# SNP Memo #2019-2020-31

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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA   
Department of Education**

DATE: February 21, 2020

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, ***Sandy***

## SUBJECT: School Breakfast, Expanding Participation

In School Year (SY) 2018-2019, public schools served over 57.1 million breakfasts to students across the Commonwealth using the federally funded School Breakfast Program (SBP). While this is a one percent increase in meals served from SY 2017-2018, only half of the eligible students eating school lunch are eating breakfast. Virginia schools are making strides in increasing breakfast participation by expanding access and in 2020 the goal is 70 percent of the students eating school lunch are also eating school breakfast.

In SY 2018-2019, 28 percent Virginia’s schools saw a decrease in their total breakfast participation. Serving a nutritious breakfast to students has benefits beyond providing essential nutrients. Two recent reports highlight the importance of breakfast and can provide guidance and incentive for spotlighting the importance of school breakfast.

### The No Kid Hungry Campaign – Break the Cycle of Chronic Absenteeism: Bring Breakfast into the Classroom

No Kid Hungry and researchers from the University of California Santa Barbara conducted a study showing that serving breakfast as part of the school day has the potential to reduce chronic absenteeism in schools. By incorporating breakfast as part of the regular school day, chronic absenteeism can be reduced by an average of six percentage points. Further analysis showed improvements in reading and reductions in anxiety and sadness. The study can be found on the [No Kid Hungry Website](file:///\\WCS02021\groupdir\SNP\A%20SNP%20New%20folder\DIR%20%23Memos\School%20Breakfast%20Fuels%20Health%20and%20Learning%20for%20Millions%20of%20Children,).

### The Food and Research and Action Center (FRAC) - School Breakfast Scorecard, School Year 2018-2019

FRAC released the [Annual Scorecard](https://frac.org/news/school-breakfast-fuels-health-and-learning) that measures the reach of the SBP and the impact of trends and policies on program participation. The Scorecard also provides information on implementing a breakfast program, a history of the SBP, best practices in school breakfast, and opportunities for strengthening program access and participation.

### National School Breakfast Week

National School Breakfast Week is March 2-5, 2020. This is a perfect opportunity to use the resources available on the [School Nutrition Association website](https://schoolnutrition.org/meetings/events/nsbw/2020/) to promote breakfast. Bring stakeholders together to collaborate and promote a breakfast program that will become part of each school’s culture. Research supports that breakfast can have a positive impact on student achievement, chronic absenteeism, and student nutrition. Plus, it tastes good!

If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Curwood, VDOE Office of School Nutrition Programs Director, via email at [sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov) or by phone at (804)225-2082.

SCC/BDB/cc