

# Universal Free Breakfast

## A Way to Improve Breakfast in Vermont Schools

### What is Universal Free Breakfast?

It's where all students can eat breakfast for free.

Universal Free Breakfast is a great way to get more kids to eat breakfast:

- Many full-pay and reduced-price eligible students just don't have the money to pay for breakfast. Now they all can participate.
- When breakfast is easily available to everyone, participation goes up, even among students who are free eligible

**Vermont schools that offer universal free breakfast see their total meal participation double, on average.**

*"If you love children and you want to see them do the best they can in school, do what you can to see that no child goes hungry in the classroom."*

*—Food Service Director, St. Johnsbury School*



*"Students approach breakfast eagerly- excited. There is no hesitation. Students know they can receive a breakfast just by being in school. No stigma is attached at all."  
—Food Service Director, Hardwick Elementary*

### Advantages for your school

- Reimbursement is increased when more students participate
- Costs per meal are reduced
- Students who eat breakfast have fewer behavior problems
- By using "Provision 2," you can reduce your paperwork and free up time for your staff to serve meals (see further details on back)

### Advantages for your students

- Every child has access to a nutritious meal and is better prepared to learn
- Students who eat breakfast have higher achievement scores
- School breakfast improves students' nutrition

## What is "Provision 2"?

Provision 2 is a paperwork reduction provision. A school can track the percentage of children qualifying for free or reduced-price meals in the 1<sup>st</sup> year, and then use the same eligibility percentages for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years—without collecting further information from students.

## Will our costs change?



All programs that instituted Universal Free Breakfast substantially increased the number of students eating breakfast. As a result, most schools decreased their labor costs per meal. Some programs also experienced a

decrease in food costs per plate by getting price discounts for larger bulk purchases.

## How are Vermont schools succeeding with Universal Free Breakfast?

- By being flexible about when and where breakfast is served so more students can participate
- By offering students several choices each day, such as a choosing between a hot meal or a bagel & fruit
- By decreasing competitive foods sold from vending machines, school stores, and a la carte lines so students are encouraged to participate in the federal program and eat healthier foods
- By gathering support from teachers, students, parents, principals, the superintendent, and school board members
- By using themes and special days to promote breakfast and keep it interesting

### For more information on how to start universal free breakfast in your school, contact:

Jo Busha  
Director of Child Nutrition Programs  
VT Department of Education  
828-5154

Dorigen Keeney  
Nutrition Program Specialist  
Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger  
865-0255

### Contact these Vermont schools to learn more:

Doug Davis  
Burlington School District  
(802) 864-8416  
ddavis@bsdvt.org

Jennifer Mitchell  
Alburt Community  
Education Center  
(802) 796-3573  
jenmitc@gisu.org

Connie Bellavance  
Orleans Southwest District  
(802) 472-6531  
cbellavance@ossu.org

Carol Brill  
St. Johnsbury School  
(802) 748-8912 x1158  
carol\_brill@yahoo.com



Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger  
180 Flynn Avenue, Burlington, Vermont 05401  
Phone: 802-865-0255 [www.vtnohunger.org](http://www.vtnohunger.org)