



Breakfast Blueprint

Breakfast After the Bell
Programs Support Learning

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Set Up Your Program for Success

“The committee supporting the new breakfast plan should include a staff person from each area of the school to participate in implementing the new plan and making decisions about changes to breakfast and instructional time.” — Elementary school paraprofessional, West Virginia



When your district establishes a new breakfast after the bell program, it may be the first time that diverse staff work together on a shared vision. They likely will bring different priorities, challenges and training backgrounds. Successful breakfast after the bell programs create open lines of communication across traditional siloes, while providing opportunities for all stakeholders to give feedback on ways to improve logistics.

Include diverse voices: Many of the survey respondents expressed a willingness to contribute time and ideas to the successful implementation of new breakfast after the bell programs, yet nearly half whose schools had adopted a new breakfast service model reported being “unsure” of the stakeholders who had a chance to participate in planning, while another 1 in 5 reported that only administrators contributed. Empowering an inclusive, district leadership team to oversee planning, implementation and evaluation builds strong breakfast after the bell programs. That team should consist of a diverse group of voices who will be implementing and impacted by the program.

- **School leaders**, such as school board members, superintendents and principals, are instrumental gatekeepers who can champion the program among families and the community.

- The district’s **food service director** oversees the development and execution of breakfast after the bell programs and must balance meeting the diverse needs of schools and staff with state and federal requirements.
- **Labor unions** represent the collective voices of staff—including bus drivers, custodians, food service workers, office staff, paraprofessionals and teachers—whose roles and responsibilities within the district can inform thoughtful planning and implementation.
- **Anti-hunger advocates** are often skilled at sharing lessons from other districts; they also may have relationships with funders.
- **Students and families** are effectively “customers” whose input can ensure the success of innovative menu items, meal preparation and more.

Empower the team: While the food service director oversees a smooth transition and a sustainable program adoption, the entire leadership team should be equipped with the time, space, leadership and other resources to provide robust support, feedback and engagement. Having team members visit a school with a successful breakfast after the bell program may help

them build shared knowledge and learn more about strategies to achieve the district's goals. As the program begins, the team will need to form a coherent district plan that may require flexibility for the unique needs of various schools. As schools approach their launch date(s), the team should conduct training and ease schools into new routines. Finally, as the new program takes root, the team should determine which stakeholders are responsible for evaluating the program and adopt a structured approach

to reviewing evaluation data to make improvements and address challenges quickly.

Throughout the life of the breakfast after the bell program, the team should work with the food service director to support and guide program improvements. Furthermore, at each step, the team will benefit from regular communication with broader stakeholder groups, both to collect authentic feedback and to report out the work of the team.

A labor-management “think tank”

New York City schools began to roll out a universal breakfast in the classroom program in the 2015-16 school year. Several logistical challenges emerged. For example, school personnel were concerned about eliminating hot breakfast service. Several of the city's unions quickly realized the need to connect with frustrated members. The United Federation of Teachers developed an online assistance form that enables members to request help and intervention for school-level issues. Additionally, the union website lists a health and safety staff contact who is assigned to directly field concerns.

The unions also brought their concerns to the deputy chancellor, who convened a “think tank” with representatives of food service staff, custodians, school aides, teachers, paraprofessionals, principals and other administrators. Over the last year, the group has met to review feedback from different stakeholders and troubleshoot together. One UFT vice president reports that strengths of the group include “being able to voice concerns in a timely

fashion” and “having the group think through it at once.” To date, the group has:

- Created a hybrid service model that blends cafeteria service for students arriving early and breakfast in the classroom for those who arrive close to the start of class;
- Coordinated adult assistance for opening prepackaged items for young students to limit spills;
- Developed a food service team to verify that any school interested in serving hot breakfast has appropriate equipment; and
- Established a protocol to conduct school-based investigations of challenges within 24 hours of a report being generated, such as through the UFT's online form.

The New York City Department of Education also created a ***33-page guide*** on incorporating nutrition education into elementary school lessons in the morning and developed a PowerPoint to guide training sessions.



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