone) For FRAC's *School Breakfast Scorecard* with state-by-state data, see http://frac.org/pdf/School_Breakfast_Scorecard_SY_2012_2013.pdf.

What is "universal school breakfast"?

This means that all students, regardless of household income, receive a free breakfast. This can happen through various funding mechanisms offered by USDA. In our state, 32 school districts are operating universal meals programs through the Community Eligibility Provision this year, including the Yakima, Grandview, Granger, Sunnyside, Toppenish, and Union Gap school districts. (Source: Linda Stone)

What is "iBreakfast"?

The Washington State Dairy Council developed a novel program called "iBreakfast," which encourages students to have yogurt parfaits for breakfast at school. The iBreakfast kit includes posters, and options to make the program work in various school settings. Students receive tickets that are entered into a drawing, and they can win prizes such as iTunes gift cards or an iPad mini. For information about participating in the program, see www.eatsmart.org/schools/barrels-and-wraps1/ibreakfast. (Contact: Cara Nichols, Washington State Dairy Council, 425-744-1616, cara@eatsmart.org)

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What is “breakfast after the bell”? Is Washington unique in trying this?

Schools have realized that many students needing breakfast were unable to arrive at school in time for school breakfast. In other cases, school cafeterias were too small to accommodate all students in the short time period available for breakfast. The solution is to switch breakfast service to after the school day begins. The way that Breakfast after the Bell can be implemented varies from school to school, but all result in greater participation in the National School Breakfast Program. One model is “Breakfast in the Classroom”: breakfast is delivered to the students to eat during attendance and announcements. Using “Grab n Go Breakfast,” students pick up a breakfast near the school entrance that is in a paper sack or other disposable package and eat it as they hurry off to class. “Breakfast after First

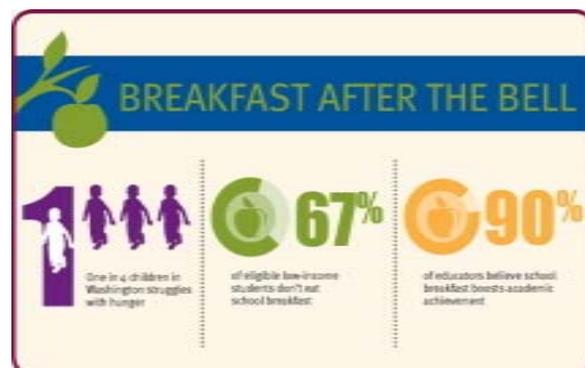


Photo Courtesy of United Way of King County

Period” is served in the school cafeteria or other central location, and works well for students in middle or high school. (Source: Linda Stone. Resource for information about Breakfast after the Bell and ways to overcome perceived barriers:

www.uwkc.org/assets/files/public-policy/breakfast-after-the-bell.pdf)

Is there any upcoming educational programming about school breakfast?

Yes! Washington Action for Healthy Kids is hosting a school breakfast summit on October 23. Keynote speaker Dayle Hayes will lead an interactive workshop about how to start a Breakfast after the Bell program in a local school. Staff from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Child Nutrition Services will address regulatory and financial issues to consider when starting an alternative breakfast program. Information at www.actionforhealthykids.org/component/events/event/192.

Does Washington receive additional funding from the state budget to cover the cost for school meals?

Yes. There is \$7.1 million per year in state funds for breakfast reimbursement, breakfast and summer meal start-up grants, and summer meal funding. The majority of funds to provide about 18 cents for each free and reduced-price breakfast served.

With the outcome of the lawsuit requiring our state legislature to completely fund K-12 basic education (A Washington Supreme Court decision on September 10, 2014 in the McCleary case), will there be any additional funding to school meals?

The Washington School Nutrition Association and other advocates have not been successful in adding child nutrition programs to the definition of Basic Education. Therefore, the McCleary settlement will likely not have a direct impact on child nutrition funding. However, many policy makers realize that their investment in the McCleary settlement could be wasted if kids arrive at school hungry. (Source: Linda Stone).

How did the November 1, 2013, cuts to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps) affect participation levels in school nutrition programs?

Participation in SNAP and eligibility for school meals are linked through direct certification. This is a matching program that allows schools to make kids eligible for free meals if their family receives SNAP benefits. The cut in SNAP reduced the dollar amount of “food stamp” benefits, but the child’s eligibility for school meals remained the same. (Source: Linda Stone)

What is the “ReFresh” curriculum?

Developed by the University of Maryland Extension, Food Supplement Nutrition Education Program, the ReFresh curriculum is designed for use in 4th and 5th grade classrooms. It focuses on encouraging students to eat more fruits, vegetables, and grains. Since these foods are emphasized more with changes to the school nutrition program, this nutrition education program has been shown to increase acceptance and selection of new foods. All 226 pages are available for free download at <http://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/docs/articles/ReFreshFullCurriculum2013.pdf>.

What resources can be used with parents to help them understand the changes in school meals?

- “The School Day Just Got Healthier” one-page handout briefly describes ten ways that the new school nutrition standards are making school meals more nutritious and how they help children maintain or reach a healthy weight. The flyer is part of the 10 Tips Nutrition Education Series and can be accessed at www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet21schoolDayJustGotHealthier.pdf.
- The USDA has launched an extensive set of materials that can be used by parents and a wide array of other audiences to help kids learn to accept the new food choices. The “Healthier School Day” tool kit can be accessed at www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/school-day-just-got-healthier-toolkit.
- The USDA also has a breakfast tool kit at www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/toolkit.

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Partners in a Healthy School Environment – Health professionals and school gatekeepers can coordinate their efforts to improve the health of American school children. Marilyn Briggs at the Center for Nutrition in Schools at the University of California Davis provides her perspective in the Health Connections Newsletter focusing on *The School Nutrition Environment – Active Partner in Health Promotion*, https://www.healthyeating.org/Portals/0/Documents/Health%20Wellness/Health%20Connections%20Newsletters/Schools_Nutr_Environment_2013.pdf

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

One Potato, Two Potato – Everything you could possibly want to know about potatoes grown in our state is now available in a new booklet, *The Truth about Potatoes* by Washington State Potatoes. It includes current, referenced information about nutrients in potatoes (protein, fiber, vitamin C, potassium, antioxidants) as well as health concerns (resistant starch, diabetes, glycemic index). Colorful photographs help to identify potato types, along with extensive and useful guidance on their selection, storage and preparation. (Contact for limited quantities of the 24-page booklet: Brandy Parker, Washington State Potatoes, 509-765-8845, bparker@potatoes.com)

Position Paper on Nutrition Guidance for Kids – The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics published last month its position on nutrition guidance for healthy children from ages 2 to 11 years. The paper reviews what these children reportedly are eating, examines trends in food and nutrient intakes, assesses the influence of advertising on children's eating patterns, and looks at the impact of federal nutrition programs on child nutrition, particularly School Nutrition. (Source: "Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Nutrition guidance for healthy children ages 2 to 11 years." *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* 114(8):1257-1276, August 2014.)

DID YOU KNOW?

Ketchup is a vegetable? That comment is attributed to Ronald Reagan's presidency, when proposed regulations were intended to provide more flexibility for school nutrition staff when \$1 billion in cuts to their program went into place in 1981. Those regulations allowed catsup and pickle relish to count as vegetables. Due to public and organizational reaction to this decision, those items were removed from the regulations.



EAT TOGETHER EAT BETTER – Family Meals Focus

Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is a hot topic, in the May 2011 issue we began a small section on recent news relating to this topic and our long-standing signature program, Eat Together, Eat Better.

One in Four U.K. Parents Never Cook with Their Children – More than a quarter of parents never cook with their children and one in eight families never prepare a meal in their oven, according to a survey by Uncle Ben's. The survey was conducted in advance of the launch of the company's weekly YouTube cooking channel, Ben's Beginners, which focuses on encouraging children and their families to cook in their home kitchens. An intriguing

video shows a real estate agent showing a house with no kitchen, and the families' reactions at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYu0RtB-oC8>.

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