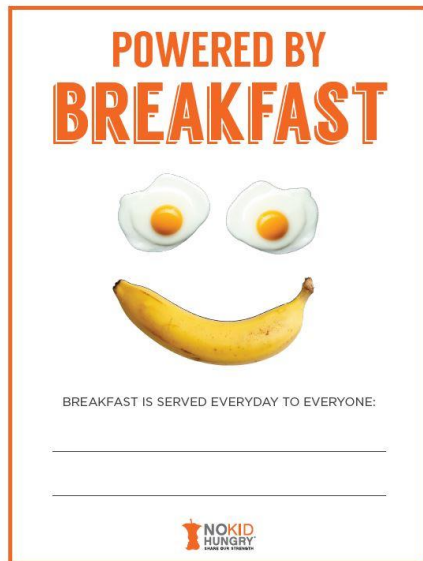


# SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Build Awareness. Generate Excitement. Increase Participation.



Marketing is an essential component to increasing school breakfast participation. Getting the word out about school breakfast helps to ensure that more kids start the day with the fuel they need to learn, grow and thrive.

This resource highlights promotion strategies to build awareness, generate excitement and ultimately increase school breakfast participation.

## GETTING STARTED

Think about your target audiences like students, teachers, principals, parents and families. How can you best reach them? What do you want them to know? It is important to promote your school breakfast program on an ongoing basis, but it is particularly important to communicate any new information. You may want to promote a change like new menu items or a new

breakfast delivery model. You may want to communicate or reiterate that the school breakfast program is available to all students every day or that all foods and beverages served meet nutritional guidelines set by the USDA. While communicating information about the school breakfast program is important, sometimes your promotion efforts might just be about having fun because generating excitement around school breakfast is also important.

## SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Make the most of your school breakfast program by using a variety of these promotion strategies:

### Contests & Challenges

Offer contests and challenges to get students excited about school breakfast. This strategy is good for short-term participation boosts and is best paired with other promotion strategies to ensure sustained participation increases. Offering different prizes for elementary, middle and high schools can make contests & challenges appealing to students of all ages. No budget for prizes? No problem! Think about incentives that already exist in your school like bucks to the school store or a “no homework” pass or seek donations from your community like movie tickets or zoo passes. Not sure what prizes will get students excited? Ask them! No one knows students as well as students themselves. Here are some contest and challenge ideas:

- **Lucky Tray Day**—Place a sticker or a special mark under a select number of breakfast trays. Students who receive a “lucky tray” win a prize.
- **Golden Ticket Day**—Place a “golden ticket” in select grab & go breakfast bags. Students who receive a “golden ticket” win a prize.
- **Raffle**—Students receive a raffle ticket each day that they eat breakfast. The more days they eat breakfast, the more chances they have to win.
- **Breakfast Club Cards**—Students receive a breakfast club card and collect a sticker each day that they eat breakfast. When the card is complete, students win a prize or the completed card serves as a raffle entry to win a prize.

Many students enjoy being creative and expressing themselves through different mediums. Nutrition staff can coordinate with teachers and principals to host a breakfast-themed art, poster, video or essay contest. Think about how you can tie this back to other efforts, like having the winning poster printed and distributed to schools throughout the district to promote the school breakfast program or having the winning essay published in the local newspaper.



For National School Breakfast Week 2018, Clark County School District in Nevada hosted a breakfast-themed art contest. The Clark County School District Food Service Director judged the art contest. The winners had their art displayed at a local library.

### Posters, Flyers & Newsletters

Think about how your school is already communicating with students, parents/families and staff. Look for opportunities to promote the school breakfast program through channels that already exist like monthly newsletters, back to school packets and Take Home Tuesday folders. In some communities, the local newspaper can be a great place to feature the weekly breakfast menu. To help you get started, the USDA has sample [school breakfast newsletter inserts](#) and a [How Does School Breakfast Help Families? flyer](#). You can also use these No Kid Hungry customizable [Powered by Breakfast posters](#) and this [Breakfast is Essential to Success flyer](#). If you are interested in creating promotional materials specific to your school, consider engaging students in the design process. Ask students in the art or graphic design clubs if they would like to be involved in creating promotional materials about school breakfast.

Students in Minnesota made these creative [breakfast posters](#). Here are a couple of customizable Grab & Go examples that you can use: [Fuel Your Brain](#) and [Morning Survival Kit](#).

The students also starred in three videos promoting school breakfast!  
[Owatonna OHS Grab & Go Breakfast](#), [Thief River Falls Breakfast Newscast](#) & [Hunger is Eliminated with Breakfast at New London Spicer](#)

### Daily Announcements

It is difficult for students to get excited about school breakfast if they don't know what's on the menu. Think about the resources available within your school to make announcements to students, like the PA system, robocalls or closed circuit TV. Announce the breakfast menu in the afternoon before students leave school so they arrive the next morning excited about and seeking out breakfast. These efforts should be in addition to sharing the breakfast menu in print, on the school website and via social media.

### Nudges

Nudges are subtle acts of positive reinforcement that aim to influence a student's behavior. Nudges can take on many forms, but a common approach is to have school staff ask students in the morning, "Have you had breakfast today?" This simple technique has been shown to effectively increase breakfast participation. Our [breakfast nudges guide](#) provides helpful tips about how to increase breakfast participation by using positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions.

## Social Media

Social media is a great tool for growing awareness about the school breakfast program. If your school or district has active social media accounts—like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram—embrace these channels as a no cost strategy to promote the school breakfast program. Find out who manages the social media channels and ask them if they are interested in sharing content about school breakfast. It is an opportunity for them to receive fresh, new content and for you to spread the word about the breakfast program—it's a win, win! Another idea:

some districts opt to create a separate social media account focused just on school food and managed by the nutrition services department. Wondering what to share on social media? Post photos, announce the menu, introduce new items, promote special events, etc. You can also use these *School Breakfast Builds Better Students* images from No Kid Hungry made for [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



## Websites

The school or district website is another channel for spreading the word about school breakfast. Similar to social media, find out who manages the website(s) and ask them what opportunity there is to promote the school breakfast program. Look to weave content about school breakfast throughout the school or district website and not just limit the info to the school meals page.

## Guest Servers or Special Guests

Think about the “celebrities” within your school or community. Who would students be excited to see help serve breakfast or join them at their breakfast table? Ask school administrators, local law enforcement, athletes or veterans to be guest servers or special guests. This strategy is most common during special celebrations like National School Breakfast Week, but can be incorporated throughout the school year.

As part of the Virginia School Breakfast Challenge, dozens of schools [invited local veterans](#) to join students for breakfast!

## Taste Tests

Taste tests are an effective and engaging tool for involving students in menu planning and generating interest in the school breakfast program. If you are looking to add variety to your breakfast menu, host a taste test to get student feedback. Provide students with two or three breakfast items and ask them to vote for their favorite; then add the winning item to the menu. Taste tests are also a great way to promote the school breakfast program to parents and families. Consider offering a taste test during back to school night or parent-teacher conferences. Action for Healthy Kids has great [tips for hosting a successful taste test](#) to help you get started.

*The USDA has additional school breakfast program [marketing ideas](#). For more information, tools and resources designed to successful end childhood hunger, visit [bestpractices.nokidhungry.org](#).*