

# What the Research says about Breakfast After the Bell

**34**  
STUDIES  
CITED IN  
THIS BRIEF

Breakfast After the Bell (BAB) refers to when school breakfast is served during the school day, aka after the bell, rather than before the start of school. BAB addresses common barriers to participation by making school breakfast more accessible to students.

## Three BAB Models



**Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC)**  
Breakfast is served and eaten in the classroom after the school day begins.



**Grab-and-Go Breakfast**  
Breakfast is served from one or more central locations and consumed in the classroom or a common area.



**Second Chance Breakfast**  
Breakfast is served after first period or later in the morning to give students another opportunity to eat after the school day has already begun.

## Largest Participation Gains with Breakfast After the Bell

**9-39**  
percentage-point  
increase in breakfast  
participation

- Across 23 studies, Breakfast After the Bell models consistently increase student participation. <sup>2-23</sup>
- These gains hold even in CEP schools where meals are already free, demonstrating that convenience and normalization drive participation. <sup>9, 24</sup>

## WHY BAB WORKS IN PRACTICE

- Does not require early arrival <sup>2-23</sup>
- Normalizes school breakfast, potentially reducing stigma <sup>16, 25</sup>
- Ensures dedicated, protected time for every child to eat <sup>2-23</sup>

## Strongest Impacts for Students Facing the Greatest Barriers

### ACADEMIC AND ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

Studies suggest that improvements are seen in attendance and academic outcomes for students from low-income households and students from racial and ethnic minority groups. Results vary across all students. <sup>2, 28, 30-34</sup>



**Attendance:** Improves among students from low-income households <sup>2, 30, 31</sup>



**Academics:** Test scores, GPA, and focus show the strongest improvement among student from low-income households and racial/ethnic minority students <sup>28, 31-33</sup>



**Achievement Gaps:** BAB helps close achievement gaps; students who need the most support benefit the most <sup>31, 33, 34</sup>

## Consistent Daily Breakfast Access Supports Student Readiness

The evidence suggests that we need to prioritize consistent, daily access to school breakfast, through Breakfast After the Bell models, especially for students from low-income families, where the impacts on attendance and academic performance are clearest. <sup>2, 32, 34</sup>

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