

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

MYTHS vs FACTS

School breakfast can bring positivity to students, families, classrooms, and schools by offering students the healthy food they need to learn and grow. School breakfast provides more than just nutrition – additional outcomes can include improved academic performance and reduced classroom disciplinary problems.^{1,2} Breakfast After the Bell (BAB) models can help address barriers and increase access to breakfast so students can more easily participate. Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC), Grab and Go to the Classroom, and Second Chance Breakfast are the [most common BAB models](#). Despite the benefits of breakfast, misinformation may contribute to negative perceptions of BAB. Below are the most common myths, along with the facts, about BAB.



MYTH	FACT
<i>The food is unhealthy.</i>	<i>School breakfast is healthier than most people realize.</i>

School breakfasts are often healthier than foods consumed outside of school.^{3,4} This is because schools participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) must adhere to robust nutrition guidelines provided by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). For instance, grains offered must be at least 80% whole grain-rich, and any remaining grains offered must be enriched.⁵ Juices must be 100% fruit/vegetables and saturated fat

must be less than 10% of total calories.⁵ Allowable sodium levels and total calories must be age and grade appropriate.⁵ This is why students who eat school breakfast daily show higher consumption of nutritious foods and essential minerals compared to their peers who never or infrequently eat school breakfast.⁶ And, BIC does not contribute to excess calories. Students who eat BIC do not consume more calories overall compared to their peers who do not participate in BIC.⁷ Find out more with [School Breakfast is Healthier Than You Think](#).

MYTH	FACT
<i>It makes a mess</i>	<i>BAB can be a simple, tidy process.</i>

By developing a holistic, efficient system involving the school nutrition staff and custodians, BAB can be a simple, tidy process. For instance, something as simple as providing a designated breakfast trash receptacle in the hallway or classroom can make a big difference. Teachers find that with planning and protocols, BAB can be a seamless part of the morning routine. Students can even help with

clean-up! For more support, check out No Kid Hungry's [Breakfast After the Bell Set Up and Clean Up Guide](#).

MYTH

BAB burdens teachers.

FACT

BAB alleviates the need for teachers to feed hungry students.

Teachers know that when students are hungry, they cannot concentrate and may disrupt class, which makes teaching even harder. Teachers spend roughly \$300 per year of their own money to provide students food and prevent such occurrences.⁸ BAB alleviates the personal responsibility teachers take on when they feed students. Additionally, offering free breakfast to all students supports teachers by increasing access to school breakfast, which helps improve student preparedness and respect for class.¹ Finally, BAB fosters an environment for social-emotional learning as students authentically practice relationship skills and decision-making.

MYTH

BAB cuts into instructional time.

FACT

Including cleanup, BAB usually takes 10-15 minutes.

Teachers actually report *more* instructional time thanks to BAB because students are not distracted from headaches and hunger pangs.⁸ Teachers commonly utilize constructive classroom activities during BAB, such as reviewing homework assignments or offering quiet reading time, which enables instructional time to occur while students are eating breakfast. BIC has shown to increase scores on standardized math and reading tests, particularly in vulnerable populations, proving that when students aren't focused on hungry bellies, they can concentrate on the lessons being taught in the classroom.^{1,2}

MYTH

BAB is paid for by school funds.

FACT

School Breakfast isn't funded by the school's general budget.

The school breakfast budget operates independently from the school district general fund and individual school budgets, which means school breakfast does not compete with school supplies or teacher salaries. Furthermore, the school nutrition department must operate as a non-profit entity, so any revenue generated by the SBP must be reinvested back into the school meals program. Schools that participate in SBP are eligible to receive federal reimbursement for every breakfast they serve.⁹ Therefore, the more students that eat school breakfast, the more revenue the district receives to make their breakfast program a success. Other possible revenue sources can come from state and local government, a la carte sales, fundraising or donation, and student payments.¹⁰ Learn more with this [Guide to School Breakfast Funding](#).

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