



# Sample NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Mountain Plains Region  
1244 Speer Blvd. Denver, CO 80204 Phone: 303-844-0312 Fax: 303-844-6203

---

**CONTACT:** Linda Glaser, ND Dept. of Public Instruction, 701-328-2294  
Anjali Budhiraja, USDA FNS, 303-844-0312

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **NORTH DAKOTA HOPES SCHOOL DISTRICTS WARM UP TO BREAKFAST**

After the holidays, it's back to regular work and school routines for parents and children alike. An important part of that daily routine is making sure children eat healthy meals. State educators believe the challenge of feeding kids can be made easier by having them eat breakfast at school.

North Dakota has been selected as one of several target states in the national effort to increase the number of students who eat breakfast at school. It was selected after the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) ranked North Dakota 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation in school breakfast access by low-income children.

"Research has shown that breakfast is the most important meal of the day for all of us," says State Superintendent of Public Instruction Wayne Sanstead. "There is clearly a link between eating breakfast and being ready to learn. One of the state's primary objectives is to provide a healthy learning environment, and I believe it is very important to have school breakfast available to as many students as possible."

"This is a good time of year to encourage schools and parents to start up the school breakfast program," says Linda Glaser, state school nutrition manager. "School districts can start the breakfast program at any time, and during the colder months, it's nice for kids to warm up with breakfast at school." Furthermore, like school lunch, school breakfast is available to all students who want it.

Statistics show not as many North Dakota students have access to breakfast as educators would like. Last winter, only 34 out of every 100 students who received a free or reduced-price lunch ate school breakfast. Out of 239 school districts that operate the school lunch program, only 131 participate in the breakfast program. "We really want to increase availability," Sanstead said.

To help districts take on the program, state child nutrition officials conducted an informal survey of 36 school districts where more than 35 percent of their students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals. From the survey, state officials learned the top concerns for school districts are making breakfast work around bus and school

schedules. They also found that districts are interested in hearing what other schools are doing to make it work.

In response to these concerns, the state is preparing marketing materials that include best practice examples from a variety of school districts. The state also plans to reach some areas with radio ads in partnership with the Midwest Dairy Council and the USDA.

School breakfast operates in the same manner as the lunch program. Generally, public or nonprofit private grade schools, high schools and childcare institutions may participate in the program. School districts and independent schools that operate a breakfast program receive cash subsidies from USDA for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve breakfasts that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price breakfasts to eligible children.

For information about implementing the breakfast program, districts should contact Linda Glaser of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction at 701-328-2294.