



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO EAT BREAKFAST AT SCHOOL

(Frankfort, Ky.) – All this week, Kentucky students are encouraged to “Wake Up! to School Breakfast.”

March 7-11 is School Breakfast Week – a time to recognize the positive impacts of the School Breakfast Program, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Nationally, about 14 million students eat breakfast at school each day. In Kentucky, more than 269,000 school breakfasts are served to students daily – the 6th highest participation rate in the nation.

“The School Breakfast Program is making a big difference for our kids,” Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt said. “Not only is it helping to curb hunger, but also it is strengthening the health and nutrition of Kentucky students and helping them do better in school,” he said.

Research has shown that students who consume breakfast make greater strides on standardized tests, pay attention and behave better in class, and are less frequently tardy, absent or visit the nurse's office. Other [research based on School Breakfast Program data](#) found that students with access to school breakfast tend to have a better overall diet and a lower body mass index (BMI) than did nonparticipants. School breakfast is especially important for teens, who are less likely to eat breakfast than other age groups, and lower income students who may be at risk of food insecurity.

“Eating breakfast at school can simplify the morning routine, making it easier for students to get to school on time with the assurance they have had a healthy, nutritious meal to provide them with the brain power they need to learn,” Pruitt said.

In Kentucky, most schools offer some form of the School Breakfast Program, although how it is implemented varies from school to school. Some schools serve a traditional hot meal in a central location before school starts or after the first class period of the day; others offer a grab and go option where students receive a sack breakfast and eat during class. No matter how it is served, each school breakfast is nutritious, well-balanced, and includes a serving of fruit, whole-grains and low-fat or fat-free milk.

(more)

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In Kentucky, 69 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, yet only 39 percent take advantage of the School Breakfast Program. In recent years, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has worked with schools to encourage the use of the Community Eligibility Provision, a cost-sharing agreement that allows high-poverty schools to serve both breakfast and lunch each school day at no cost to all students. Currently, 137 Kentucky school districts take advantage of the Community Eligibility Provision in one or more schools in the district.

To help support the ongoing success of the School Breakfast Program and other child nutrition programs, USDA has announced it will award up to \$6.8 million in competitive Team Nutrition Training Grants to help schools and child care sites sustain the successful implementation of the healthier meals made possible by the bipartisan Healthy Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010. Grants through this program are intended to conduct and evaluate training, nutrition education, and technical assistance activities to support the implementation of USDA nutrition standards for snacks and meals, like school breakfast. For more information on the request for grant applications as well as summaries of activities conducted by previous grantees, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition-training-grants>.

The School Breakfast Program is one of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service's 15 nutrition assistance programs, which also include the [School Lunch Program](#) and the [Summer Food Service Program](#). In Kentucky, these programs are administered through the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of School and Community Nutrition.

School Breakfast Week is celebrated in the midst of National Nutrition Month, commemorated each March. Throughout the month, USDA is [highlighting the results of efforts](#) to improve access to safe, healthy food for all Americans and supporting the health of the next generation.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

On Thursday, March 10, Sean Monahan from the USDA Southeast Regional Office will visit Cawood Elementary in Harlan Co. to celebrate School Breakfast Week.

On Friday, March 11, starting about 8:15 a.m. ET, USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) Administrator Val Dolcini, FSA State Executive Director for Kentucky, John McCauley, and Sean Monahan will visit Leestown Middle School in Fayette Co. to observe the Grab 'n' Go School Breakfast Program. Afterward they will tour Locust Trace School, a Farm to School Program in Fayette Co.

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