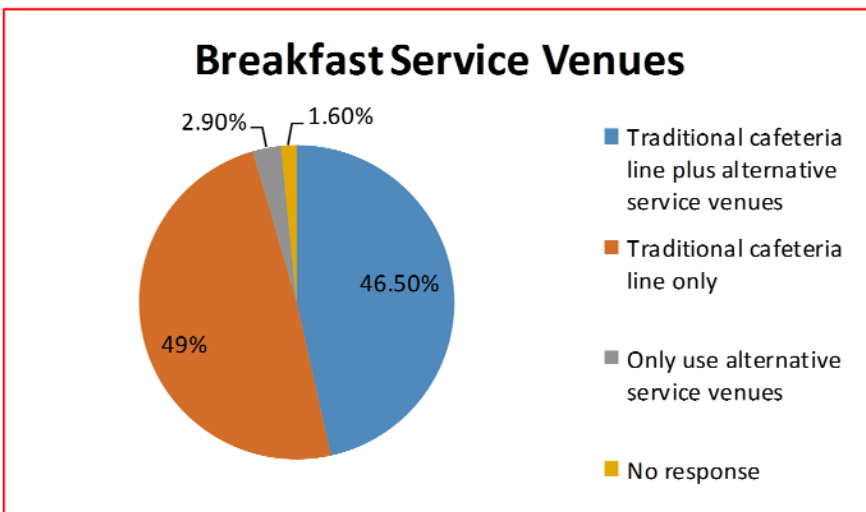


timing is everything: A Closer Look at School Breakfast service times



In the Fall of 2016, SNA issued its biennial report examining trends and changes in school nutrition operations. Topic areas covered in *School Nutrition Operations Report: The State of School Nutrition 2016* include program participation, food and beverage trends, service models, meal prices, unpaid meal charges, payment systems, equipment and construction and purchasing. The findings are based on responses from nearly 1,000 school nutrition directors nationwide.

Upon review of the Operations Report, the School Nutrition Foundation, a member of the Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom, wanted to spotlight the information in the report specific to breakfast suggesting the most effective way to increase participation is to serve breakfast in the first 15 minutes of the school day. The following is a summary from the report.



Source: 2016 School Nutrition Operations Report

How Many Districts are Offering a School Breakfast Program?

Overall 98.3% of districts reported offering a school breakfast program.

Where is Breakfast Served?

- Alternative service venues for breakfast are common, used to some extent by nearly one-half of the districts for their breakfast service. The most common way alternative venues are used are in combination with traditional cafeteria line service. The usage of alternative breakfast service venues climbs sharply as district size increases.
- The districts that offer breakfast via alternative venues most commonly do so via Grab & Go kiosks located either inside or outside of the cafeteria, with these two locations cited by a majority of the districts as a venue offered in any school. Direct delivery to the classroom is less prevalent, but still cited by a significant number (42.9%) of the districts. Reimbursable vending lags in prevalence, used by fewer than 5% of the districts that offer breakfast via alternative venues.

Breakfast Service Times				
	For any elem. school	For any middle school	For any high school	For any school
Before the start of the official school day	83.8%	80.8%	83.1%	92.3%
In the first 10-15 minutes of the official school day	27.6%	17.3%	14.5%	32.2%
During a morning break	4.1%	8.9%	22.4%	26.8%

When is Breakfast Served?

Breakfast service before the start of the official school day is the most common service option by a wide margin. Breakfast service in the first 10-15 minutes of the school day is far less popular, but does show a fair response level, especially at the elementary school level. Least common is breakfast service during a morning break, although this does increase in use at the high school level, where it is cited by 22.4%.

Is Participation Impacted by Service Time?

School districts serving breakfast in the first 10-15 minutes of the school day have a median breakfast Average Daily Participation (ADP) rate of 31% as compared to the 26% of the entire sample set. The difference is even higher among elementary schools with those that serve breakfast in the first 10-15 minutes of the school day having a median ADP of 40% as compared to 32% of all elementary schools.

Breakfast Average Daily Participation Rates									
<i>All data are medians.</i>									
Service time	Population	Program/ district- wide	n =	Elem. only	n =	Middle school only	n =	High school only	n =
	Full sample	26.0%	699	32.0%	615	20.0%	578	15.0%	600
Serve break- fast before start of school day	At elem	25.0%	597	30.0%	543	20.0%	507	15.0%	512
	At MS	25.0%	573	30.0%	521	19.7%	516	15.0%	500
	At HS	25.0%	586	31.0%	516	20.0%	496	15.0%	537
	At any school	25.0%	561	30.5%	576	20.0%	541	15.0%	563
Serve break- fast in first 10- 15 min of school day	At elem	34.4%	200	44.0%	183	25.0%	171	20.0%	174
	At MS	40.0%	127	50.0%	112	33.0%	109	23.2%	106
	At HS	33.0%	103	40.0%	97	25.0%	93	20.0%	97
	At any school	30.7%	237	40.0%	216	24.0%	204	18.0%	206
Serve break- fast during morning break	At elem	27.0%	27	30.0%	23	20.0%	18	19.0%	16
	At MS	27.0%	55	30.0%	45	25.0%	47	16.3%	44
	At HS	22.5%	152	23.1%	136	15.6%	130	15.0%	145
	At any school	23.0%	180	25.0%	159	17.1%	150	15.0%	160

Why is This Important?

Research shows that children who eat their morning meal at school perform better academically, are on time, have fewer absences, and fewer trips to the school nurse and principal's office. According to USDA, data from January 6, 2017 shows that 30.3 million students participate in the National School Lunch Program, while 14.52 million participate in the School Breakfast Program. While nearly all districts offer the breakfast program, there is room for growth in participation.

Among the factors that can impact ADP are service model and timing. Although districts offer alternative methods of breakfast service, the data suggests the most effective way to increase participation is to serve breakfast in the first 15 minutes of the school day. As stated above, school districts serving breakfast in the first 10-15 minutes of the school day have a median breakfast participation rate of 31% as compared to the 26% of the entire sample set. Given our experience with Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom, we suspect that in reality this difference is even greater; the limitations of the data set are that the participation numbers provided are an aggregate for the district and not by individual school. This means the average could include schools with or without alternative service times and models.

What are the Next Steps?

For those interested in moving breakfast to the first 10-15 minutes of the school day, the Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom website (www.breakfastinclassroom.org) has grant opportunities, blog posts, webinar archives, toolkits, videos to help engage stakeholders, and a number of other resources available.

Sources:

2016 School Nutrition Operations Report
USDA Participation Data, January 6, 2017

For the full SNA Operations Report, check out:
www.schoolnutrition.org/research

