

Garfield Heights City Schools

3 Elementary and 1 Middle school

Suburban – Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

Innovative Breakfast Programs and Meal Quality

2019 Champion of Breakfast



Collaborators

- Child Nutrition Services, Director Lauryn Palgut and Pisanick Partners
- Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom and Children's Hunger Alliance
- District and building administration, teachers, custodians

Serving Strategy

- Breakfast is prepared and transported from high school kitchen to elementary/middle schools each day
- Breakfast is served from mobile carts strategically stationed in elementary/middle schools
- Students choose items from mobile carts and eat in their classroom
- Teachers assist with distribution of meals, crowd control and counting the students served

Goals

- Increase breakfast participation of elementary and middle school with a new serving strategy so all students have equal and efficient access to breakfast every school day
- Pilot in 1 elementary, apply key learnings to implementation at two elementary and one middle school.
- Create and offer foods desired by students that transport and work well on mobile serving
- Be fiscally sound, utilize commodity foods

Results

- Participation increased by 541 students daily! In 18/19, 1752 of 2507 students ate compared to 17/18 with 1211 of 2539 students eating. That's 70% participation with the new strategy!
- Increase in participation = increase in revenue, pilot school needed 1 additional hour in labor between two staff. With implementation at additional schools, district added a breakfast manager
- Federal reimbursements for breakfast increased 47% for September-December 2018 over 2017.
- Positive school environment, no breakfast stigma



All K-8 students at Garfield Heights City Schools (GHCS) are eligible for breakfast and lunch at no charge thru Community Eligibility provision. Although all students are eligible, breakfast participation lagged regardless of student socio-economics. GHCS child nutrition services wanted more students to eat breakfast so they started research. Teachers and administrators were surveyed about the school morning routines, traffic flow, student behavior, and concerns about breakfast. The student voice is very important too so teachers and building staff helped administer student surveys during homeroom and computer class. Child Nutrition reviewed their customers opinions and concerns then worked with CHA to develop an improved breakfast model. Together they secured grant funding to support necessary infrastructure changes. For the 17/18 school year, GHCS chose to pilot in one elementary a hybrid of Breakfast in the Classroom; students choose breakfast from mobile serving carts strategically placed throughout the building then eat in their classroom. Working thru the pilot school kinks and several tweaks to the menu choices, the improved Breakfast in the Classroom was implemented in the other elementary and middle schools in the 18/19 school year.

A majority of the grant funding was used to purchase breakfast kiosks and 2 over-wrap machines. The over-wrap machines were installed at the high school kitchen where all breakfasts are prepared, placed in small containers and then sealed with the overwrap machine for food safety. All breakfasts are transported from the high school to the elementary and middle schools which adds an additional layer of complexity.

With the new serving strategy, student breakfast participation increased from 48% to 70% - an additional 541 students eat each day! In the pilot year, labor hours increased by 1 hour split between two staff. In 2018/19, a full time breakfast manager was added to oversee day to day operations and the production center/satellite kitchen at the high school. Food costs increased 34% with their increase in participation and USDA reimbursements for breakfast increased 47%. Grant funding supported the purchase of infrastructure equipment. The district maintains fiscal responsibility and cost saving measures such as fully utilizing USDA foods as part of the entrée items in at least 7 of 10 days.

Post implementation teacher surveys report BIC has help create a positive school environment, breaking down barriers and created a sense of community and engagement with students.

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