

Action Plan for Participation and Money Concerns

When schools in North Dakota were surveyed about starting the School Breakfast Program, concerns about lack of participation and other money concerns were identified. This action plan addresses these concerns with possible solutions.

CONCERN: If mid-morning milk breaks developed into breakfast, concern about decreased lunch participation.

SOLUTION: When **breakfast** is served **in the classroom** at the beginning of the day, three hours or more passes between breakfast and lunch. Most children can eat every three hours; therefore, participation at lunch should not be affected. Because breakfast is reimbursed by USDA, it is a better option than the milk break.

CONCERN: Will there be enough students participating to justify beginning the program?

SOLUTION #1: **Breakfast in the classroom** is one of the ways to ensure adequate participation. A recent study* found that schools offering classroom breakfast experienced dramatic increases in school breakfast participation, increased school attendance, and decreased tardiness.

SOLUTION #2: **Breakfast after first period** is the option that Julie Hartman, principal of Hurdsfield Public School, has decided works best for her students. With only 17 students, participation has not been a problem. But the school has made one unusual choice to make the program more effective, Hartman says. Originally, breakfast was served as soon as students arrived at school at 7:50. But the staff found students were not really focusing on eating at that point – they were too busy catching up and getting ready for the day. So, now the school serves breakfast at 8:45 a.m., after the first class. Hartman says they find students are much calmer and benefit from the service more at that time. “The kids are too wound up after getting off the bus,” she says. Breakfast is served for 15 minutes, and everyone eats together.

SOLUTION #3: Surveying students to determine what foods they will eat is the first step to ensuring adequate participation. (See the folder called “*Initial Assessment*”) The next step is to market the program so students, parents, teachers, administrators, coaches and other staff are supportive. (See the folder called “*Marketing Efforts*”)

CONCERN: Will our revenue be adequate to cover our costs?

SOLUTION: The best way to determine if revenue will cover costs is to complete the worksheets contained in the “*Discover School Breakfast*” toolkit, “*Calculating Costs*” section. By calculating a break-even point, you will know exactly how many students will need to eat breakfast to ensure a successful program.

Another key to success is keeping breakfast simple. Dixie Schultz, Food Service Director for the Mandan Public Schools, serves cereal, toast, juice and milk every day except Wednesdays when she varies the menu slightly by adding a cheese slice or a hot item. She charges 90 cents for breakfast and has determined that her cost to produce a breakfast is 70-75 cents. Adding breakfast provides additional revenue to the program, with costs that can be easily controlled with careful planning.

