



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: August 18, 2017
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Instructional Time and School Nutrition Programs**

This memorandum is to emphasize the importance of School Nutrition Programs (SNP) and the connection to student academic achievement. Please note that key SNPs such as the School Breakfast Program (SBP), afterschool snacks, and Supper in the Classroom can effectively occur concurrently with instruction.

Breakfast in the Classroom can be provided to students while educational activities are occurring. In an elementary classroom, a teacher may read aloud to the class, review material from the previous day, or have students read materials to prepare for the day's lesson while they are eating breakfast. In a middle or high school classroom, a teacher may present educational materials to the class, ask the students to read, or review homework with the students during breakfast service. Afterschool snacks and Supper in the Classroom can also be provided to students while educational activities are occurring. In an elementary classroom, a teacher may read aloud to the class, recap what was presented that day, or quiz the students on material presented. In a middle or high school classroom, a teacher may provide instructions for homework or quiz the students on material presented. As long as breakfast or supper is served and eaten in the classroom while otherwise allowable instructional activities are occurring, the time will be included in instructional minutes.

School Breakfast and Academic Achievement

Students cannot be hungry for knowledge when they are just plain hungry. According to national data, students who eat breakfast, on average, achieve 17.5 percent higher scores on standardized tests, attend 1.5 more days of school per year, and therefore, are more likely to graduate from high school. As part of the Alternative School Breakfast Service Models Pilot in Virginia during the 2015-2016 school year, 54 percent of schools that implemented a Breakfast After the Bell (BaB) model saw an increase in meals served and an increase in at least one of their SOL scores.

School Breakfast Implementation and Participation

The traditional school breakfast model (in the cafeteria, before the bell) does not effectively reach children who rely on school meals. Over 1,000 schools in Virginia have implemented a BaB model such as Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab and Go Breakfast, or Second Chance Breakfast; more than 700 schools have moved to BaB within the past three years. These models are proven to increase participation in the School Breakfast Program because of the expanded access they provide. These BaB models increase access to school breakfast for all students who may miss breakfast on any given day, for any given reason.

To increase participation in the SBP, schools can encourage more students to eat breakfast by implementing a BaB model such as:

- **Breakfast in the Classroom:** a model where students or staff delivers breakfast meals to classrooms from the cafeteria in coolers or with a school nutrition staff member serving breakfast from carts in the

hallway. Children typically take 10-15 minutes to eat and instructional activities can occur during this meal time.

- **Grab and Go Breakfast:** a model where students pick up breakfast from a mobile kiosk or cart strategically placed in a high traffic area such as a hallway or entryway. Students can eat their breakfast in a common area, somewhere on school grounds, or in their classroom prior to the start of the school day.
- **Second Chance Breakfast:** a model where students eat breakfast during a break in the morning, usually after first period or halfway between breakfast service and lunch service. Students can get breakfast from the cafeteria, a kiosk or cart, and then eat it on the way to their next class or when they arrive at their next class. This model has been shown to be particularly effective in high schools, where passing periods allow for convenient distribution and students often prefer to eat later in the morning.

The No Kid Hungry Virginia Campaign

The Virginia Department of Education works closely with the No Kid Hungry Virginia team to implement and expand child nutrition programs such as the SBP. The No Kid Hungry Virginia campaign works with school divisions across Virginia to implement BaB models and provide support for child nutrition programs.

We encourage you to reach out to your Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs Specialist or a No Kid Hungry Virginia team member to work with your schools on implementing or expanding a BaB model to ensure that all children are nourished and prepared to learn. Many grant opportunities are available *now* to assist Virginia schools with making the move to or expanding BaB.

For more information regarding instructional time and School Nutrition Programs, please contact your Regional Specialist or Sandy Curwood, Director of School Nutrition Programs at (804) 225-2074 or sandra.curwood@doe.virginia.gov or Sarah Steely, Program Manager, No Kid Hungry Virginia at (804) 864-7510 or sarah.steely@vdh.virginia.gov.

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