

# Breakfast First



## A State-Wide Report

2017



# Introduction

We, at the Food Bank of Delaware, hope this report will motivate and encourage everyone to keep the issue of school breakfast participation at the top of the statewide agenda. It is an issue about which we care very deeply.

According to Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry, food insecurity exists in 17.2 million households in America. As if that statistic is not powerful enough, over 3.9 million of those households include children. Of these households, 59 percent report participating in one or more federal programs, including SNAP (formerly known as food stamps), the National School Lunch Program and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children). These numbers indicate that even while receiving help and trying to get back on their feet, families are still struggling to make ends meet. The numbers are striking and should mobilize all of us to do our part to make them non-existent.

With the staggering numbers of food insecure households, it is no surprise that school breakfast and lunch programs have become a necessity for many families. No Kid Hungry reports that over 20 million children receive a free or reduced-price lunch at school on an average day. It is surprising though that only about 9.8 million of those students get a free or reduced-price breakfast. It is exactly these type of statistics that caused the Food Bank of Delaware in coordination with the Delaware Department of Education to write our first *Breakfast First: A State-Wide Report* in 2014. It was in this report that we were able to highlight the work being done in schools across our state and highlight the need for more accessible school breakfast programs. The statistics do not lie when it comes to the importance of children having a good breakfast.

- As reported by No Kid Hungry, students who regularly start the day with a healthy breakfast have a 17.5 percent average increase in standardized math scores and are in school 1.5 more days on average.
- According to the National Institutes of Health, undernourished children don't learn as fast or as well as nourished children.
- Children's Health Watch reports that children who struggle with hunger are sick more, recover slower and are hospitalized more frequently.
- Schools report making breakfast mandatory on standardized testing days.

While this report will highlight important accomplishments in our schools, we cannot sit idly by and rest on our laurels. We must continue to be active and advocate for even more success stories. Within this report, we have highlighted schools that are experiencing success with their school breakfast programs. In addition, we have shared information about school breakfast programs in other states and what they are doing.

Our children deserve every opportunity to be successful, both in school and in their lives. It is up to all of us to ensure that this is possible.

Patricia Beebe  
President and CEO  
Food Bank of Delaware

# Breakfast Basics

The federal School Breakfast Program (SBP), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), serves breakfast to children all over the country. The program is open to “any public school, nonprofit private school, or residential child care institution,” including charter schools (FRAC School Breakfast Scorecard, February 2017). By participating, each school receives federal reimbursement funds for each breakfast served. Certain schools receive a higher reimbursement if they are identified as “severe need” schools. These are schools where at least 40% of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were free or reduced.

Breakfast is available and what the individual child pays for the breakfast is based upon the income of the family. This information is obtained by applications completed by the family and returned to the school. Children in households that participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), as well as children that are foster youth, migrant, homeless, runaway or participate in a Head Start program are “categorically eligible.” This means that those children receive access to free school meals automatically, without completing additional paperwork.

	Non-Severe Need	Severe Need	Paid for by the Student
Free – Families at 130% of Federal Poverty Level	\$1.71	\$2.04	\$0
Reduced – Families between 130% and 185% of Federal Poverty Level	\$1.41	\$1.74	\$0.30 (Maximum Charge Allowed)
Paid – Families above 185% of Federal Poverty Level	\$0.29	\$0.29	Varies by school and district



## How Can Schools Offer Breakfast for Free to All Students?

The federal government has created multiple options for schools to offer breakfast for free to students in high poverty schools. These options base the federal reimbursement available to a school on the proportion of low-income children attending that school. Offering breakfast free to all children increases access, regardless of eligibility status. These programs would not require any payment from the individual student and generally make serving breakfast through an "alternative service model" easier, as no fees need to be collected at the time of service.

There are three options in Delaware for schools to offer school breakfast for free to all students:

### Community Eligibility Provision

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) was authorized by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This provision allows schools identified as high-poverty to serve breakfast and lunch to all students free of charge. These schools do not have to collect school meal applications from individual students or keep track of meals in various fee categories. Any school, group of schools or districts with a 40% or more identified student percentage (ISP) is eligible for the program. The ISP is determined by adding up the following:

- Children directly certified by their participation in SNAP, TANF, FDPIR and in some states Medicaid benefits.
- Children identified as foster youth, migrant, homeless, runaway or participating in a Head Start program.

Once these students are identified, that percentage is multiplied by 1.6 to determine the number of meals that will be reimbursed at the federal free rate.

An example, Main Street Elementary School has 100 students, 60 (or 60%) of which fall in the categories outlined above. The school would make the following calculation:

$$60 \times 1.6 = 96$$

This means that 96% of the meals eaten in that school would be reimbursed at the federal free rate and 4% would be reimbursed at the federal paid rate.

**In school year 2016-2017, there are 115 schools in Delaware utilizing CEP.**



## Provision 2

Provision 2 is a provision of the National School Lunch Act where schools, similar to CEP, are not required to collect or process school meal applications or collect fees. In this program, schools collect school meal applications in the first year. The schools then determine how many students fall into each fee category and submit for reimbursements for them that year, which is then called the "base year." The schools then use that data to establish claiming percentage for the remaining three years of the four-year cycle.

**Currently, there are no schools in Delaware utilizing Provision 2.**

## Universal

Universal school breakfast is a choice made by the local school or district to offer breakfast at no cost to all students. This model requires schools to collect school meal applications every year. By doing so, the school will be able to determine a total number of meals to be claimed for federal reimbursement in each eligibility category (free, reduced or paid). The school receives federal reimbursement for each meal served under the eligibility categories. In the event there was a difference in cost, the school will have to make up any difference using local or unrestricted funds.

**Currently, there are 16 schools in Delaware utilizing universal school breakfast, but not participating in CFP**



# What's Going on Nationally?

According to the February 2017 Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) School Breakfast Scorecard, school breakfast was served to an average of 12.1 million low income children across the country in the 2015-2016 school year. This figure represents a 3.7% increase from the 2014-2015 school year, which is a step in the right direction. However, the same report indicates that in the 2015-2016 school year only 56 low-income children ate school breakfast for every 100 who ate school lunch. This indicates that there is still much work to be done throughout the nation to make greater strides in ensuring children have access to a healthy breakfast.

Delaware appears to be doing well in this area. According to the FRAC School Breakfast Scorecard, 61.5 low-income children participated in school breakfast for every 100 participating in school lunch. This makes Delaware 11th in the nation for participation. Since the printing of the Scorecard, Delaware can also claim that 100% of schools participating in the National School Lunch Program are also participating in the School Breakfast program, as of the 2016-2017 school year. While these numbers are impressive, it does not mean that more cannot be done.

## Ratio of Free and Reduced-Price School Breakfast to School Lunch Participation School Year 2015-2016

State	Ratio of Low-Income Student Participation in Breakfast per 100 Participating in Lunch
West Virginia	83.9
New Mexico	72.9
District of Columbia	67.4
Tennessee	64.5
Maryland	64.2
Kentucky	64.2
Arkansas	63.5
Texas	63.1
Vermont	62.7
South Carolina	62.3
Delaware	61.5

*FRAC School Breakfast Scorecard - February 2017*

Some states have seen great success recently in implementing creative breakfast after the bell and other alternative service model programs that have increased participation in school breakfast. West Virginia, Mexico and Washington, DC have passed state legislation mandating “breakfast after the bell” in at least some of their schools. In 2015, Virginia added an amendment to the 2015-2016 budget to include \$537,000 that will provide schools an additional \$0.05 per breakfast served when using an alternative breakfast model. More recently, Illinois passed a bill in 2016 that will mandate that breakfast be served after the bell in schools that have at least 70% free and reduced-price eligibility beginning in the 2017-2018 school year.

*For more information on legislative accomplishments in other states, please visit No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices School Breakfast Program Policy page at <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast/school-breakfast-policy-0>*

## Recapping School Breakfast in Delaware

In 2014, the Food Bank of Delaware published the first *Breakfast First: A State-Wide Report* highlighting the important role that breakfast has in the life of our children. This report sought to lay out the basics of school breakfast, while providing data and key findings about the number of students utilizing breakfast. The report showed that the state of Delaware had an opportunity to increase access to school breakfast all across our state, and because of this, the Food Bank of Delaware decided to commission the first School Breakfast Challenge.

The School Breakfast Challenge was intended to recognize schools that were achieving success in their school breakfast programs. Success was measured by recognizing the highest participation rates and highest participation increase among district schools and charters/non-publics.

At the 2015 "Coming Together: A Community Response to Hunger Conference," the Food Bank of Delaware presented monetary awards to achieving schools:

**District Highest Participation Overall:**

1. New Castle Elementary School \$3,000
2. Stubbs Elementary \$2,000
3. West Seaford Elementary \$1,500
4. Seaford Middle School \$500

**District Highest Increase in Participation from 2013-2014:**

1. Seaford High School \$3,000
2. Stanton Middle School \$2,000
3. Frederick Douglass \$1,500
4. Blades Elementary \$500

**Charter/Single Unit Highest Participation Overall:**

1. Academy of Dover \$3,000

**Charter/Single Unit Highest Increase in Participation from 2013-2014:**

1. Family Foundations Academy \$3,000

Following the end of the School Breakfast Challenge, the Food Bank of Delaware recognized the work was not done. The Coalition to End Hunger, an initiative of the Food Bank of Delaware, continued advocating throughout the 2015-2016 school year to draw attention to this important issue. In early 2016, the Food Bank was approached by Frederica Jenner, former President of the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA), about considering legislation in the Delaware General Assembly around school breakfast. This was an important step. Throughout the spring of 2016, the Food Bank of Delaware, working closely with DSEA and other stakeholders, convened a Delaware School Breakfast Alliance to look at the issue. Thanks to the efforts of State Representative Ed Osienksi, a bill was introduced in the Delaware House of Representatives. House Bill 408 went through a few iterations over the course of the 148th General Assembly, but finally passed the House of Representatives on June 16, 2016 and the Delaware State Senate on July 1, 2016. A copy of the bill can be found on pages 8-10.

The bill was signed into law on September 14, 2016 by Former Governor Jack Markell in a signing ceremony at Albert H. Jones Elementary School. Governor Markell echoed the necessity of school breakfast at the signing ceremony when he said, "Ensuring all students have access to a nutritional meal to start their day is vital not only for their general health, but has also shown to improve attendance and academic progress."





SPONSOR: Rep. Osienski & Rep. Longhurst & Sen. Townsend  
Reps. Baumbach, Bentz, Heffeman, Jaques, Potter; Sens.  
Blevins, Henry, Marshall

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 408  
AS AMENDED BY  
HOUSE AMENDMENT NO. 2

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SCHOOL BREAKFAST.

WHEREAS, it is widely accepted that breakfast is the most important meal of the day; and

WHEREAS, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics approximately eight to twelve percent of all school-aged kids skip breakfast; and

WHEREAS, the number of adolescents skipping breakfast may be as high as twenty to thirty percent; and

WHEREAS, school breakfast is being offered to children in all of Delaware's traditional public schools already;  
and

WHEREAS, nationally, less than half the students who are eligible for free or reduced price school breakfast are currently participating; and

WHEREAS, eating breakfast at school is proven to increase academic performance, improve student behavior and positively impacts the health of our children;

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Chapter 41, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§4137. Alternative Service Models for School Breakfast.

(a) Purpose. The purpose of allowing for Alternative Service Models for School Breakfast is:



(1) To increase the total number of public school, excluding charter school, students eating breakfast on school days;

(2) To help improve the academic performance of these students; and

(3) To improve the overall health of these students in the State of Delaware.

(b) Definitions. For the purposes of this section:

(1) "Alternative Service Model" means breakfast meal service that may include one or more of the following:

a. Breakfast in the Classroom.

b. Grab and Go Breakfast.

c. Second Chance Breakfast.

(2) "Breakfast in the Classroom" means that breakfast meals are eaten in the classroom at the start of the school day. A breakfast meal can either be delivered to the classroom or be served from the cafeteria or a cart or kiosk placed within the school, the cafeteria, or another location deemed appropriate by the school.

(3) "Community Eligibility Provision" means a provision from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows schools and local education agencies with high poverty rates to provide a breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost.

(4) "Department" means the State of Delaware Department of Education.

(5) "Free Claiming Percentage Rate", for the purposes of this program, means the Identified Student Percentage of a school multiplied by a factor of 1.6.

(6) "Grab and Go Breakfast" means that students are able to access a breakfast meal from a cart or kiosk placed within the school, the cafeteria or another location deemed appropriate by the school.

(7) "Identified Student Percentage" means the number of students in a school directly certified for free meals (any student in a household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) plus any student identified as homeless, foster, migrant or runaway) between the period of July 1 through April 1 annually.

(8) "National School Lunch Program" means the federal National School Lunch Act created in 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 et seq.

(9) "Reduced Price Meal" means a meal a child is entitled to in the School Breakfast or National School Lunch Program where the family's income is between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty threshold, published annually in the Federal register as required by Section 9 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

(10) “School Breakfast Program” means the federal School Breakfast Program created in 42 U.S.C §§ 1773 et seq.

(11) “Second Chance Breakfast” means that students are offered the opportunity to obtain a breakfast meal at a time prior to the beginning of second period.

(c) The Program.

(1) Beginning in school year 2017-2018, every public school site, including charter school sites, participating in the Community Eligibility Provision, shall be required to offer a breakfast at no cost to every student in the school through an Alternative Service Model, which may be in addition to their traditional breakfast meal service.

(d) Administration. The Department may promulgate regulations regarding the implementation of this section.

# Delaware Success Stories

## Seaford High School

School breakfast at Seaford High School is truly a labor of love for their building principals. Principal Terry Carson and Assistant Principals Kelly Cannon and Clarence Gills take the job of ensuring that all their students have access to a healthy breakfast very seriously.

Seaford High School is a public high school with a student population of 794 in western Sussex County. According to the winter 2016 school profile on the Delaware Department of Education website, 39.3 % of students are low income. In the City of Seaford alone, according to the last



*Principal Terry Carson organizes bags of breakfasts in preparation for delivery to classrooms*

Census date, 25.3% of persons are living in poverty. Seaford School District is Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) district wide and claims over 99% meals as free.

Principal Terry Carson recognizes these numbers, “It is one of the most important things I do each day. These kids are your family, the school is their safe place. We are taking care of them and they in turn are taking care of our building,” she says.

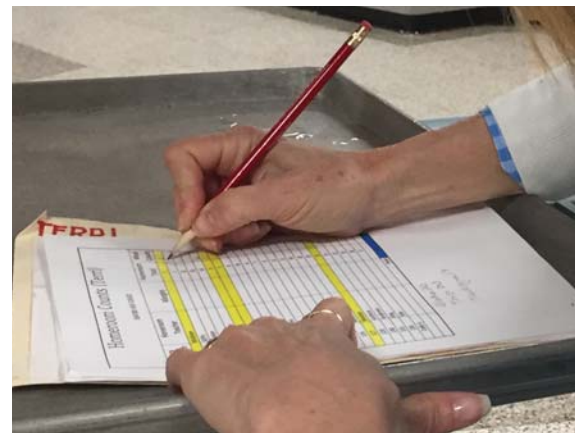
Each morning, Principal Carson and her two assistant principals gather in the cafeteria at 7:45 a.m. Within minutes, they have their list of classrooms and their rolling cart filled with breakfast bags. Each administrator has a regular route of classrooms to visit and drop off breakfast bags for each student.

Students assist with breakfast duties, creating a leadership opportunity for those interested. The system works like a well-oiled machine and Principal Carson says they are done in no more than 10 minutes. The breakfasts are consumed by the students, while morning activities are going on in the classroom. They dispose of waste in the classroom trash can or in cans placed throughout the hallways in the morning.

By 8:00 a.m., the next period of the day is starting and instruction is continuing.

Principal Carson knows this might be a foreign idea to other administrators. She states, *“Some say it’s not what you should be doing with your morning, but this is exactly what I should be doing. You have a better relationship with the kids. Giving them breakfast is a means of showing them we care about them and when I see them later in the day, they know I have already seen them once that day and I was already doing something for them.”*

In addition to breakfast deliveries by administrators throughout the school, there is also an opportunity for



*Classrooms are checked off as teachers pick up their students’ breakfasts*



those students arriving late to receive a breakfast as well. The second chance breakfast is available when the student signs into the building upon arrival. Each morning 20 breakfast bags are dropped off to the Attendance Secretary, who distributes them to the students as they arrive. Most days all of them are taken.

Bill Mengel, Supervisor of Nutrition Services for Seaford School District, indicates, “Students at this age won’t trade in the social activity in the morning to eat a traditional school breakfast in the cafeteria.” He continues, “This system works because it allows them to have that social interaction in the morning and then still receive breakfast in the classroom.”

Assistant Principal Kelly Cannon, who was hired in July of 2016 sums it up best, “When I came here, it was different that the administrative staff was doing this, but not odd. It

allowed me to get to know the school and the students exponentially better. If I ever became a school principal and could implement this in my building, I would. It would definitely make my life easier.”

## Milford Central Academy



Milford Central Academy, in the Milford School District, serves students in grades 6-8 in lower Kent County. According to the winter 2016 school profile on the Delaware Department of Education website, 37.8 percent of its students are classified as low income. This has not, however, stopped the school district from serving all of the students through a universal school breakfast program since 2004. The school district went an additional step further by adopting CEP districtwide in school year 2016-2017.

Of the 972 students at Milford Central Academy, about 31.6 percent are participating in school breakfast. The breakfast is served in a traditional model in the cafeteria each morning. The options are presented in the cafeteria line, and students participating in the program are allowed off the bus at 8:20 a.m. They report to the



cafeteria and stay there to consume their meal. Any students not participating in breakfast are allowed off the buses and into the building at 8:34 a.m. While this system works currently, the district is considering options for expanding their offerings.

Milford High School recently placed a kiosk at the entrance of the school and breakfast participation increased in that building. The high school received the funds to purchase the kiosk through a grant. Tammy Thompson, cafeteria manager at Milford Central Academy, says, ***“I love what I do. It is all about the kids.”*** This sentiment is heard throughout the district and they look to increase their offerings even more in the years ahead.

## A.I. DuPont High School

The support of the administration and staff of Alexis I. (A.I.) duPont High School can be seen in their school breakfast program.

A.I. duPont High School is a public high school with a student population of 1,062 in northern New Castle County. The principal, Kevin Palladinetti, recognizes the important work done by his school nutrition department. ***“We don’t have teachers complaining, they recognize that providing***

***breakfast is an important part of ensuring the success of our students,” he says. “The school nutrition staff here has it down. They are doing a great job.”***



A.I. offers a “grab and go” model school breakfast program for their students. Each day, the nutrition staff is in place by 7:05 a.m. to meet students at three designated locations in the school. As students get off the bus or arrive at school, they go to one of the locations where a fully stocked cart of breakfast items is awaiting them.

The menu rotates every six weeks with “entrée” items, while cereal, Nutrigrain bars, fresh fruit, peanut butter and jelly, milk and juice are staples each day. The students make their individual selections, and the staff member ensures that students have a fully reimbursable meal per USDA guidelines. The process for each student barely takes a few seconds.

The nutrition staff is responsible for making sure they have a completed production sheet for their cart before they leave the cafeteria in the morning and must count each student that receives breakfast on a manual counter during the process. The whole process is completed by 7:30 a.m. and the school day begins. After the first school day bell, the staff consolidate all the carts into one and place it in the middle of the school, with just one nutrition staff member. This allows for a “second chance breakfast” to be made available to any student that arrives late to school, either by a late bus or dropped off by a parent. “No child ever goes without breakfast if they want it,” says Cafeteria Manager Christine Manniel.



The nutrition staff are committed to the effort, which makes it very easy. "This is the second year we have served breakfast from the grab and go carts. We haven't had any issues with teachers or service," says Manniel. "We are lucky to have such a supportive principal in Mr. Palladinetti. He recognizes it is important to get breakfast to our students and that spirit runs throughout the school." While administrative support and backing from nutrition department leadership is important, Manniel recognizes her team in making it all possible. "The staff in the cafeteria here is great. They have it down and they get it. These ladies make it happen each day."

Kim, the School Nutrition Lead, says, "It helps you in getting to know your kids and know what they want. I think the kids need breakfast each day and they love it here."

## Implementing Success

*Breakfast Can Be Easy As...*



### How it works:

1. Teachers, nutrition staff members or volunteers distribute meals to students from insulated coolers during the first 10-15 minutes of class.
2. Children eat their breakfast while listening to the morning announcements.
3. When finished, the students clear their desks and wipe them down. The teacher will then place the trash bin in the hallway to be collected by custodial staff.

*This model works best for students that do not switch classes, since it allows their teacher to easily keep record of meals distributed.*



### How it works:

1. When students arrive, they are given the option to have either a traditional cafeteria breakfast or choose take-away bag.
2. Students either eat in the cafeteria or they eat their on-the-go breakfast between periods or during a designated nutrition break.
3. Schools provide additional trash receptacles in hallways to collect any trash from the to-go bags.

*This model works best for older students that may be hungry upon arriving to school. Meals are recorded via a POS system.*



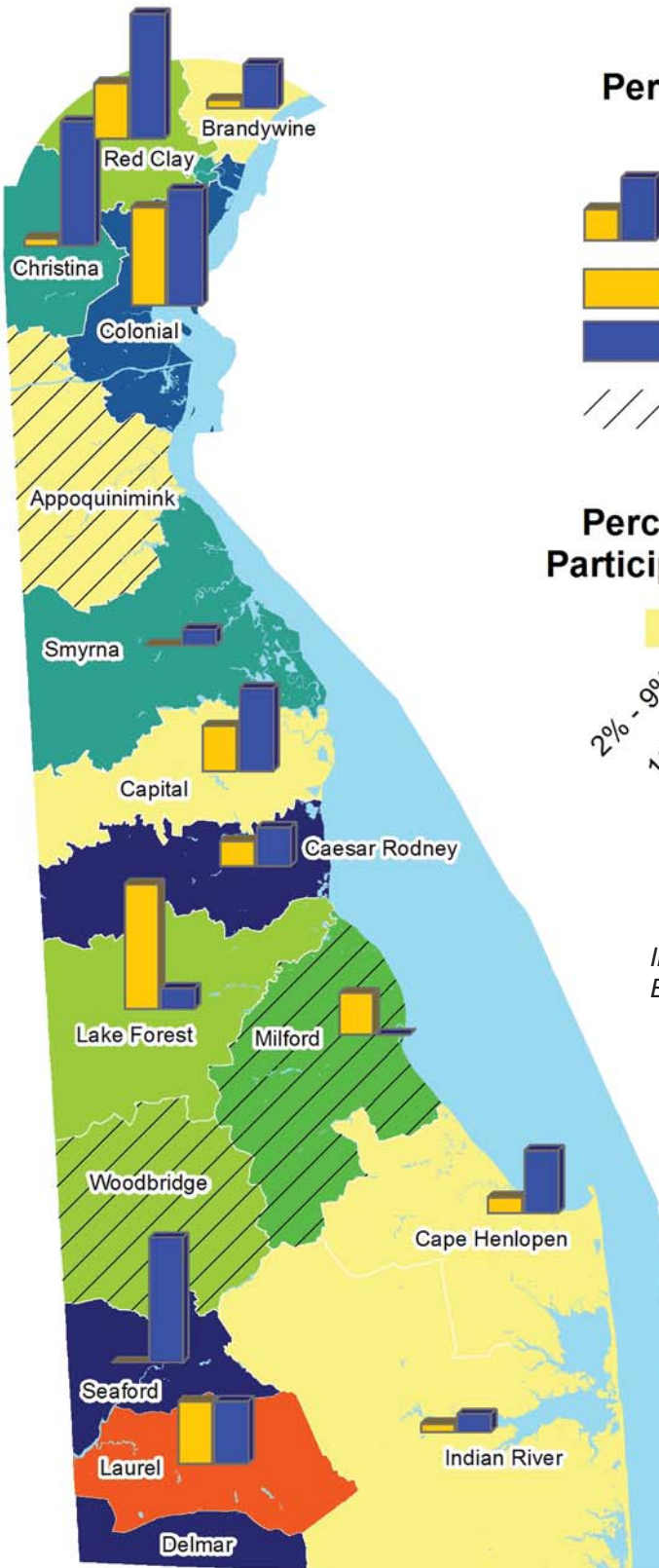
### How it works:

1. Students arrive in the cafeteria and fill bags with breakfast items of their choice, or school nutrition staff prepare meal bags to distribute to students in hallway kiosks.
2. Students bring meals to class and consume them during the first 15 minutes.
3. When finished, the students clear their desks and wipe them down. The teacher will then place the trash bin in the hallway to be collected by custodial staff.

*This model works best for schools where it is not feasible to deliver meals to each classroom. Meals are recorded via a POS system.*

Information and program model designs presented are provided by FRAC

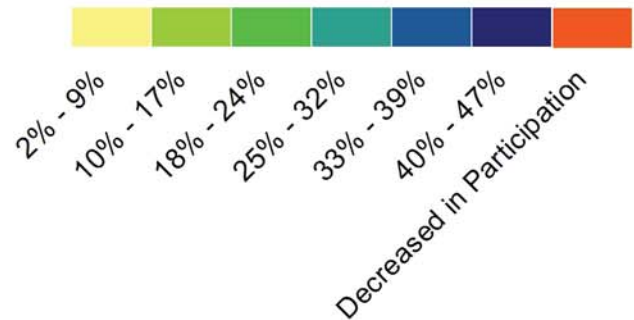
# A Look at Alternative Breakfast Model Use Across the State



## Percent of Schools using Breakfast Alternative Service Models



## Percent Increase in School Breakfast Participation from 2013-2014 to 2016-2017



Information obtained from Delaware Department of Education administrative data 2013-2017

\*The height of each bar represents 50% of the schools within a given district. Larger bars on the map show larger participation in alternative service models. Smaller bars show less than 50% participation in alternative service models.

# Conclusion and Next Steps

Good things are happening in Delaware, but there is always room to do more. As highlighted in this report, schools in our state have developed innovative ways to make breakfast more available and accessible for students in ways that work for them. In doing so, they have increased school breakfast participation in their individual schools.

Between 2015 and 2016, five states, including Delaware, passed a bill in their state legislature in regard to school breakfast. While the actual requirements may be different in each of these states, each bill creates a greater opportunity for children to access breakfast and the impact that these laws will have on their education cannot be understated.

The passage of House Bill 408 in the 148th General Assembly was a step in the right direction for school breakfast. When the bill goes into effect this fall, proven alternative models will be found in all of the schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This is a huge step, but cannot be the last conversation about school breakfast in our state.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016 the Food Bank of Delaware and its network of hunger-relief partners received over 917,000 visits and distributed over 7.1 million pounds of food. In that same time period, the Food Bank of Delaware provided over 243,300 meals through its after-school nutrition program and over 160,000 backpacks to children at risk of going hungry on weekends. These numbers tell us hungry and food insecure individuals and families are in our communities and there is still work to be done to meet their needs.

**So, what can you do to make a difference in school breakfast programs across our state? The answer is we need you to get involved. There are multiple things you can do to make a difference:**

- Share this report with your local school board, superintendent, administrators, nutrition staff and teachers to facilitate a conversation about what your school can do.
- Find out if your district is participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and if not, encourage them to apply if they are eligible.
- Encourage your local and state elected officials to review this report and encourage them to work with schools to continue to make breakfast free and accessible to as many children as possible.

## Together, we can create a community free of hunger!





To learn more about school breakfast, please contact:

**Chad Robinson**  
Food Bank of Delaware  
(302) 393-2010  
[crobinson@fbd.org](mailto:crobinson@fbd.org)