

**21**  
STUDIES  
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# What the Research says about School Breakfast for All

School Breakfast for All is a term often used for providing breakfast at no cost to all students in a school, district, or state. Providing school breakfast at no cost to all students is associated with higher participation, improved access to food, and measurable benefits for students facing the greatest barriers.

## Overwhelming Evidence School Breakfast for All Increases Student Participation

**4-26**  
percentage-point  
increase in breakfast  
participation

- Across 15 studies, schools offering breakfast at no cost to all students saw consistent increases in participation. <sup>2-11, 13-16</sup>
- When universal free meal policies are removed, participation drops sharply, suggesting a direct relationship between access and student uptake. <sup>11</sup>

## Student Food Security and Diet Quality Improves

GENERALLY POSITIVE EVIDENCE ACROSS STUDIES



Reduced student hunger, especially for children from low income households

<sup>18, 8</sup>



More fruit and milk consumed under School Breakfast For All <sup>17</sup>

Offering school breakfast at no cost to all students is associated with improvements in food security and diet, particularly among students from low-income households. <sup>17, 18, 8</sup>

## Academic and Attendance Outcomes

STRONGER EVIDENCE FOR STUDENTS FACING THE GREATEST BARRIERS

School breakfast is most effective for students who face structural barriers to access and opportunity. Research shows meaningful gains in attendance and academic outcomes among students from low-income households and students from racial and ethnic minority groups. <sup>1</sup>



**Attendance:** Improves among students from low-income households <sup>19-21</sup>



**Academics:** Strongest academic gains for racial/ethnic minority students and students from low income households <sup>19-21</sup>



**Achievement Gaps:** Helps close achievement gaps; the most vulnerable students benefit most <sup>19-21</sup>

## Pathways to School Breakfast for All

- States can enact legislation that allows school breakfast (or both school breakfast and school lunch) to be provided to all students at no cost, regardless of household income.
- Schools and districts can use federal provisions such as the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 to offer school meals at no charge to all students.

## References

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