

Ready

*Good evening to everyone. For those of you who may not know me, I'm **[name and title of presenter]**. I'd like to thank the board and **[superintendent's name or whomever else you'd like to acknowledge]** for giving me the chance to speak to you today. I'm here to talk -- very briefly -- about our breakfast program, and to ask for your support as we attempt to increase our students' participation in this incredibly valuable but greatly underused program.*

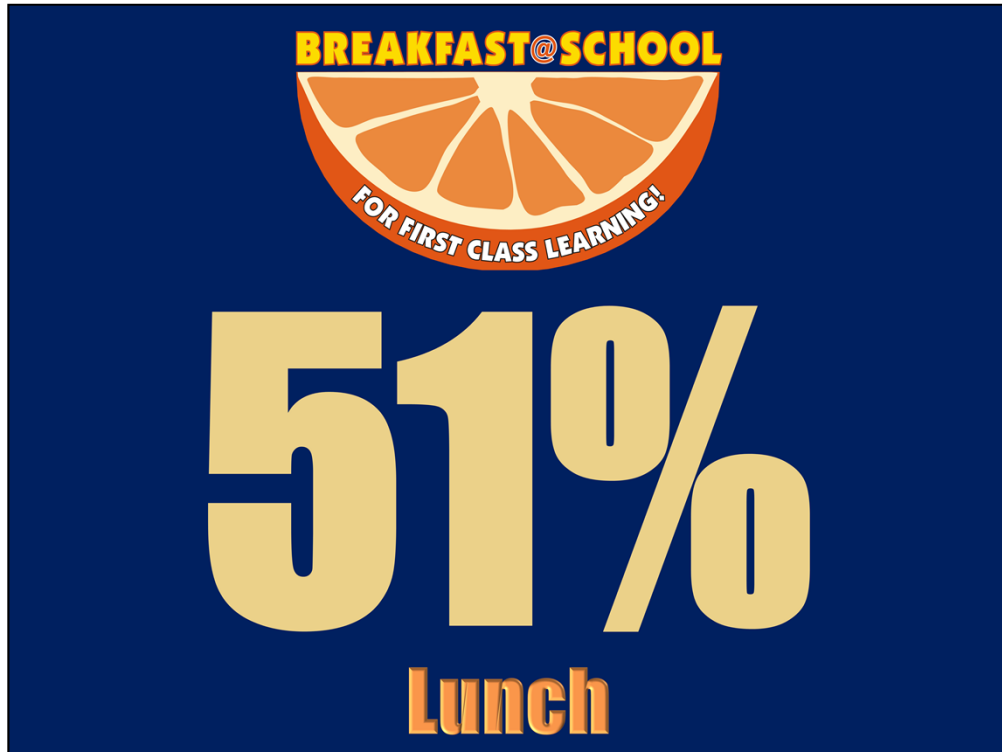
This school year, the state of Florida began requiring all schools to make breakfast available for kids every morning, and to that end they're kicking off a statewide awareness campaign using this theme . . .



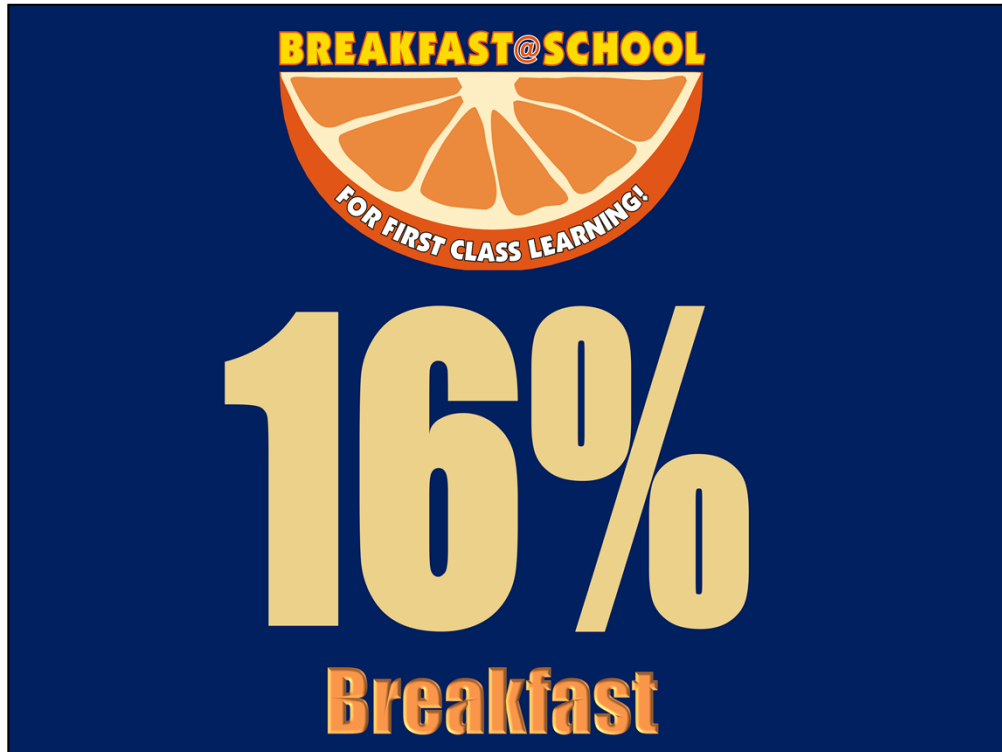
“Breakfast @ School, for first class learning.”

That’s six little words (seven if you count the “at” sign) that say a lot about this program. First that, yes, breakfast is available at all of our schools, which a lot of parents are not aware of, and second that a good morning meal is crucial for high-quality learning – especially in those first few classes of the day.

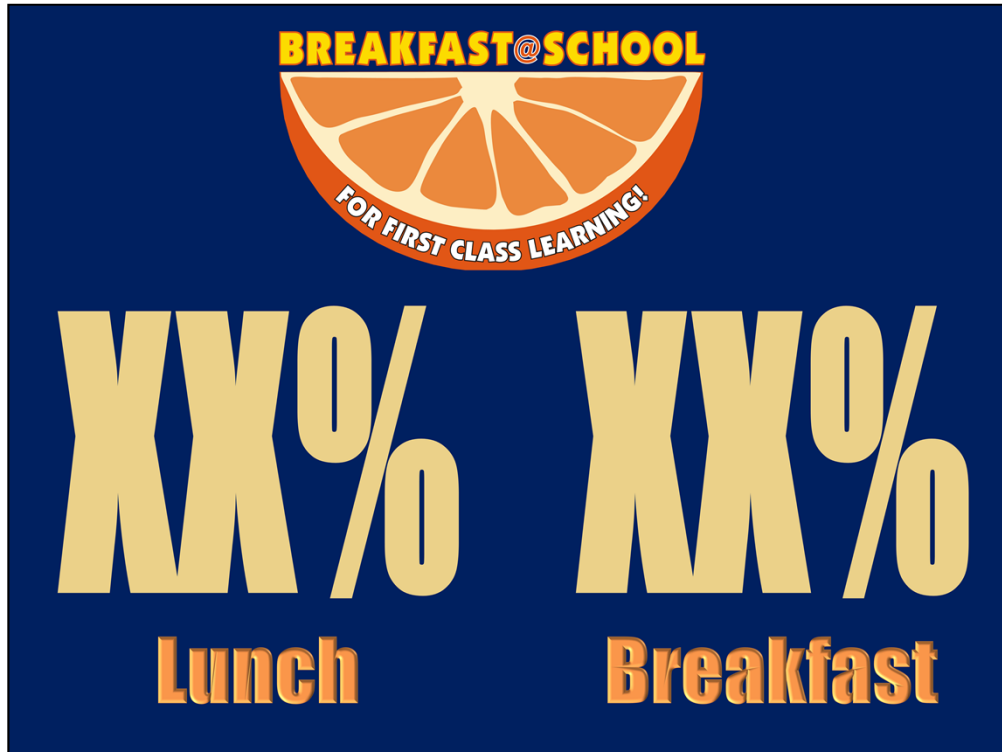
I’ll summarize a little bit of the research about the educational value of breakfast in a moment, but first a few pertinent statistics.



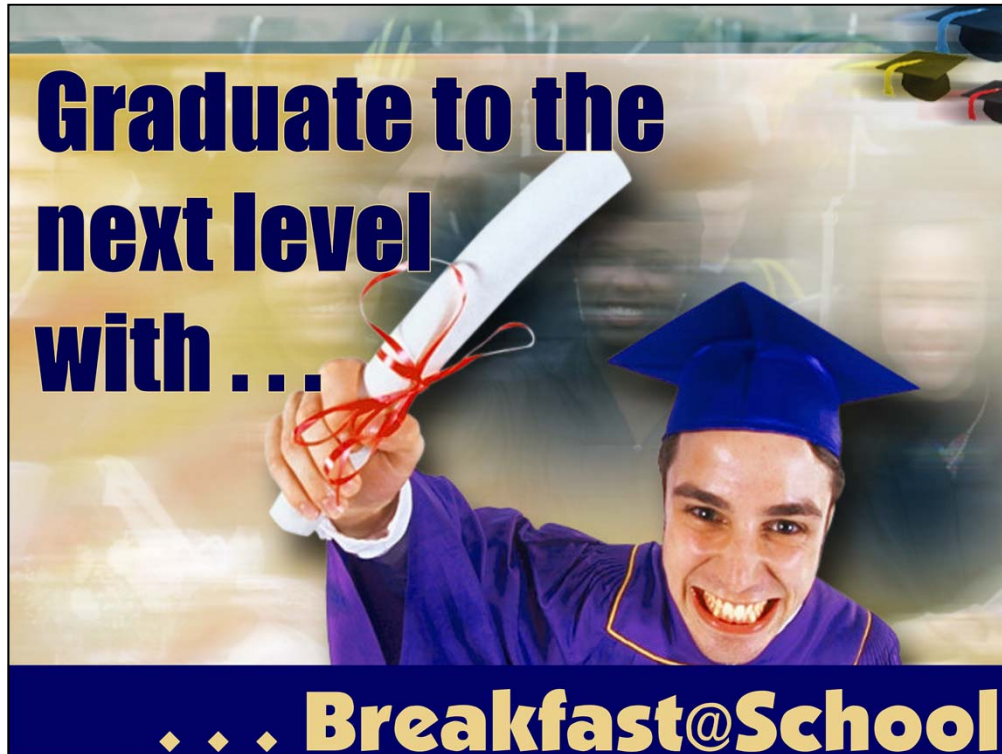
While lunch participation in Florida's schools is strong – about half of all Florida K through 12 students eat school lunch every day . . .



. . . Fewer than a third as many eat breakfast at school, fewer than one in six on an average day.



*. . .Here in our district, the numbers aren't much different – we provide lunches for xx% of our students on an average day and just xx% for breakfast. Now, we're certainly always trying to get our lunch number up – we'd like to serve everyone -- but I believe that it's absolutely **imperative** to get that number on the right up closer to the one on the left. The educational benefits of good morning nutrition are just too great for us to be satisfied with such low participation. So we'd like to take advantage of this new statewide campaign to take the next step with our breakfast program. We'd like to . . .*



Graduate to the next level of child nutrition by increasing our students' participation in Breakfast at School. Again, I promise to be brief, and (I hope) informative, and (I especially hope) persuasive today. I think that part of what I'm going to talk to you about doesn't require persuasion, but some other parts may well.



*Here's the part that shouldn't require much persuasion. I think all of us can probably agree that a good breakfast provides a healthy serving of educational, nutritional, and even behavioral benefits for students. I'll summarize those benefits for you in a moment, but I think it's safe to say that breakfast does a lot of good for our kids. **The benefits of breakfast are real.***



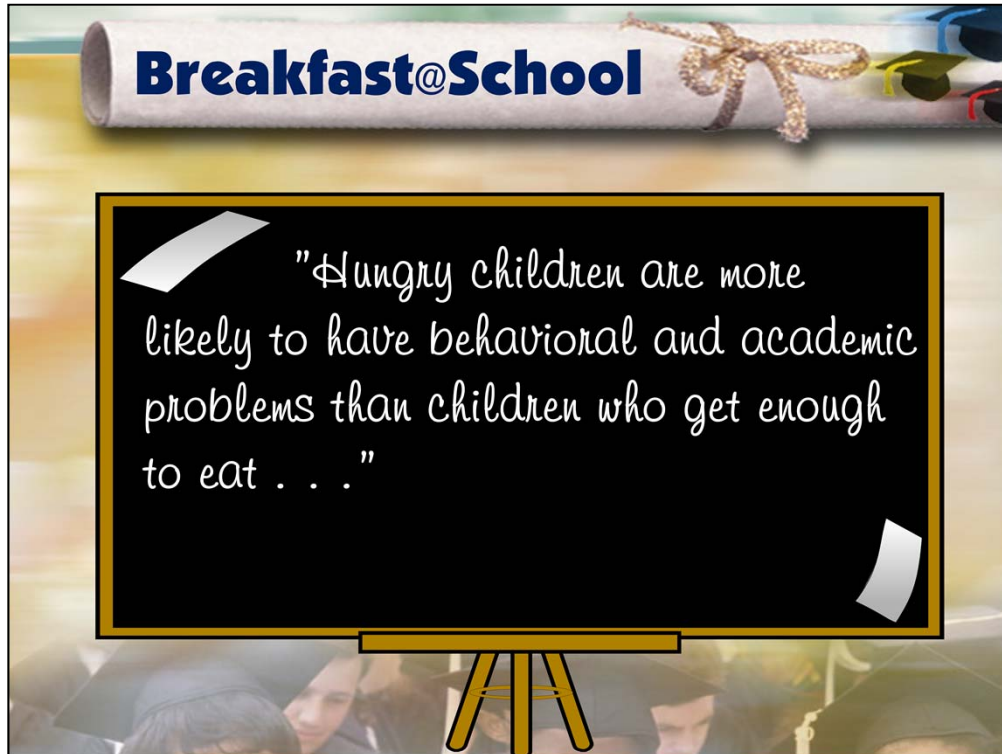
*What's **not** always as real, however, are the **barriers** that often come to mind when we consider serving more breakfasts at school. The reasons why we **should** serve breakfast@school to as many kids as possible are so much more compelling and so much more real than the reasons why we **can't**.*



*Certainly, there are challenges that must be met if we are to serve more breakfasts in some or all of our schools. But the potential benefits for our schools and students are **so great**, that we should carefully look at the perceived barriers to see whether or not they hold up under scrutiny. If we find that these barriers aren't real or aren't difficult to overcome, we should consider actively trying to promote breakfast at school as an option for our families and kids.*

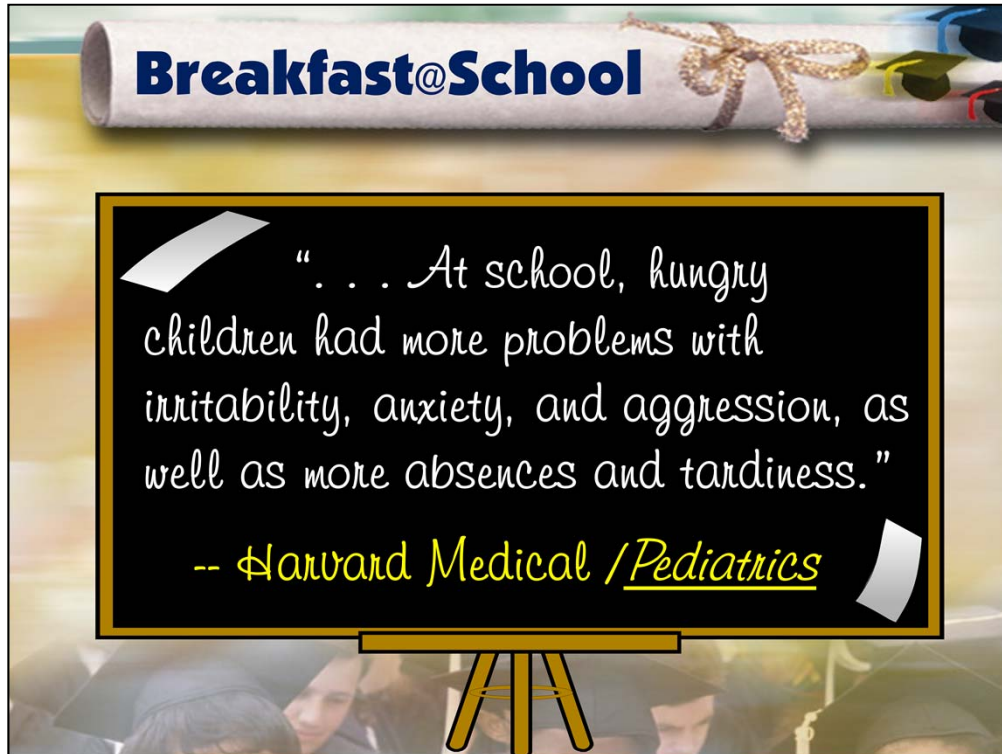


*Let's first look at a few of these benefits I keep mentioning, which fall under these basic categories. Breakfast at School can help kids improve **how they act** in school and **how well they learn**, by improving **what they eat** in the morning.*

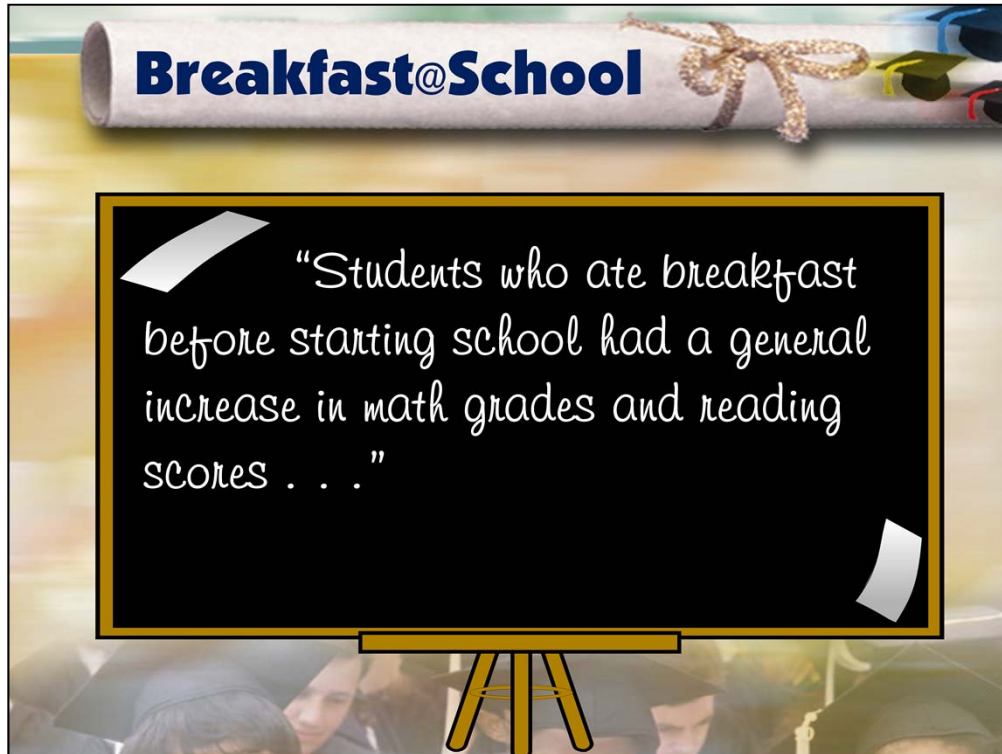


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One study, done at Harvard, found that "Hungry children are more likely to have behavioral and academic problems than children who get enough to eat . . ." [DO NOT ADVANCE HERE; THIS SLIDE WILL ADVANCE AUTOMATICALLY]

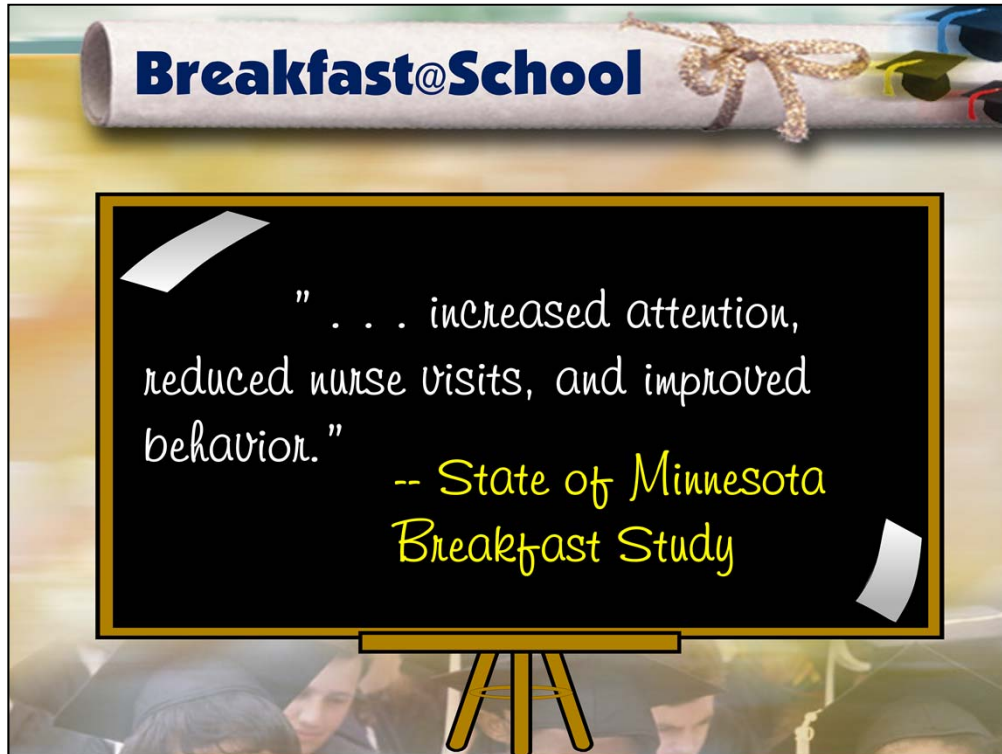


". . . At school, hungry children had more problems with irritability, anxiety, and aggression, as well as more absences and tardiness." **[ADVANCE HERE]**



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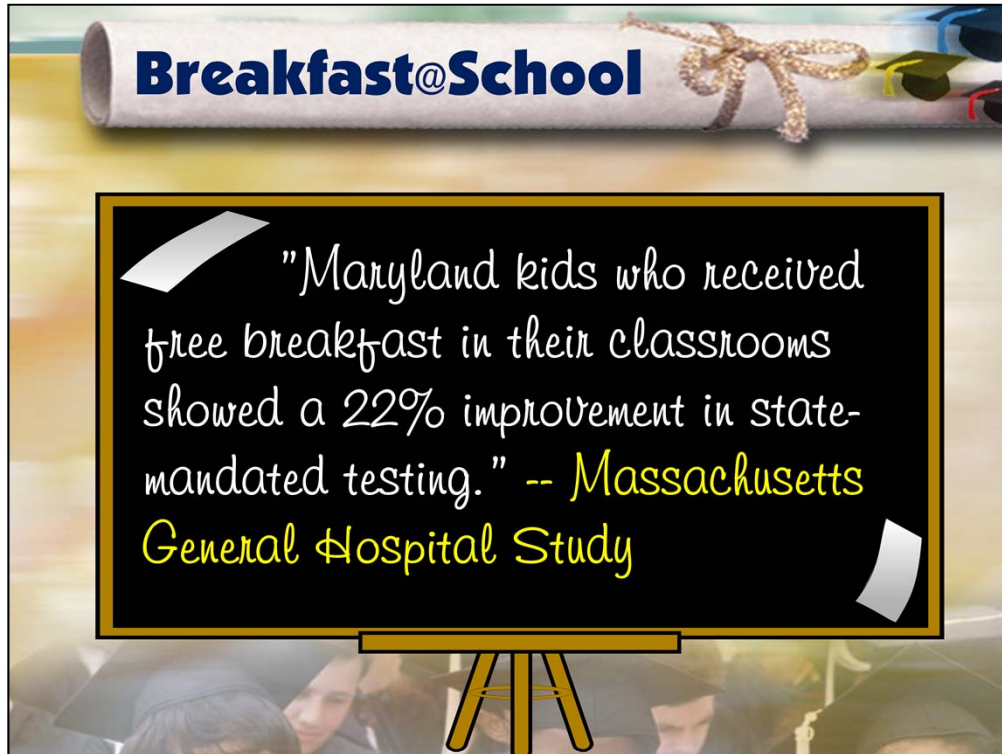
In a statewide pilot program in Minnesota, "Students who ate breakfast before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores . . ." [DO NOT ADVANCE HERE; THIS SLIDE WILL ADVANCE AUTOMATICALLY]



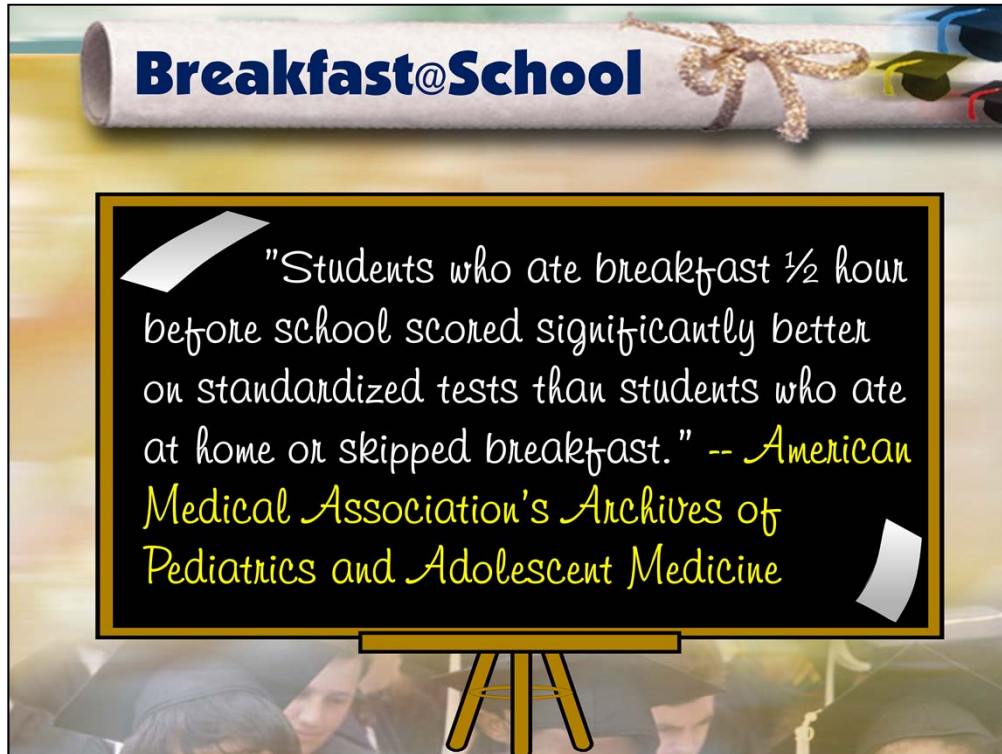
". . . increased attention, reduced nurse visits, and improved behavior." **[ADVANCE HERE]**



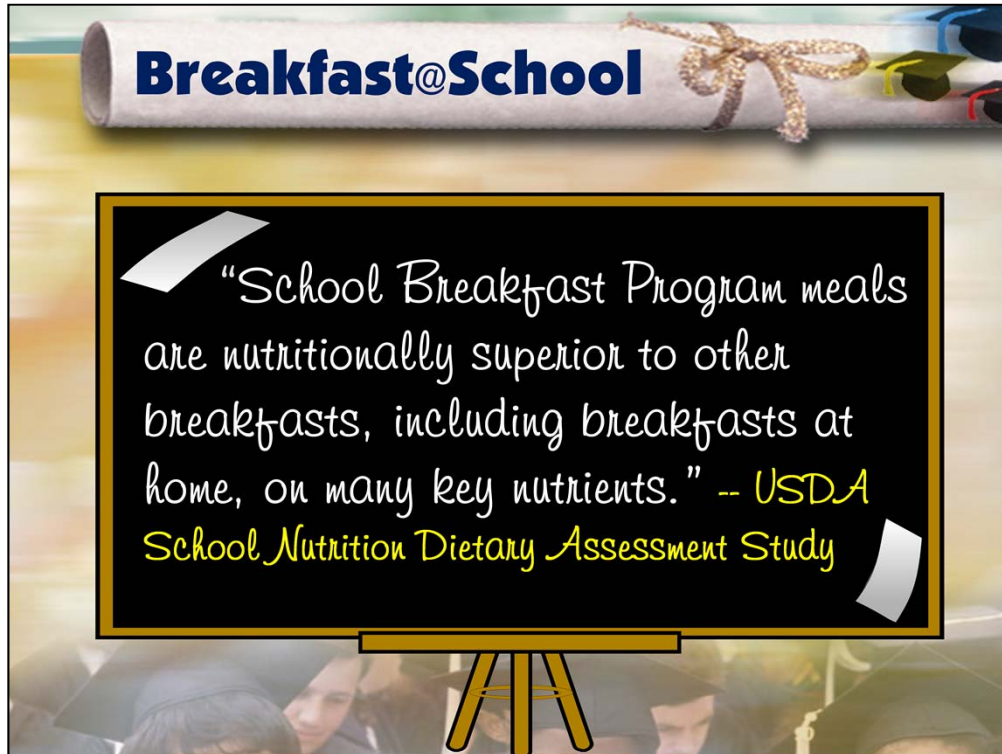
Tufts University researchers concluded that "Participation in the program had a significant association with improvement in standardized test scores and rates of absence and tardiness."



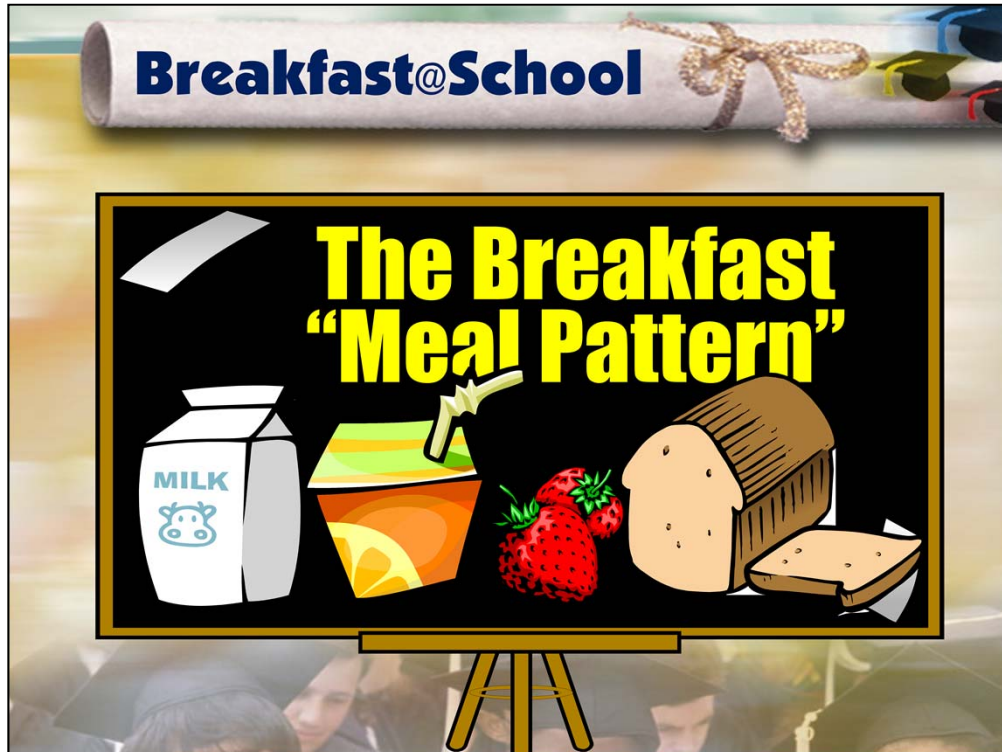
In another study, "Maryland kids who received free breakfast in their classrooms showed a 22% improvement in state-mandated testing," compared to a 5% increase statewide.



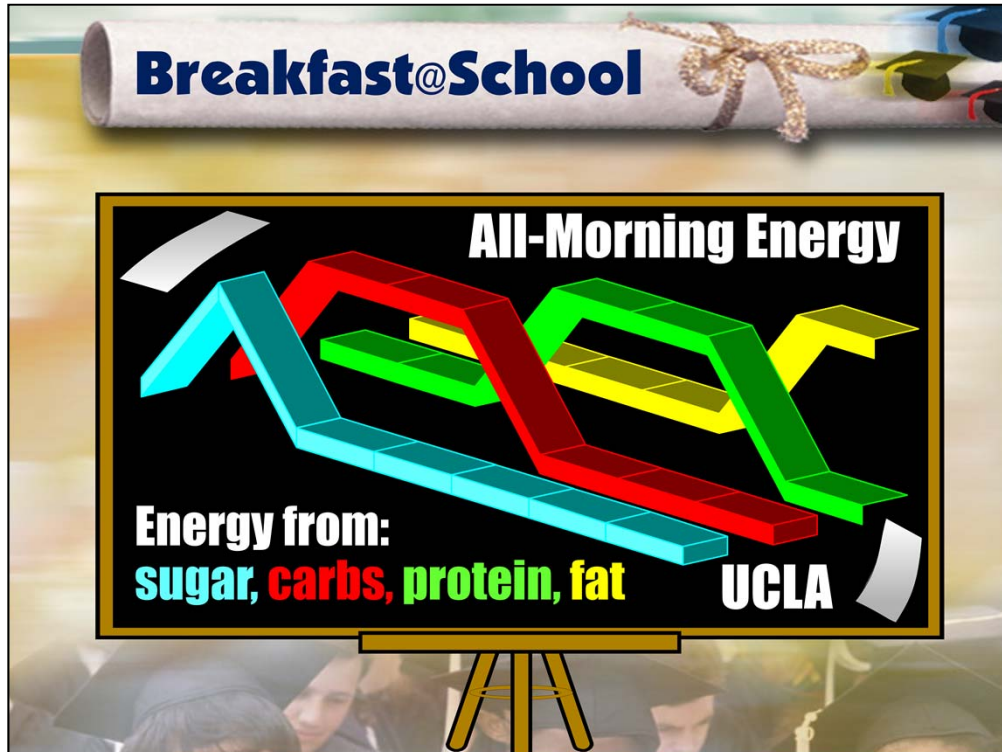
*Significantly, research has also shown that **WHEN** kids eat breakfast makes a difference for school performance, too. A study published in the AMA's Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine found that "Students who ate breakfast a half hour before school scored significantly better on standardized tests than students who ate earlier at home or skipped breakfast."*



*And the **kind** of meal matters, too. USDA researchers found that, on average, "School Breakfast Program meals are nutritionally superior to other breakfasts, including breakfasts at home, on many key nutrients."*



That's because menu planning for school breakfast must follow a very specific "meal pattern" required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture -- at least 8 ounces of milk; a half-cup of fruit or vegetable or 100% fruit juice; and a serving of bread or grain, like a muffin, cereal, toast, or a bagel. Significantly, all juice we serve must be 100% juice, no sugary "juice drinks", and Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour, and that goes for the cereal we serve, too. Breakfast at school provides a balanced, nutritious meal for our kids.



Why is the kind of meal kids eat so important? This balance of healthy foods guarantees that a typical breakfast at school delivers longer-lasting energy. A school breakfast that fits this pattern provides some sugar and complex carbohydrates, protein, and a little fat -- all of which release their energy in a staggered fashion over several hours, as shown in this chart from a study at UCLA. That means kids get energy to learn that lasts all morning.

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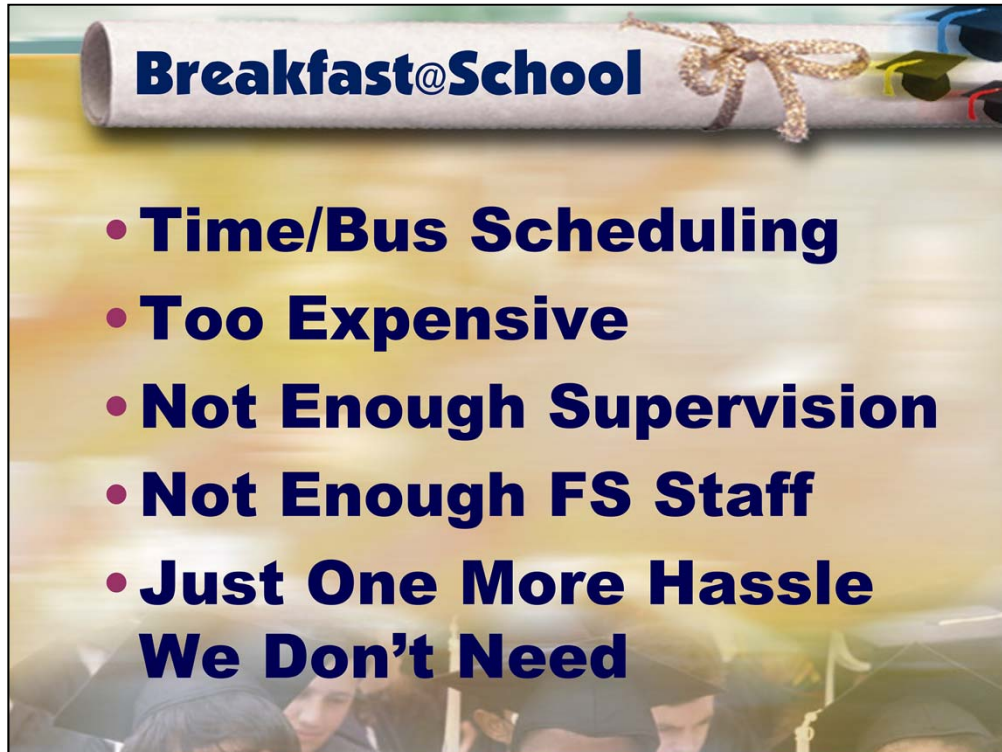
I could go on and on like this, as I'm sure you know. Research invariably shows that students who eat breakfast -- especially school breakfast -- behave better in school and perform better academically. And small wonder, because they're getting the high-quality, balanced nutrition they need immediately before the challenges of their school days begin.

*So research, common sense, and our own observations all testify to the benefits that breakfast provides. But if all that mattered were these tremendous results, every school system would do whatever it takes to serve breakfast to as many kids as possible. Indeed, many systems that don't regularly promote breakfast make a special effort to serve breakfast during test weeks, so it's safe to say that there is a consensus about the reality of these benefits. **So if districts like ours***

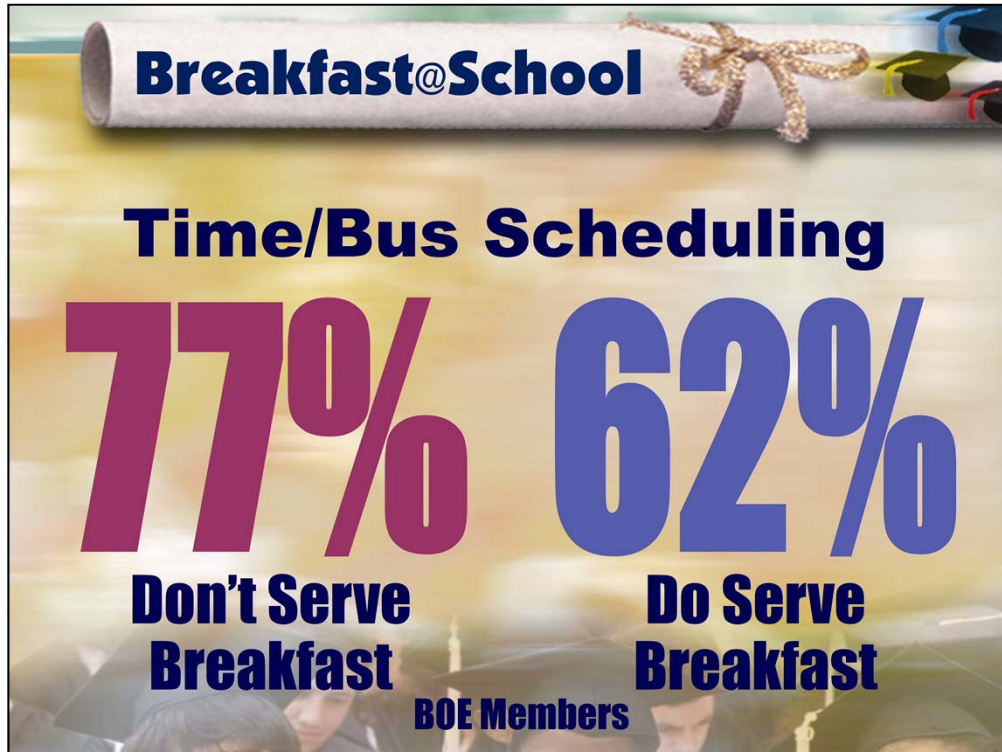
still aren't serving breakfast to as many kids as we serve lunch, there must be BARRIERS that are equally or more compelling than these great benefits.



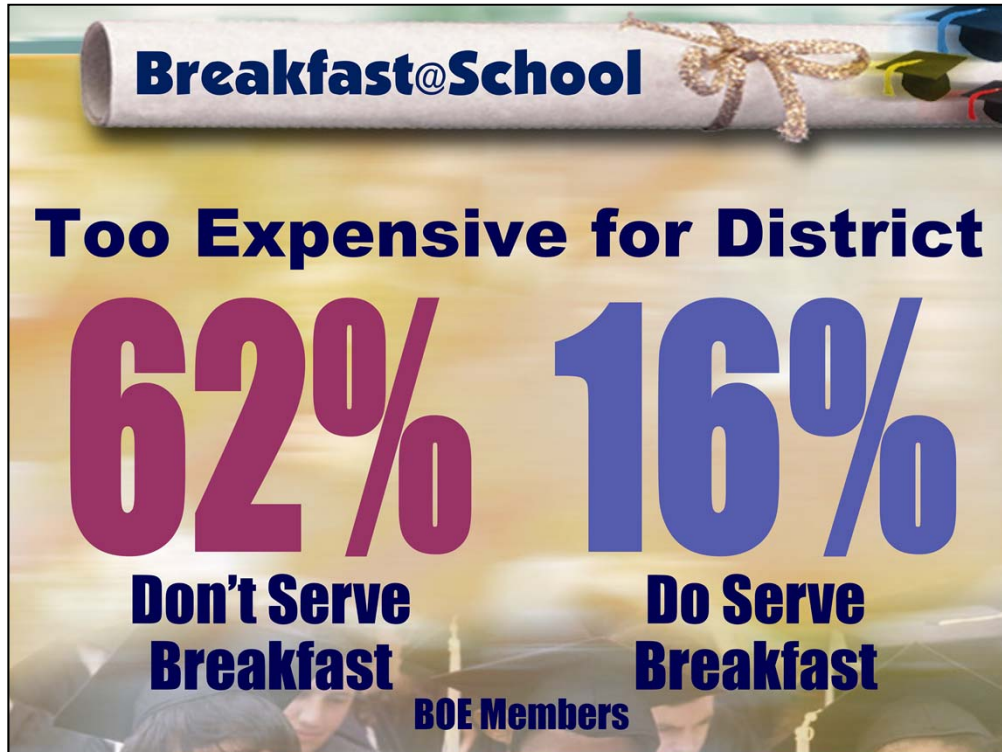
Many of these barriers are operational and logistical in nature.



In a recent survey of school board members and superintendents conducted by the Department of Education in another state, respondents identified these barriers that they believed would make expanding a school breakfast program impractical or undesirable. Interestingly, though, perception of these barriers tended to go down, in some cases dramatically, with actual experience with an expanded breakfast program.



*For example, nearly 77% of board members surveyed whose **districts didn't serve breakfast** perceived scheduling concerns to be a barrier to beginning a breakfast program. **[ENTER]** But that figure went down 15 percentage points among board members whose districts actually did serve breakfast. Nonetheless, scheduling can be a real obstacle to serving more kids breakfast. Other barriers weren't as daunting.*



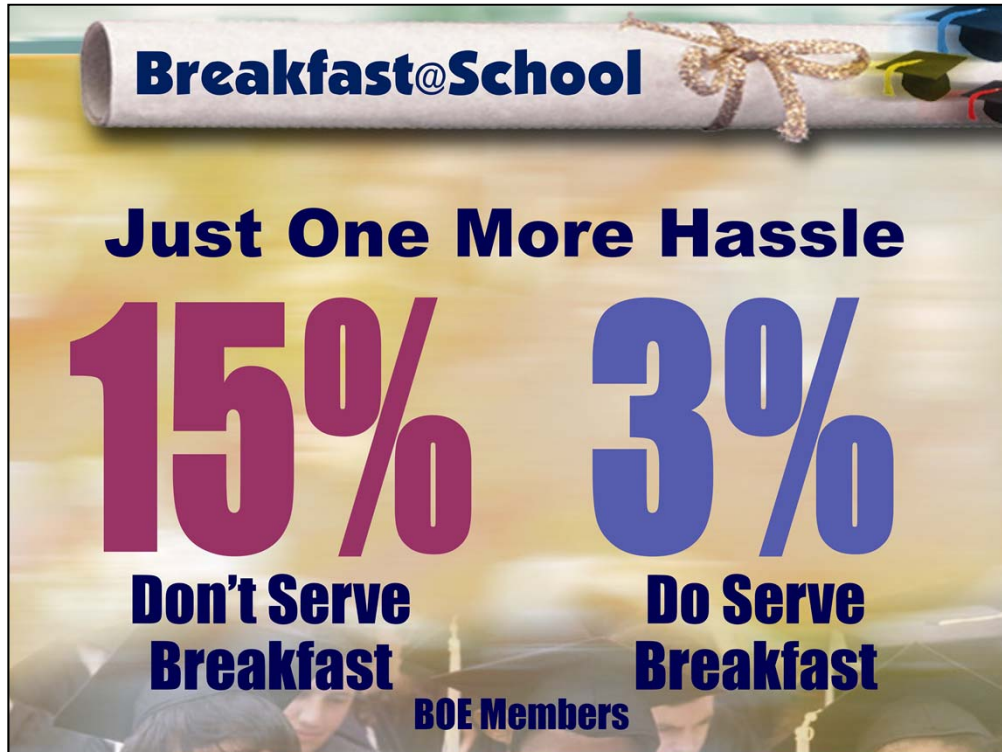
*Over 60% of board members whose districts didn't serve breakfast perceived that breakfast would be too expensive for the district, **but only about 16%** still expressed that concern when they actually had an expanded program in place.*



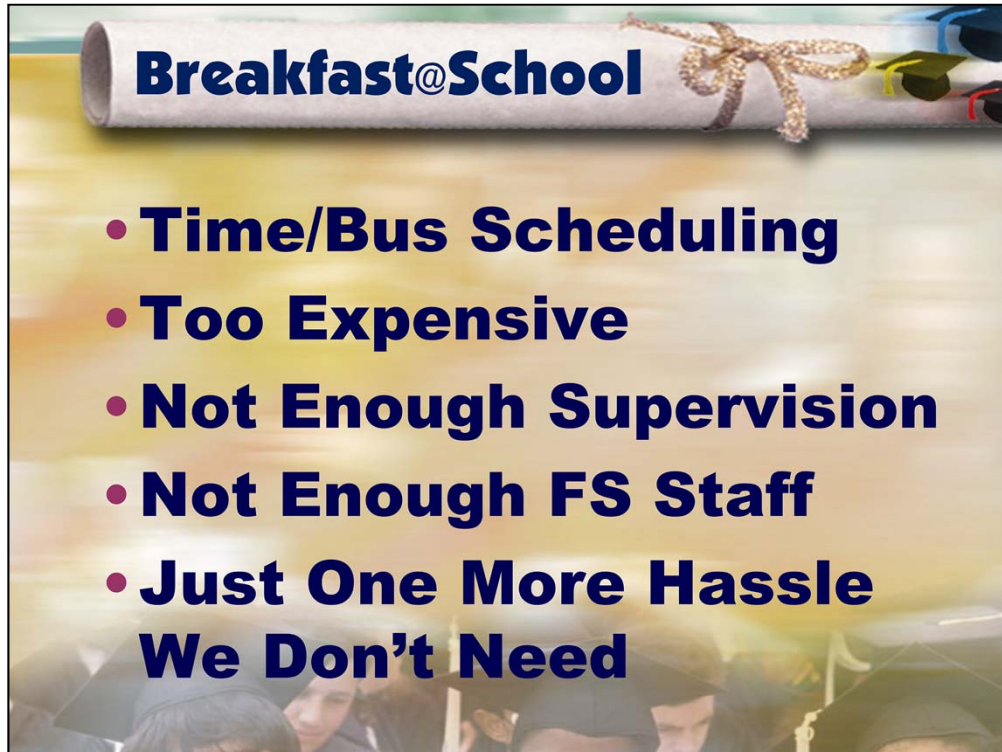
Nearly 60% of board members whose school don't serve breakfast feared that there wouldn't be enough staff for supervision, but only one-third as many found that to be an actual problem in practice.



Expectations of food service staff shortages also largely failed to materialize.



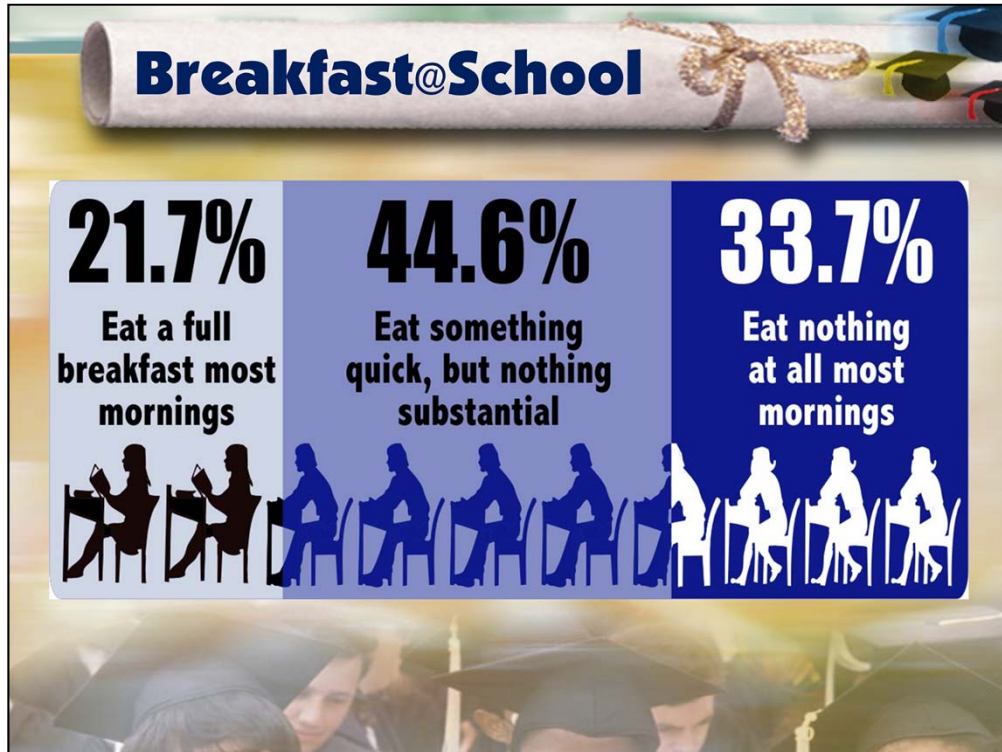
*And a mere 3% of board members perceived the program as a hassle once breakfast in school was in place -- even though five times as many assumed that **would be the case** when they didn't have a program.*



*Significantly, the drops in all of these numbers were even more dramatic among board members from **affluent districts** that serve breakfast, those with fewer than 10% of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. This finding belies the common perception that school breakfast can only work in districts with a lot of students eligible for free meals. Whatever a district's socioeconomic make-up, experience with the breakfast program clearly tends to prove to board members that barriers to breakfast aren't nearly as daunting as they might have feared.*

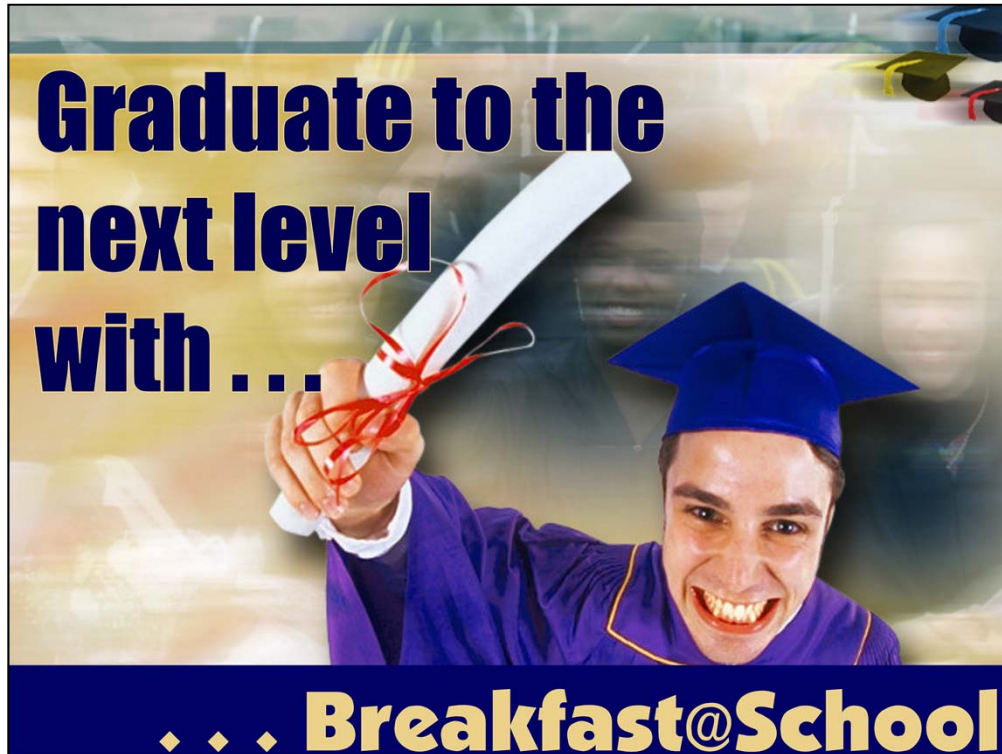


Of course, perceived logistical problems aren't the only reasons why systems don't offer breakfast. Some systems, particularly more affluent ones, also tend to assume that because kids in their districts can afford to eat well at home, they are doing so. But this may be assuming too much. A survey conducted at one suburban high school in Ohio produced some eye-opening results on this question, and I think we might see similar results here.



1500 students at a high school were asked what they usually eat for breakfast. On an average school day, only about two students out of ten eat a full breakfast. Slightly more younger students said they usually eat breakfast (about 3 in 10 middle schoolers and about 4 in 10 elementary students). But in every age group a large majority of students – nearly 80% -- were not receiving the educational and behavioral benefits of breakfast -- and this is in a relatively affluent district. Clearly, we cannot automatically assume that because our students can **afford** to eat breakfast that they are doing so. It's a fact that today's households are hectic places in the morning and also that many kids who **aren't** hungry as they rush to get ready or hurry to get out to the bus discover that they **ARE** hungry when they get to school. Our

students' behavior, concentration, and academic performance will improve if we feed more of them in the morning.



So if we want to graduate to the next level of child nutrition by increasing our students' participation in Breakfast at School., what do we need to do in our schools here in _____ county?



This section will be tailored individually for each presenter and each audience.



The two concluding screens (this and the next) will summarize the local story, reiterate the local “call to action”, and lead back to the logo and campaign.



We now have a generation's worth of research that proves that breakfast improves behavior, participation, and academic performance for our kids. And those benefits are maximized when kids eat balanced meals as close as possible to the start of the school day. That's true for kids of all age groups and income levels -- and that's exactly what breakfast at school delivers.

The benefits of breakfast at school are too great to ignore, especially when the barriers are not as significant as we might fear. I believe that we owe it to our schools, our communities, and our kids to avail ourselves of these benefits if we can make the program work logistically -- and I'm confident that, with your support, we can.



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