

In-Classroom Breakfast Programs: Best Practices



National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi
1-800-321-3054

2008

This publication has been produced by the National Food Service Management Institute – Applied Research Division, located at The University of Southern Mississippi with headquarters at The University of Mississippi. Funding for the Institute has been provided with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, to The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The University of Mississippi or the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

The information provided in this publication is the result of independent research produced by NFSMI and is not necessarily in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) policy. FNS is the federal agency responsible for all federal domestic child nutrition programs including the National School Lunch Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. Individuals are encouraged to contact their local child nutrition program sponsor and/or their Child Nutrition State Agency should there appear to be a conflict with the information contained herein, and any state or federal policy that governs the associated Child Nutrition Program. For more information on the federal Child Nutrition Programs please visit www.fns.usda.gov/cnd.

National Food Service Management Institute The University of Mississippi

Building the Future Through Child Nutrition

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

PURPOSE

The purpose of NFSMI is to improve the operation of Child Nutrition Programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination. The Administrative Offices and Divisions of Technology Transfer and Education and Training are located in Oxford. The Division of Applied Research is located at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

MISSION

The mission of the NFSMI is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of Child Nutrition Programs.

VISION

The vision of the NFSMI is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in Child Nutrition Programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Headquarters

The University of Mississippi
Phone: 800-321-3054
Fax: 800-321-3061
www.nfsmi.org

**Education and Training Division
Information Services Division**
The University of Mississippi
6 Jeanette Phillips Drive
P.O. Drawer 188
University, MS 38677-0188

Applied Research Division
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #10077
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601-266-5773
Fax: 888-262-9631

Acknowledgments

WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED BY

**Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS
Professor of Human Nutrition and Dietetics
Eastern Michigan University**

**Deborah H. Carr, PhD, RD
Director, Applied Research Division
National Food Service Management Institute**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Charlotte B. Oakley, PhD, RD, FADA

IN-CLASSROOM BREAKFAST PROGRAMS: BEST PRACTICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to improve student access to the underutilized U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Breakfast Program, some school districts are adopting distribution and service models for in-classroom breakfast. These models include distribution of breakfasts to each classroom by students and/or school nutrition employees and use mobile breakfast carts in hallways. The purpose of this study was to determine the best practices of providing an in-classroom breakfast.

Using case study research methodology, the National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division conducted the study. After a pilot visit in a Southeast USDA Region district, three districts of varying sizes in the Mid-Atlantic West, and Midwest USDA regions were selected based on recommendations from their state agency for operating an exemplary in-classroom breakfast program. A case study approach was used and the preparation, distribution, and service of in-classroom breakfast were observed. Interviews with school nutrition directors, principals, teachers, and other school personnel were conducted.

The planning process for implementing an in-classroom breakfast program involved school nutrition personnel, school administrators, teachers, custodians, and parents. The distribution and service of in-classroom breakfast were customized to each school within the districts; therefore, the initial development of the in-classroom breakfast model was time-consuming. Directors ranked high the following menu planning considerations: nutritive value,

student preference, food cost, and food safety. Additional considerations were prepackaging, heating and cooling requirements, labor cost, packaging requirements, and teacher requests.

The school nutrition program (SNP) directors and managers showed exceptional planning, organizational, and communication skills. The SNP directors and supervisors maintained good communication with school principals. All SNP managers used color coding for labels to organize foods and deliveries, forms designed for in-classroom breakfast, and regular communication with school personnel, students, and parents. The school nutrition personnel followed food safety and sanitation procedures and detailed schedules for breakfast deliveries. Accurate records for production and meal reimbursement categories were maintained.

All three districts and the pilot district reported increased student participation in the breakfast program after implementation of in-classroom breakfast. Teachers and school administrators had positive impressions of in-classroom breakfast based on fewer tardy students, fewer disciplinary referrals, student focus on academics, and creation of a positive school culture. It can be concluded that improved nutrition intake for students does have an impact on student success and readiness for learning.

The planning for in-classroom breakfast should include menus, logistics of distribution and service including staffing, and record keeping. Continuous quality improvement techniques should be applied after implementation. The planning and implementation of in-classroom breakfast can be successful if a school team representing school nutrition, administration, teachers, custodians, students, and parents uses the best practice results from this study.

The results of this study were used to develop a best practices resource and checklist. These will be useful for SNP directors who wish to implement in-classroom breakfast programs

or improve existing in-classroom breakfast programs in schools. The resource and checklist are included in the back of this report.