



## BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM INVIGORATES MORNINGS AT HOLLAND WOODS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Through trial and error, Holland Woods Middle School realized that meeting students' needs was the best way to start the day. Principal Abe Leaver and Port Huron Schools' Director of Food and Nutrition Mary Kurkowski launched **Fuel Period**, a Breakfast in the Classroom program for their 475 students in grades 6-8, during the 2017-2018 school year. Leaver shifted the breakfast program from a Grab and Go model that *only* provided breakfast to students before the school day started, to serving students Breakfast in the Classroom during the first period of the day. The shift came as Leaver realized students were rushing to grab their breakfast in the countdown to school starting at 7:25am, and then quickly trying to eat at their locker while socializing with friends. The results were trash in the hallways and food left in lockers to rot. Cafeteria staff were also unable to assess which foods were being eaten and which were being thrown away. Additionally, even though the school provided all students breakfast as no cost thanks to the Community Eligibility Provision, breakfast participation was only at 22.3% of total student enrollment. "This system just seemed to de-emphasize breakfast and getting the proper start to the day for students," Leaver said.



As a school, children need us now more than ever for so many more reasons than in the past. We need to embrace and meet their needs as a part of our complete educational process – Principal Leaver.

So Leaver and Kurkowski collaborated to change the breakfast program to better meet the needs of the students. Kurkowski worked with USDA's Team Nutrition for guidance, and sought input from staff and students on menu selection. Serving breakfast after the official start of the school day and bringing it into



the classroom brought new life into the breakfast program. Fuel Period brought the breakfast participation up to 57.29% of total student enrollment. Fuel Period also provides students the opportunity to build basic habits of ownership and responsibility, which Leaver notes is crucial for students of this age. Students are responsible for keeping classrooms and desktops neat after eating breakfast, which the teachers love. The teachers also report that the students who eat breakfast during Fuel Period seem more awake, more organized, and more oriented to daily learning tasks. "Don't be afraid to do what's best for kids, it's the right thing to do," stated Kurkowski.

To learn more about Breakfast After the Bell, visit No Kid Hungry's [Center for Best Practices](#). If you'd like help with your Michigan breakfast program, contact Stephanie Willingham at [WillinghamS@michigan.gov](mailto:WillinghamS@michigan.gov).