



THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT

In May 2010, the Council of the District of Columbia (DC) passed the Healthy Schools Act, a landmark policy to create healthy school environments. In addition to broad obesity prevention efforts for DC, the Act provides free school breakfasts to all students. The Healthy Schools Act also requires schools with over 40 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals to serve Breakfast After the Bell service models, such as Breakfast in the Classroom or Grab and Go. In the 2010-2011 school year, the Act provided schools with \$7 per student to support implementation of innovative breakfast models.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

School breakfast participation rose by 32 percent in the first year after the 2010 Healthy Schools Act required universal Breakfast After the Bell for high-need elementary schools.¹

DC now ranks 3rd in the nation in free or reduced-price student school breakfast participation, maintaining strong school breakfast participation since implementation.² By 2014, 70 percent of low-income students were participating in school breakfast programs.³

The Healthy Schools Act is linked to progress in health and wellness and improvements in food insecurity, according to a 2016 analysis of the implementation and impact of the Healthy Schools Act.³



LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Healthy Schools Act includes a variety of provisions to encourage and promote participation in the child nutrition programs, healthy eating and physical activity. The breakfast-related requirements include:

- DC public and charter schools must serve breakfast through “alternative serving models” if more than 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.
- Elementary schools are required to implement Breakfast in the Classroom, but middle and high schools may choose their own breakfast model.
- Schools with breakfast participation exceeding 75% of its average daily attendance are not required to implement Breakfast After the Bell.
- All public and charter schools must offer free breakfast to all students. The Act initially provided funds to cover the gap in federal reimbursement for reduced price and paid students in charter schools, but this was eliminated in 2011.
- Schools that implement strategies to promote healthy eating are provided with ten cents additional reimbursement for each breakfast served that meets or exceeds federal nutrition standards and is served through alternative service models.
- Eligible new schools receive a one-time payment of \$7 per student to provide resources to implement a Breakfast in the Classroom program.



WHICH SCHOOLS ARE INCLUDED?

All public and charter schools with more than 40 percent free or reduced-price eligible students are required to implement Breakfast After the Bell. Elementary schools are required to implement Breakfast in the Classroom, but middle and high schools may choose their own models including Breakfast in the Classroom or Grab and Go. Private schools may choose to participate.



IMPLEMENTATION

The DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and D.C. Hunger Solutions have created resources, training and technical assistance including, an alternative breakfast service models implementation guide, breakfast promotion materials, and school stakeholder trainings to help ensure breakfast becomes part of every child’s school day.

“A HEALTHY BREAKFAST IS ESSENTIAL TO EDUCATION, AND OSSE IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING DISTRICT CHILDREN THE STRONG START THEY NEED EVERY DAY TO BE READY FOR SCHOOL AND READY TO BE THE MOST PRODUCTIVE STUDENTS POSSIBLE.”

- FORMER STATE SUPERINTENDENT HOSANNA MAHALEY

¹ FRAC school breakfast Score card 2010-2011

² FRAC school breakfast score card 2015-2016

³ E. Watts, A. Snelling, et al. The Healthy Schools Act of 2010: Building Healthy School Environments. American University, Washington, DC. January 2016.

Accessed at: http://au.blogs.american.edu/files/2016/02/Report_HealthySchoolAct_FINAL.pdf?_ga=1.36774568.968267521.1491192074