



School Breakfast Program Basics

Overview

The School Breakfast Program is a federal and state funded child nutrition program and operates similarly to the National School Lunch Program. Schools receive state and federal reimbursement for every meal that meets requirements.

The School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern

The meal pattern includes daily and weekly meal component requirements for each grade group (K-5, 6-8, 9-12). Details related to the meal pattern can be found on [MDE's School Nutrition webpage](#). The three required food components for breakfast are: grains, fruits/vegetables, and fluid milk. The Offer Versus Serve (OVS) provision allows students to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable breakfast. OVS is optional at breakfast for all grades. If schools implement OVS, the breakfast menu must offer students four food items from the three required food components. The student must select at least three food items, one of which is ½ cup fruit/vegetable. Details on OVS can be found in the recorded training on the Minnesota Department of Education webpage [Offer vs Serve for Breakfast](#).

Point of Service

The POS is the location in the serving line where a determination can be made that a reimbursable meal has been selected by a student. A staff person should be positioned at the end of the service line/area to ensure students select a reimbursable meal. This person also must accurately count reimbursable meals so that the school receives reimbursement. Meals must be counted at all locations where breakfast is served, including breakfast in the classroom. To learn more about POS counts, view [MDE's Point of Service and Meal Counting Procedures](#).

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Communication and Training

All staff, including classroom teachers and substitute employees who are involved in the School Breakfast Program, must receive up-to-date information and training pertaining to their tasks associated with the School Breakfast Program. Staff should:

- ✓ Receive civil rights training on an annual basis. View civil rights training information on the Minnesota Department of Education [Civil Rights for USDA Programs](#).
- ✓ Understand locations and times for breakfast service.
- ✓ Recognize when a student has selected a reimbursable meal.
- ✓ Understand the importance of accurate POS meal counts and the procedure for submitting meal counts if they are responsible for collecting that information.
- ✓ Know who to contact with questions regarding the School Breakfast Program.

Best Practices

- Participation rates often increase when schools implement alternative service models such as breakfast in the classroom, grab and go, or second chance breakfast.
- Communicate frequently with students, staff, and parents to provide updates on the location and time that breakfast is served. Highlight special menu items with photos to help market your program.
- Provide reminders that school breakfast benefits everyone. All children, regardless of socioeconomic status, need access to a nutritious meal to start their day so they are ready to learn.