

Teachers' Role in Building a Successful Breakfast Program

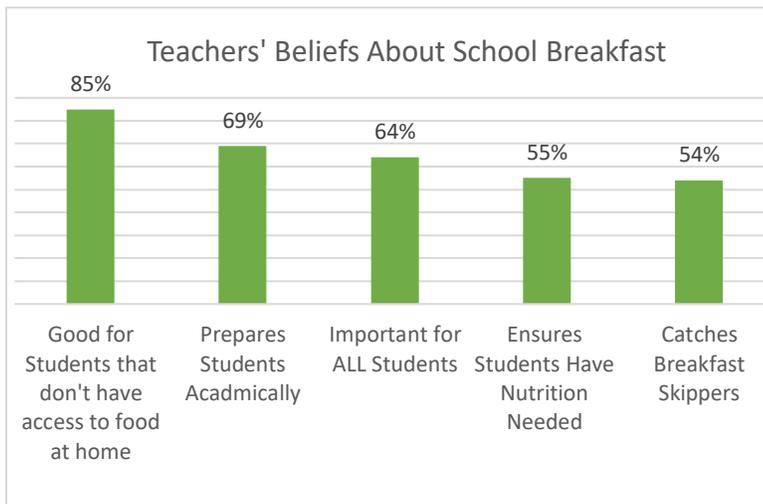
Teachers are important in building a successful breakfast program. In a recent survey of teachers, nearly 40% of the respondents indicated that they, in addition to school food service staff, play a vital role in increasing school breakfast participation. Teachers are critical in conversations about planning school breakfast because they can reinforce the importance of breakfast and assist in implementation. By informing and involving teachers in the implementation process, they become champions of school breakfast.

School breakfast provides access to food and supports academic achievement. Surveys revealed that teachers believe breakfast is an important part of a student's school day.

Top 5 Beliefs About School Breakfast

- Helps students that don't have access to enough food at home.
- Supports academic achievement and learning
- Important for all students.
- Ensures students have nutrition needed.
- Catches "breakfast skippers" across socioeconomic levels.

Although teachers understand the benefits of school breakfast, 37% believe that breakfast is only available in schools in high-poverty areas.



Teachers report that there are barriers to students participating in school breakfast.

Time constraints: Nearly 45% of teachers identified time constraints ranging from tardiness, long lines, having to split time between breakfast and meeting with teachers, homework, late buses, and just not enough time allocated for breakfast are the greatest barriers to participating in school breakfast. Even teachers that reported 100% free breakfast for all students still mentioned that time constraints prevented all students from accessing the service. Many teachers commented that too many of students come to school late and miss the opportunity to eat breakfast at school.

"Students who arrive at school too late for breakfast, need an opportunity to receive it, also."

Food quality: Teachers were nearly three times more likely than principals surveyed to prioritize improving the nutrition quality of the meals to get more kids to eat breakfast. Comments ranged from lack of variety to taste, sugar content and lack of protein in foods served.

"Serve breakfast foods the kids will eat. Throw in some oatmeal and scrambled eggs and toast. Serve a hot breakfast once or twice a week and cold cereal once or twice a week..."

Other barriers: Teachers also responded that affordability, social stigma, availability and the importance of school breakfast impacted breakfast participation.

"Families lack knowledge and schools lack funding. I'm very thankful to be in one of the few districts in Ohio that has breakfast in the classroom for all elementary students and the impact is huge!"

Helpful resources identified by teachers include:

- **Best Practices:** 50% of teachers said they would like breakfast case studies or examples of best practices.
- **Grants:** 45% of teachers suggested grants and other funding would help participation in breakfast.
- **Research:** 42% of teachers said they would like to see research about the student impact of school breakfast.
- **Communications:** 38% suggested communicating directly to parents with flyers and promoting school breakfast to students with school banners, posters and other marketing materials.

For best practices, research and promotional materials, visit www.ohioschoolbreakfastchallenge.com.

Over 1,400 responses were collected by Share Our Strength from the Ohio Education Association members that represent Ohio's teachers and education support professionals working in K-12 districts. Surveys were administered by Share Our Strength to approximately 110,000 teachers and support professionals of Ohio Education Association.