Serving Breakfast After the Bell and Its Impact on Chronic Absenteeism
MEET TODAY’S SPEAKERS

Summer Kriegshauser
Senior Manager, School Breakfast
Share Our Strength

Hedy Chang
Executive Director and President
Attendance Works

Karen Wong
Senior Manager, Research & Evaluation
Share Our Strength

Julie Pittman
North Carolina No Kid Hungry Educator
Outreach Manager and North Carolina Western Region Teacher of the Year
Agenda

• Overview of Hunger In Our Schools and Serving Breakfast After the Bell– Summer Kriegshauser, Share Our Strength
• Chronic Absenteeism: Why it Matters and What Works to Address It – Hedy Chang, Attendance Works
• Research on Breakfast After the Bell and Its Impact on Chronic Absenteeism – Karen Wong, Share Our Strength
• Educator Perspective: Access to Breakfast as an Education Issue – Julie Pittman, North Carolina Western Region Teacher of the Year and North Carolina No Kid Hungry Outreach Manager
• Questions and Discussion
Summer Kriegshauser
Senior Manager, School Breakfast
Share Our Strength’s No Kid Hungry Campaign

• Overview of Hunger In Our Schools and Serving Breakfast After the Bell
No Kid Hungry

FEEDING KIDS
by working with schools and communities to make food programs available for every kid in need.

TEACHING FAMILIES
how to make the most of their food budgets by purchasing and preparing nutritious food for their kids.

MOBILIZING THE PUBLIC AND OUR LEADERS
so that ending childhood hunger is a top priority in this nation.
Why is Breakfast Important?
Hunger Threatens Children's Futures

EDUCATION
3 out of 4 public school teachers say that students regularly come to school hungry.

HEALTH
Hungry children are sick more, recover more slowly & are hospitalized more frequently.

ECONOMY
Research puts hunger’s cost to the U.S. economy per year at $167.5 billion

Sources in appendix
Traditional Breakfast in the Cafeteria has challenges…

- Bus or carpool does not arrive in time for students to eat before school
- Stigma that school breakfast is for low-income students, so students skip breakfast
- High School/middle School students may not be hungry first thing in the morning
- Cafeteria location may not be convenient for students
- Not enough time for students to eat in the morning before class starts
- Students would rather socialize with their friends
Making Breakfast Part of the School Day…

- addresses the common barriers of traditional cafeteria breakfast, and
- ensures more students are able to start the day with a healthy meal.

**Breakfast After the Bell:**
alternative serving model(s) where breakfast is served after the official start of the school day and students are allowed to eat outside of the cafeteria

- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Grab and Go to the Classroom
- Second Chance Breakfast
Breakfast After the Bell Basics
Breakfast After the Bell Participation Rates

Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC): Breakfast is offered/served in the classroom and eaten in the classroom.

Grab and Go: Breakfast is offered/served from one or more central locations and consumed in a non-specific location.

Second Chance Breakfast: Breakfast is offered/served between 1st and 2nd period and consumed in a non-specific location. Usually offered via Grab and Go or Traditional Cafeteria breakfast.

Participation measured by average daily participation F&RP school breakfast / average daily participation F&RP school lunch.

Analysis includes 2,201 schools from 14 states: CA, FL, IL, MA, MD, MI, MT, NC, NE, NV, PA, TX, VA, and WA.
Breakfast in the Classroom

Breakfast is served in the classroom and eaten in the classroom. The process usually takes 15 minutes. Teachers or students are typically involved with the “point of sale” by checking off who is participating in breakfast.
Grab and Go

Breakfast is served from one or more central locations, either via carts and kiosks placed in high-traffic areas, or via quick cafeteria line. Students grab their breakfast, take it the classroom or a common area and eat. This model is run by the school cafeteria staff.
Second Chance Breakfast

Breakfast is served between 1st and 2nd periods or during a mid-morning break either via Grab and Go or traditional cafeteria breakfast where they have at least 15 minutes to eat in the cafeteria. School cafeteria staff are responsible for running this model.
Hedy Chang
Executive Director
Attendance Works

• Chronic Absenteeism: Why It Matters and What Can Be Done
Chronic Absence
Why It Matters? What Can Be Done?

www.attendanceworks.org
What is Chronic Absence?

Chronic absence is missing so much school for any reason that a student is academically at risk. To ensure it acts as an early warning sign, Attendance Works recommends defining it as **missing 10% or more of school for any reason**.

Chronic absence is different from **truancy** (unexcused absences only) or **average daily attendance** (how many students show up to school each day).
Research Shows Connection Between Attendance and Academic Success

PK-1st Grade: Students who attend regularly in the early grades perform better on measures of academic and social and emotional capacities.

3rd Grade: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to be able to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade.

Middle School Success: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to have passing grades in middle school.

High School Completion: Students who attend school regularly in high school are more likely to graduate from high school.

College Completion: Students who attend school regularly in high school are more likely to persist in college and graduate.

Chronic Absence = Warning Sign of Academic Risk
Call Attention to How Chronic Absence Contributes to Equity Gaps

- Vulnerable children, especially those living in poverty, are 2-3 times more likely to experience chronic absence at earlier ages.

- Vulnerable children are much less likely to have the resources to make up for lost learning time in the classroom.

- Vulnerable children are more likely to experience multiple years of chronic absence.
Chronic Absence is Widespread and Concentrated

- In SY 2015-16, nearly 8 million students were chronically absent, an increase of more than 800,000 students since SY 2013-14.
- More than half of the chronically absent students were found in 4% of districts.
- In 8 states and the District of Columbia, more than 20 percent of students were chronically absent.
- While urban and suburban districts typically have larger numbers, rural districts often have high percentages of chronically absent students.

http://www.hamiltonproject.org/charts/chronic_absence_across_the_united_states
Under ESSA, all states must report chronic absence. Most states included it as an accountability metric in their plans.

**Who's In: Chronic Absenteeism Under the Every Student Succeeds Act**
Future Ed, Georgetown University, September 2017.
Chronic Absence Data: A Tool for Targeting and Evaluating Interventions

What makes chronic absence data so valuable?

✓ Available nationally through the Office of Civil Rights and (soon) Ed Facts
✓ Now published annually by the majority of states
✓ Increasingly produced in real-time by school districts
✓ More frequently available than measures of emotional health or academic performance
What Works to Reduce Chronic Absence
Changing outcomes requires adopting a NEW attendance paradigm

**From: Truancy**
- Counts unexcused absences
- Emphasizes individual compliance with school rules
- Uses legal, typically more blaming and punitive, solutions

**To: Chronic Absence**
- Counts all absences
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses preventive problem-solving, trauma-sensitive strategies
- Cultivates family & student engagement
Solutions Require Understanding What Factors Contribute to Chronic Absence

**Barriers**
- Illness, both chronic and acute
- Lack of health, mental health, vision, or dental care
- Family responsibilities
- Trauma
- Unsafe path to/from school
- Poor transportation
- Housing and food insecurity
- Frequent school changes
- Involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice systems
- Inequitable access to resources due to bias & discrimination

**Negative School Experiences**
- Struggling academically and behaviorally
- Ineffective or harmful interventions
- Bored
- Social challenges
- Bullying
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Harsh, biased disciplinary practices especially for students of color
- Negative attitudes of parents due to their own school experience
- Undiagnosed disability
- Lack of appropriate accommodations for disability

**Lack of Engagement**
- Lack of or inequitable access to challenging, culturally responsive, engaging instruction & enrichment
- Lack of academic, emotional and behavioral support
- No meaningful or negative relationships to adults in the school
- Stronger ties with peers out of school than in school
- Unwelcoming school climate
- Failure to earn credits/no future plans
- Many teacher absences or long-term substitutes

**Misconceptions**
- Absences are only a problem if they are unexcused
- Missing 2 days per month doesn’t affect learning
- Sporadic absences aren’t a problem
- Attendance only matters in the older grades
- Suspensions are not relevant

High and extreme levels of chronic absence are an alert that additional investment is needed to unpack and address common causes of missing school.
Chronic Absence is a Sign That Positive Conditions for Learning Aren’t in Place
Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

High and extreme levels of chronic absence are an alert that additional support is needed to address chronic absence.

Tier 1: Prevention
- Engaging school climate
- Positive relationships with students and families
- Impact of absences on achievement widely understood
- Chronic absence data monitored
- Good and improved attendance recognized
- Common barriers identified and addressed

Tier 2: Early Intervention
- Personalized early outreach
- Action plan addresses barriers and increases engagement
- Caring mentors

Tier 3: Specialized supports
- Coordinated school and interagency response
- Legal intervention (last resort)

Students missing less than 5% (satisfactory)
Students missing 5-9% (at risk)
Students missing 10-19% (moderate chronic absence)
Students missing 20% or more (severe chronic absence)
Leading Health Related Causes/Barriers

- Asthma
- Bullying
- Oral Health
- Mental Health
- Nutrition
- Vision
Take a Data Driven Systemic Approach

**Positive Engagement:** Uses caring relationships, effective messaging and a positive school climate to motivate daily attendance.

**Actionable Data:** Is accurate, accessible, and regularly reported in an understandable format.

**Capacity Building**
Expands ability to work together to interpret data, engage in problem solving, and adopt best practices to improve attendance.

**Shared Accountability:** Ensures chronic absence is monitored & reinforced by policy.

**Strategic partnerships** between district and community partners address specific attendance barriers and mobilize support for all ingredients.
Karen Wong
Senior Manager, Research and Evaluation
Share Our Strength’s No Kid Hungry Campaign

• Research: Can Breakfast After the Bell Help Reduce Chronic Absenteeism?
The Study: Is there a link between Breakfast After the Bell and chronic absenteeism?

- No Kid Hungry commissioned a study to answer the question, “Can serving breakfast as a part of the school day, commonly known as Breakfast After the Bell, reduce chronic absenteeism rates?

- The study was conducted in 2019 by leading education researchers at the University of California Santa Barbara: Dr. Michael Gottfried and Jacob Kirksey. The study consists two analyses:
  - A state analysis in Colorado and Nevada, which had passed legislation requiring higher-poverty schools to serve Breakfast After the Bell.
  - A national analysis of young elementary school students that looked at access to breakfast served after the bell and in the classroom.
The Study: State Analysis Methods

• **Scope:** Colorado and Nevada state policy required certain schools (schools where 70% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals) to provide Breakfast After the Bell.

• **Data Sources:** CO and NV school-level chronic absenteeism data (U.S. Department of Education) and school breakfast administrative data (state agency) for school year 2013-2014 and 2015-2016

• **Analysis:** Regression Discontinuity Design and Difference-in-Differences
The Study: National Analysis Methods

• Scope: Nationally representative data on young elementary school students, some of whom had access to Breakfast in the Classroom (a particular approach to Breakfast after the Bell).

• Data Source: Nationally representative student-level data on Kindergarteners and 1st Graders from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey (ECLS-K). Data originated in School Year 2010-2011 and was compared to 2011-2012

• Analysis: Difference-in-Differences
The Findings: Breakfast served after the bell can significantly reduce chronic absenteeism rates.

The State Research:
• Chronic absenteeism rates were on average 6 percentage points lower for schools that served Breakfast After the Bell.
• Breakfast After the Bell was particularly helpful in reducing chronic absenteeism in elementary and rural schools.

The National Research:
• Chronic absenteeism rates were lower for schools that served Breakfast in the Classroom.
• Exploratory analysis found that Breakfast in the Classroom can improve reading test scores. Breakfast in the Classroom also has the potential to improve internalizing behaviors (anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, and sadness).

Julie Pittman
North Carolina Western Region Teacher of the Year &
No Kid Hungry North Carolina Educator Outreach Manager

• Educator Perspective: Access to Breakfast as an Education Issue
Access to Breakfast is an Education Issue

Maslow’s Needs

- **Physiological needs:** food, water, warmth, rest
- **Safety needs:** security, safety
- **Belongingness and love needs:** intimate relationships, friends
- **Esteem needs:** prestige and feeling of accomplishment
- **Self-actualization:** achieving one’s full potential, including creative activities

Food and food security are critical components of the physiological and safety needs of a child.
• Children who struggle with hunger are sick more, recover slowly, & are hospitalized more frequently. ([Journal of Nutrition](https://journalofnutrition.org))

• Food insecurity can be part of several forms of toxic stress that literally damage the architecture of a child’s developing brain. ([RTI](https://rti.org))

• 66% of low-income families report choosing between buying food and paying for medicine and health care in the past year ([Hunger in America](https://hungerinamerica.org))

• 3 out of 4 public school teachers say that students regularly come to school hungry. ([Hunger in Our Schools](https://hungerinourschools.org))

• 9 out of 10 teachers say they are concerned about the effects hunger has on children’s education ([Hunger in Our Schools](https://hungerinourschools.org))

• Children struggling with hunger also struggle academically, and are more likely to drop out before getting a high school degree. High-school dropouts make significantly less than their peers who graduate. ([Deloitte](https://deloitte.com))

• Summer hunger is linked to cognitive decline and summer learning loss for children from low-income families. Studies show re-teaching costs average $1,540 per student per year. ([Deloitte](https://deloitte.com))

• Breakfast After the Bell can reduce chronic absenteeism, increase test scores, and improve social emotional development ([Study on Chronic Absenteeism and Breakfast After the Bell](https://studyonchronicabsenteeism.org))