



HOW TO CREATE A BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL SUCCESS STORY

Sharing breakfast success can be a wonderful way to showcase a Breakfast After the Bell (BAB) program. A BAB success story can highlight the incredible work of school and district staff that make the school breakfast program a win for the students, the school, and the community. The following steps are designed to help guide you in creating your own BAB success story and sharing it with your networks.

STEP 1: DEFINE GOALS

When beginning the process of creating a BAB success story, it is helpful to think about the ultimate goals you want to accomplish by sharing your story. Defining your goals will inform how you can craft your success story. Do you want to...

- Inspire others? Success stories can influence other schools and districts to adopt innovative breakfast delivery models in ways they hadn't considered before.
- Spread awareness about the benefits of BAB? Success stories can illuminate how the breakfast program has benefited various aspects of the school, including attendance rates, behavioral issues, and the overall student experience.
- Share a "how-to" for others to replicate? Success stories can tell the full scope of the implementation process, including challenges and solutions, which can be valuable information to share with other schools that are working through their own breakfast expansion efforts.
- Demonstrate leadership and garner recognition for the program? Success stories can show how creative, unique, and savvy a school is by sharing the details of the breakfast program, and giving recognition to the school and the staff that made it happen.

STEP 2: GATHER INFORMATION

Before writing your success story, you'll need to collect information about various aspects of the program. The principal and school nutrition director are key stakeholders that you'll need to communicate with to gather information. If there are other individuals who championed the program, such as a teacher or custodian, try to interview them as well. Information can be gathered in-person, or via phone or email. Use the following questions as a guide to gather information:

- What is the student enrollment and free & reduced rate in the school?

- What changes to the breakfast program have contributed to its newfound success? For example, which BAB model did the school implement?
- What was the breakfast program like before the changes? Were there barriers preventing students from participating?
- What was the student breakfast participation rate before and after the changes to the program?
- Were attendance rates, academic performance, tardiness, nurse visits, behavioral issues, classroom dynamic, etc. affected by the breakfast program changes?
- How have teachers and custodians benefited from the breakfast program changes?
- What are the operational details of the new breakfast program?
- Were the breakfast program changes easy to implement? What were the challenges and how did you find solutions?
- What advice would you give to other school stakeholders who want to implement BAB?

If possible, obtain quotes from various stakeholders to enhance the story. You may also have follow-up questions, which may mean conducting second interviews. Be sure to get as much information as you can from the stakeholders you interview so that you can create a rich and compelling story.

STEP 3: TAKE PICTURES

It's important to visually document the success of the breakfast program in pictures. If you can visit the school and the principal grants permission, then take pictures of the breakfast program. If you cannot visit the school, or if you cannot take pictures yourself, request pictures from the principal or school nutrition director. Pictures that are taken high pixilation are the most useful. It's helpful to have pictures of the following:

- The BAB program in action,
- Breakfast food items,
- Equipment, such as grab and go carts, rolling coolers, etc.,
- Students eating breakfast (may need student waivers – consult principal), and
- Students helping with setting up and cleaning up the breakfast program (may need student waivers – consult principal).

STEP 4: PUT YOUR STORY TOGETHER

After you've gathered all of the necessary information and obtained high-quality pictures of the breakfast program, begin to craft the story. There are several simple, yet effective platforms to build the story on, including Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, and Google Docs and Slides. The total length should be no more than two pages, including space for pictures. Plug in pictures throughout the story – two to three pictures is sufficient. If you have breakfast icons, graphics, or logos to include in your story, be sure to leave space for those as well. Think of the story as a puzzle, and you are putting all of the pieces together. The story should have a beginning, middle, and an end. The title should capture the sentiment of the story, therefore it can be helpful to wait until the story has been written before you decide on a title.

Start the story with a celebratory detail, which will immediately showcase the success of the breakfast program. Then let the details about the program unfold, such as why the breakfast program changed, the logistics of the old breakfast program versus the new, the benefits that have resulted from BAB implementation, etc. Include quotes from school stakeholders throughout the story. Note any challenges the school experienced with the new breakfast program, and highlight how the school overcame those challenges. End the story on an upbeat note or with an encouraging quote from a school stakeholder. For example, if the school has future plans that would continue to enhance the breakfast program, mention those.

Finally, you may want to include information about where your readers can go to learn more or get BAB support, such as technical assistance or grant funding. Put this information at the very end of the document; it should not be woven into the content of the story. For example, “If you’d like to learn more about BAB, contact XXX”.

It’s helpful to review other success stories to see how the story arc flows, what details are included, how quotes are utilized, etc. to help guide your own writing process. Here are three examples:

- [Flexibility and Communication are the Keys to Breakfast Success at The Literacy Academy at Cleveland](#)
- [Breakfast Sheriffs Keep Hunger at Bay](#)
- [On Time, Focused, and Fed: A Breakfast Story from Illinois](#)

STEP 5: SEEK APPROVAL

Once you have a completed story, you’ll need to obtain final approval from the school stakeholders you interviewed. Email them a copy of the story and ask them to carefully read through it and notify you if:

- any details are incorrect,
- the story arc does not align with the actual events that occurred in the school, or
- they want to use different pictures or logos.

Make any requested changes, and then go through another approval request until all of the school stakeholders you interviewed have approved the story.

STEP 6: PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

Congratulations! You’ve created a BAB success story. One of the best ways to promote your success story is to share it on social media via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. In order for the story to be hyperlinked on social media posts, it must live on a website. Determine the best place for the story to live online, such as on the school’s website or on Google Drive. In addition to social media channels, include the success story in e-newsletters, the local newspaper, blog posts, etc. Printing hard copies can also be fun to give out at events or post throughout the school. And finally, don’t forget to share your success story with No Kid Hungry! Please email your story to us at bestpractices@strength.org.

Happy Writing!

