

Food Service Facts

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25. School Breakfast Program

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in more than 1,400 public and private nonprofit schools and residential child care institutions in Kansas. Public schools in Kansas are required by state statute to offer the SBP in each public school building under the jurisdiction of the school district's board of education.

The SBP began as a pilot project in 1966, and was made permanent in 1975. It operates in the same manner as the National School Lunch Program. Public or private nonprofit schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions may participate in the SBP. Sponsors that participate in the breakfast program receive reimbursement for each meal served. In return, they must serve breakfasts that meet federal requirements and offer reduced price or free breakfasts to eligible children.

Breakfast Requirements and Policies

School Breakfast Program Waivers

Kansas statute allows public school sponsors to apply for waivers for the SBP for individual attendance centers within the district. To be eligible for a SBP waiver, the attendance center must have 35 percent or less of its enrolled students eligible for reduced price or free meals during March of the preceding year. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) appoints a SBP Waiver Review Committee to evaluate each waiver application, determine the validity of the reason or reasons for which the waiver is requested and recommend whether the waiver should be granted or denied. The Kansas State Board of Education considers the Waiver Review Committee's recommendations and makes the final decision on waiver requests.

KSDE makes waiver applications available to schools in February of each year. Applications are reviewed in April and May for approval for the following school year.

Meal Requirements

School breakfasts must meet the applicable recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual's calories should come from fat, and less than 10 percent should from saturated fat. In addition, breakfasts must provide one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowance for protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C and calories. See chapters 16, 17, and 18 of *Food Service Facts* for menu planning guidelines and requirements. Local sponsors and schools are responsible for determining the menus, the specific food items served and how they are prepared.

Meal Charges and Reimbursement

Any enrolled child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the SBP. Sponsors may charge no more than thirty (30) cents for a reduced price breakfast. Sponsors set their own prices for breakfasts served to students who pay the full meal price, although they must operate their food service as a non-profit program.

Most of the support USDA provides to sponsors in the SBP comes in the form of cash reimbursement for each breakfast served. The reimbursement rates are established annually by USDA. Current reimbursement rates are always available at www.kn-eat.org.

Serving Breakfast in Alternative Schools

Alternative schools are often considered to be a “program” of another school, rather than a separate school.

- ◆ When a sponsor indicates that an alternative school operates as a program of another school, breakfast does not have to be served at the alternative site **if** the students have access to breakfast at the related school.
- ◆ If the alternative school’s principal completes KSDE’s Principal’s Building Report, then breakfast must be served at the alternative site unless an SBP waiver is obtained.

For example, an education service center operates several alternative schools. The students attending these schools are enrolled in the school districts serving their area. The alternative schools are considered to be programs of each respective local high school. The KSDE Principal’s Building Report is not completed for the alternative schools. Therefore, breakfast does not need to be served at these alternative schools **if** the students have access to breakfast at the related high schools.

Offering Breakfast for Preschool Children

Schools are encouraged to offer breakfast to preschoolers. However, if the beginning of the preschool program day is later than breakfast service times, the preschoolers do not need to be offered breakfast. Preschoolers who have access to breakfast or lunch are not eligible for the Special Milk Program. Refer to Chapter 28 of *Food Service Facts* for more information on the Special Milk Program.

Serving Times for School Breakfasts

Breakfast is to be served at the beginning, or close to the beginning, of the child’s school day. KSDE permits middle, junior and senior high schools to alter the serving time for school breakfast. These schools may begin serving no later than after the first hour of class instruction. The service time must be a minimum of twenty (20) minutes to allow students to pass to and from class and to eat their breakfast.

Location of Breakfast Serving and Dining Areas

The school may determine the most appropriate method of dispensing breakfast. It may be served in the classroom or from a central area in the school from a portable service area. Regardless of the location of the breakfast service, there must be point-of-service accountability and consideration of the need for disposal of waste products. Kansas statute prohibits the use of instructional time for meal consumption. However, it is allowable for students to eat in the classroom while teachers are completing administrative tasks such as roll call.

Length of Time for Breakfast Service

The length of service will depend on the menu and on the number of students to be served, but must be a minimum of twenty (20) minutes. Students should be allowed **at least** ten (10) minutes to eat after they have taken their seat with their food. Bus routes need to be coordinated with school start times to be certain that breakfast is available to students who ride the bus as well as to other students.

Breakfast When School Starts Late

Schools should offer breakfast on days with late buses or late starts when it will be two (2) hours or more from the time of the students' arrival until all students have been served lunch. Some students may have had longer bus rides and schedules that prevented them from having breakfast at home. Students should be informed about breakfast procedures on late-start days. The school breakfast menu must still meet program requirements. However, it may be simplified (i.e. a cereal/crackers, juice and milk) to facilitate quick, easy service.

Serving Breakfast in Adjacent School Buildings

Q *Our high school and elementary school are in separate buildings and students eat at the elementary school for lunch. Do I have to get a SBP waiver for the high school?*

A Yes, breakfast must be offered in every building used for instructional purposes, unless a waiver has been granted by KSDE. The waiver application should indicate that breakfast is readily available at the elementary school for the high school students.



Serving Breakfast After a Waiver Has Been Granted

Q *What if I want to serve breakfast in a school with a waiver?*

A A SBP waiver exempts a school from having to serve breakfast, but in no way limits its ability to pilot or begin a breakfast program. If it is determined that breakfast will be served on a regular basis, the Site Application filed with KSDE should be updated to indicate breakfast is served.



Severe Need Breakfast (SNB)

USDA provides additional reimbursement to schools determined to be in “severe need” based on high percentages of students eligible for reduced price and free meal benefits. The additional reimbursement is to allow those schools serving many low-income students to provide a more substantial breakfast than is required. Rates of reimbursement for SNB are announced annually by USDA and are distributed by KSDE at the beginning of each school year. Current SNB reimbursement rates are available at www.kn-eat.org.

SNB Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, a school must have served at least 40 percent of **lunches** reduced price or free in the second preceding school year. Eligibility to participate in SNB is determined on a school by school basis. Schools that are eligible for SNB reimbursement are provided the additional funds since the KN-CLAIM information system automatically determines eligibility based on data submitted.

Breakfast Research

A number of studies have reported students are more alert and perform better in class if they eat breakfast.

- ◆ Researchers at Harvard Medical/Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston reported that hungry children are more likely to have behavioral and academic problems than children who get enough to eat. At school, hungry children had more problems with irritability, anxiety and aggression, as well as more absences and tardiness. (*Pediatrics*, January, 1998; *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, February, 1998)
- ◆ A Tufts University Statement in 1998 titled *The Link Between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children* stated: “Recent research provides compelling evidence that under-nutrition impacts the behavior of children, their school performance and their overall cognitive development.”
- ◆ The *Minnesota Breakfast Study* found that students who ate breakfast before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits and improved student behaviors. (December, 1997)
- ◆ USDA’s School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study (1993) showed that School Breakfast Program meals are nutritionally superior in many key nutrients to other breakfasts, including breakfasts at home.
- ◆ A 1989 study published in the *American Journal of Diseases of Children* reported that “participation in the School Breakfast Program is associated with significant improvements in academic functioning among low-income elementary school children.”