

# Ohio School Breakfast Program: Implementation and Effectiveness - 2022-2023 School Year



**OFFICE OF NUTRITION**

# Implementation and Effectiveness of the Ohio School Breakfast Program

## 2022-2023 School Year

### Executive Summary

This report illustrates annual data and trends for the School Breakfast Program in Ohio. Statewide data from the 2021-2022 school year shows an increase in total breakfasts served, as well as an increase in breakfast participation relative to school enrollment. Participation rates for both the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program increased in the 2021-2022 school year compared to pre-pandemic data. Cafeteria service remains the most popular breakfast service model for the 2022-2023 school year; however, more than half of all school sites also offer an alternative breakfast service option.

State law<sup>1</sup> requires the Ohio Department of Education to report on the implementation and effectiveness of the School Breakfast Program using the following data measures:

- (1) The number of students and participation rates in the free and reduced-price breakfast program for each school building;
- (2) The type of breakfast model used by each school building taking part in the breakfast program; and
- (3) The number of students and participation rates in free or reduced-price lunch for each school building.

In response to COVID-19 beginning in March 2020 and continuing through the 2021-2022 academic year, schools significantly shifted school meal operations. In 2021-2022, using U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) child nutrition program [waivers](#), nearly all Ohio schools operated breakfast and lunch meal services through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). This allowed all students to receive no-cost meals. Although waivers allowed flexibility to serve meals through non-congregate methods, such as drive-thru pickup at school buildings and community pickup locations, most school meals in the 2021-2022 academic year were served in school buildings. The waivers allowing the Seamless Summer Option expired on June 30, 2022. The expiration of the waivers led to a transition back to traditional in-school meal service for the 2022-2023 school year.

While the Seamless Summer Option allowed for the continuation and simplification of breakfast and lunch meal services through school year 2021-2022, this program affected data reporting on the implementation and effectiveness of the School Breakfast Program. Students in schools offering waivers were offered free breakfast and lunch regardless of income. This affected the collection of free and reduced-price meal applications, which are a primary source of eligibility data.

The Ohio Department of Education prepared this report with data collected through the Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System (CRRS).

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.818

## Impact of COVID-19 on the School Breakfast Program

Ohio's strategic plan for education, [Each Child, Our Future](#), and Ohio's [Whole Child Framework](#) recognize each child is unique and has basic needs—including nutrition—that must be met to enable learning. As discussed previously, most schools operating child nutrition programs in the 2021-2022 school year changed traditional meal service operations to help diminish the spread of COVID-19 while continuing to provide nutritious meals.

For the 2022-2023 school year, through the Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022, Congress enabled limited flexibilities for school food service operations for COVID-19 incidents on a case-by-case basis. Resources regarding 2022-2023 school year meal service flexibilities are available on the Ohio Department of Education's [Child Nutrition Food and Nutrition Waivers webpage](#).

## School Breakfast Program Background

The Ohio Department of Education's Office of Nutrition administers U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs in Ohio. Piloted by the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, the School Breakfast Program reimburses public and nonpublic schools that serve nutritious breakfasts to children in prekindergarten through grade 12. The U.S. Congress made the School Breakfast Program permanent in 1975. In a traditional school year, schools taking part in the program collectively serve more than 71 million breakfasts to 1.7 million enrolled children.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows that healthy, nutritious diets help children grow and succeed, and healthy meals are an important factor in school performance. Evidence shows that regularly eating breakfast before or during school significantly correlates with positive academic outcomes<sup>3</sup> for children. According to pediatricians, a good diet gives children better verbal skills, better memory and a more consistent focus in the classroom. Additionally, breakfast positively correlates with student attendance. Research shows that students who receive breakfast also regularly attend nearly two more days of school per year than students who go hungry.<sup>4</sup>

## Schools that Adopt Breakfast Programs

This report illustrates three types of data:

1. The total percentage of schools offering morning meals through the Ohio School Breakfast Program;
2. The program participation rate at those schools; and
3. The numbers of schools feeding students under a variety of breakfast service models.

The report includes trends in Ohio School Breakfast Program eligibility and participation. Graphs in the report show both past and current Ohio School Breakfast Program data. See the [full data set for each school building](#) included in this report on the Ohio Department of Education's website.

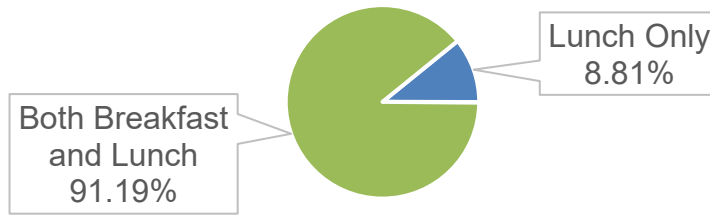
In the 2022-2023 school year, **3,734 Ohio school sites** offer USDA nutrition programs. Of those, **more than 91% of these schools** operate both the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program. These figures are increases from school year 2019-2020 (pre-pandemic), when 3,674 schools offered USDA nutrition programs and 89% of schools offered breakfast and lunch.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Monthly meal counts in the Ohio Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System.

<sup>3</sup> Hossein M. et al (2019). The relationship of breakfast and snack foods with cognitive and academic performance and physical activity levels of adolescent students. *Biological Rhythm Research*.

<sup>4</sup> Taras H. (2005). Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*.

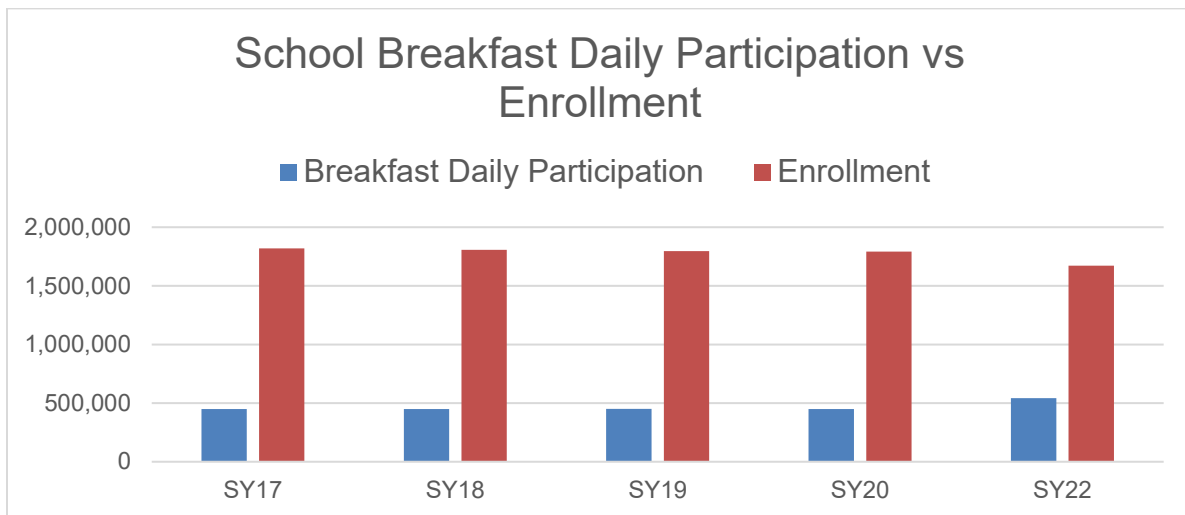
## School Breakfast (SBP) and School Lunch (NSLP) Program Adoption in Ohio Schools 2022-2023 School Year



### School Breakfast Participation

Using data from the 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022 school years, the Ohio Department of Education divided School Breakfast Program average daily participation<sup>5</sup> (blue bar below) by Ohio's statewide student enrollment<sup>6</sup> (red bar) to calculate the percentage of students who take part in the School Breakfast Program.

Due to March 2020 COVID-19-related school closures, school year 2019-2020 data used for this analysis is through February 2020. Due to school participation in the Seamless Summer Option or the Summer Food Service Program, School Breakfast Program participation data for the 2020-2021 school year is not available. Complete enrollment data for the 2022-2023 school year is not yet available.



School Breakfast Program participation rates for 2017-2022 are as follows:

- 2016-2017: 24.7%;
- 2017-2018: 24.9%;
- 2018-2019: 25.1%;
- 2019-2020: 25.1%;
- 2020-2021: not calculated due to pandemic
- 2021-2022: 32.4%.

<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Advanced Report Cards

School Breakfast Program participation rates have increased across the five-year sample despite a decline in overall statewide school enrollment. In school year 2021-2022, schools offered no-cost breakfasts to all students under the Seamless Summer Option, which may have contributed to the increased participation rate.

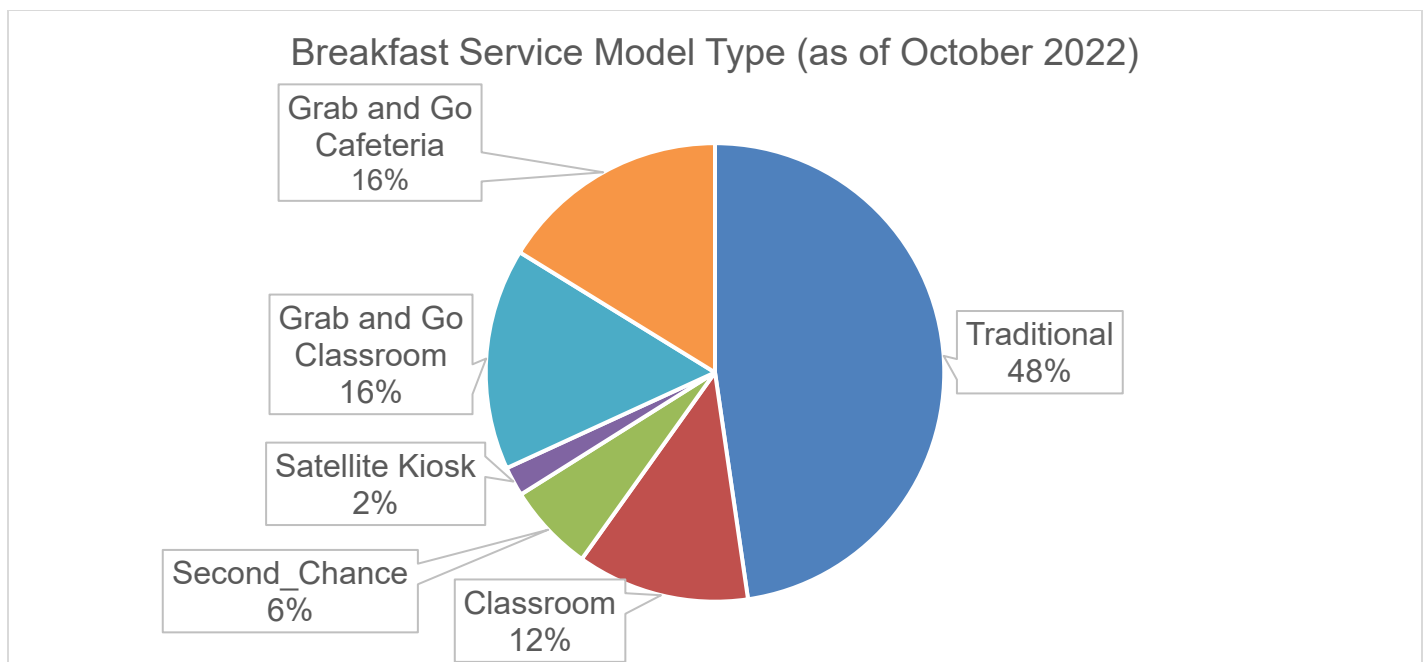
## Breakfast Model in Each School as of October 2022

The Ohio Department of Education annually collects data from each school that serves breakfast. Schools report the breakfast models they are using in each building. During the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, many schools shifted service models from traditional cafeteria settings to alternative service model methods in response to COVID-19 protocols. Schools transitioned back to in-person School Breakfast Program meal service for the 2022-2023 school year; however, the data indicates many schools continued to utilize alternative service model methods in some settings.

For the 2022-2023 school year, Ohio schools provided breakfast service model responses. The data and graph below reflect the breakfast service models used at each school as of October 2022.<sup>7</sup>

Breakfast models include, but are not limited to, the following:

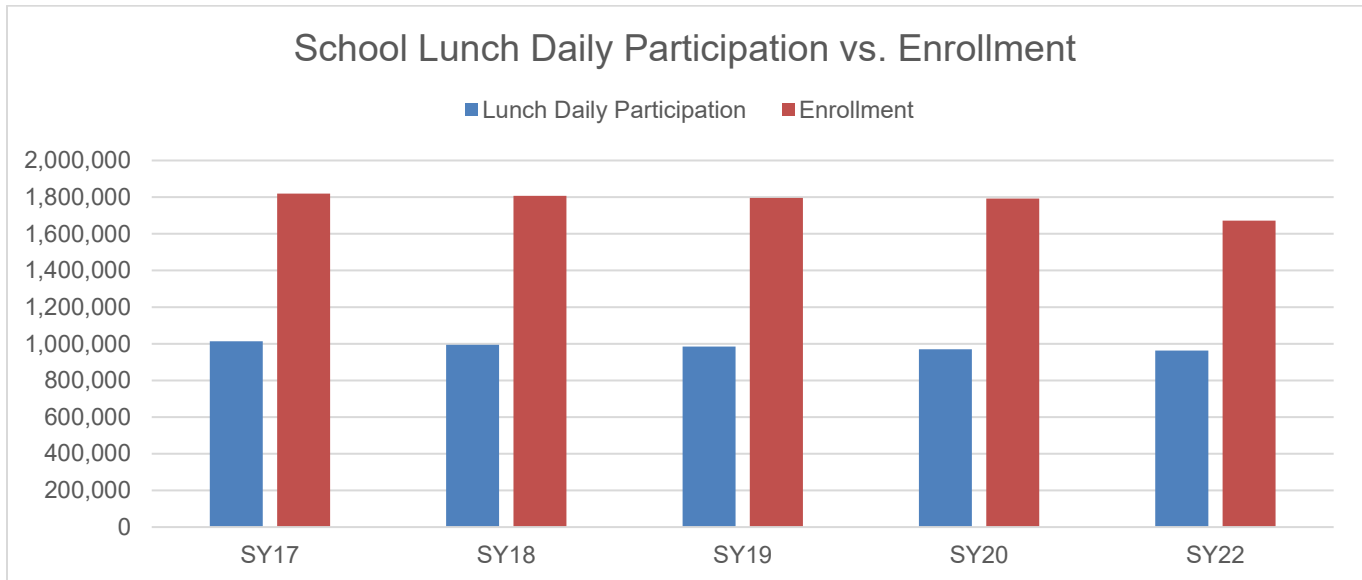
- *Traditional*: Breakfast served in the cafeteria on a traditional serving line before the school day begins;
- *Breakfast in the Classroom*: Bagged or boxed breakfasts served in the cafeteria or classroom. Students can eat in the classroom before or during the first class period;
- *Second-Chance Breakfast*: Students eat breakfast after the school day begins, generally after the first period, in the cafeteria;
- *Satellite Breakfast/Breakfast Kiosk*: Students pick up bagged breakfasts in the hallway on their way to classes;
- *Grab and Go – Cafeteria*: Students pick up bagged breakfasts and eat in the cafeteria; or
- *Grab and Go – Classroom*: Students pick up bagged breakfasts and eat in the classroom.



<sup>7</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System. Data last pulled 11/23/2022.

## School Lunch Program Participation

Using data from the 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022 school years, the Ohio Department of Education reviewed total statewide enrollment and National School Lunch Program participation to determine participation rates. The participation rate is determined by dividing National School Lunch Program average daily participation<sup>8</sup> (blue bar below) by the statewide school enrollment for Ohio<sup>9</sup> (red bar). Due to March 2020 COVID-19-related school closures, school year 2019-2020 data used for this analysis is through February 2020. Due to school participation in the Seamless Summer Option or the Summer Food Service Program, School Lunch Program participation data for the 2020-2021 school year is not available. Complete enrollment data for the 2022-2023 school year is not yet available.



School Lunch Program participation rates for 2017-2022 are as follows:

- 2016-2017: 55.7%;
- 2017-2018: 55.1%;
- 2018-2019: 54.8%;
- 2019-2020: 54.1%;
- 2020-2021: not calculated due to pandemic
- 2021-2022: 57.6%.

See the full [data set for each school building](#) on the Department website.

## Summary

This report illustrates the statewide implementation and effectiveness of school breakfast in Ohio. The full data set for each school building is available on the Ohio Department of Education website. In the 2022-2023 school year, more than 91% of Ohio schools with USDA nutrition programs serve breakfast. The data shows a statewide increase in School Breakfast Program participation rates in school year 2021-2022, relative to both National School Lunch Program participation as well as total statewide enrollment. In the 2021-2022 school year, 32.4% of enrolled children participated in the School Breakfast Program and 57.6% participated in the

<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>

<sup>9</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Advanced Report Cards

National School Lunch Program. Both percentages increased compared to pre-pandemic participation data. In attempts to minimize risk and exposure of students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of Ohio schools utilized waivers allowing no-cost meal service to all students and flexibility with service times and models in school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The waivers expired in June 2022, resulting in a transition back to in-school School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program operations for the 2022-2023 school year. Traditional breakfast service remains the most popular breakfast model, followed by Grab and Go – Classroom or Grab and Go – Cafeteria.