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BY DYLAN LYNCH



Breakfast Buy-in:

Study Reveals Insights About Teacher Support for In-Class Meals

Teachers' perceptions of school breakfast matter, and new research supported by SNA explores how those views are shaped early in their careers. This recap of a *School Food for Thought* podcast episode highlights a recent study that explores those ideals and the factors that may influence them.

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On a season three episode of SNA's podcast, *School Food for Thought*, special guest hosts Keith Rushing, PhD, RD, editor of the *Journal of Child Nutrition & Management (JCN&M)*, and Dr. Marjuyua Lartey Gibson, PhD, RDN, director of applied research at the Institute of Child Nutrition, welcomed Brigham Young University master's student Kelsey Anderson, BS, for an in-depth conversation about her research article, "A Qualitative Analysis of Elementary Education Student's Perceptions of Breakfast in the Classroom Before and After an Educational Video Intervention." The article was originally published in the 2024 fall issue of *JCN&M*. The topic focuses on changing how future teachers feel about breakfast in the classroom, also known as BIC. In the episode, we hear from Anderson about her team's approach to beginning their research, the results of the findings and how their work could help school nutrition professionals gain more support for school breakfast programs. Here's what was learned from the conversation!

How the Study Worked

Anderson and her team were curious about why teachers weren't always fans of BIC. A past study showed that, among five school breakfast models, like traditional breakfast in the cafeteria, grab-and-go, vending options, second chance breakfast and BIC,

teachers liked BIC the least. The research team wondered, "What if we help future teachers understand BIC before they even enter the classroom?" "Would they be more open to the idea?" To test this, they surveyed college students majoring in elementary education, asking them how they felt about

“It was exciting to see that just from their open responses, we could tell their attitudes were improving.”

—Kelsey Anderson, on the visible change in participants’ perceptions

school breakfast and BIC. After the future educators submitted their responses, the team had them watch a brief educational video on the benefits of BIC. A week later, they took the same survey again to see if anything changed.

breakfast, especially in a classroom setting. They then took the same survey again. The research team focused on the open-ended responses to see how respondents’ thoughts and feelings changed after learning more about BIC.



The Power of Education

The team read through every survey response, before and after the video. What they found was encouraging: Many students had a positive change in attitude after watching the video.

One student admitted, “I don’t truly understand what the program is,” before seeing the video. Afterward, that same student said, “I definitely feel like I know more about how it works and feel more confident in its value.” That shift showed how even simple education can change minds and help prepare younger professionals for the challenges and successes of what’s to come as they take on roles within the school nutrition community.

The study focused on college students in one western state who were preparing to become teachers. Participants took a first survey with both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. They were asked questions like:

- ▶ Why do you think school breakfast participation is low in your state?
- ▶ How ready do you feel to support BIC in your future classroom?
- ▶ What concerns do you have about BIC?

After a week, they watched a five-minute video explaining the benefits of school





The researchers found three important themes in the responses:

1. Knowledge & Readiness

Students who knew little about school breakfast or BIC were unsure how to support it. After watching the video, many said they felt more confident. Still, some said they would need more training before they felt ready to make it work in a real classroom.

2. Logistics

Many future teachers were worried about how BIC would actually work. Would it be messy? Distracting? Take up too much time away from the curriculum? But after learning more,

some said that once it became a routine, they thought it could run smoothly like any other classroom activity.

3. Social Implications

Some believed there is a sense of a stigma that was a reason school breakfast participation is low. Traditional breakfast programs, held in the cafeteria before school, might make kids feel singled out. BIC could help remove that stigma because everyone eats together in the classroom. However, some respondents also expressed concern about how parents might feel about schools serving breakfast instead of families doing it at home.

“Just the fact that our results showed that if you educate in a simple way, they are receptive to that education... that was exciting.”

—Kelsey Anderson, on the power of introducing new information to future teachers

“Perceptions can be changed, and they can be changed in a positive way. The more we talk about it and discuss these things, the better the future.”

—Kelsey Anderson, reflecting on the potential for progress



Big Takeaways

So, what can school nutrition directors or child nutrition and teaching professionals learn from this?

Anderson’s message was clear: People can change their minds, but they simply just need information. A short, well-made educational video had a big impact. This suggests that similar strategies might work when trying to get support from teachers, principals or even parents. Anderson added that education doesn’t have to always be in this format. It could be a quick presentation, a simple email or even a classroom visit. What matters is starting with a baseline (what people already think), and then providing helpful, research-based information to shift those perceptions.

The video used in Anderson’s study was created using a program called Doodly, which makes fun, sketch-style animations with voiceover narration. It explained the history and purpose of school breakfast, why

it matters and how different breakfast delivery models work. It also talked about USDA guidelines, such as requirements for fruits and whole grains, and was wrapped up by showing a real-life example of BIC in action. The goal was to make it simple, engaging and easy to understand for future teachers who may never have heard of BIC before. The team is now updating the video for a national version of the study and working on how to share it more widely.

Looking Ahead: Changing the Narrative

When asked how she sees perceptions of BIC changing in the future, Anderson was optimistic. She believes that most people aren’t against new ideas, they just don’t know enough about them. Once people learn how BIC works and how it can help students, they’re more likely to support it.

Still, she acknowledged it’s not always easy. Convincing principals or school staff to make a change can be hard, especially if they’re worried about logistics, cost or student behavior. But sharing success stories and tangible data and even doing a short trial run can help break down those barriers. Dr. Lartey Gibson agreed, adding that school nutrition professionals should connect with others who’ve made BIC work and share that experience.

This podcast episode was a reminder that implementing fresh ideas starts with understanding. As Keith Rushing shared at the end of the episode, the *Journal of Child*



Nutrition & Management is full of helpful studies like Anderson's. It's a valuable resource for anyone working in child nutrition—from researchers to school administrators. And yes, more podcast episodes like this one are on the way. If you're looking for more ways to learn about the latest school nutrition research, keep an ear and an eye out.

Want to read the full article? Visit the *Journal of Child Nutrition & Management* page on SNA's website. **SN+**

Dylan Lynch is the Editorial Content Manager at SNA and Editor of School Nutrition magazine.

Journal OF CHILD NUTRITION & MANAGEMENT

Want more research like this? Keep an eye out for the Spring 2025 issue of the *Journal of Child Nutrition & Management*—coming soon! Visit schoolnutrition.org/jcnm.

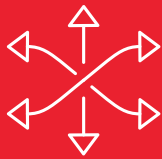
School Food for Thought

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