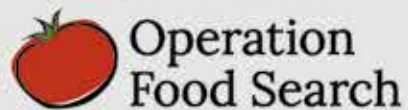




SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018

Volume 1 • March 2020

POWERED BY





Operation Food Search is a nonprofit, hunger relief organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger and family food insecurity in Missouri. Our mission is to nourish and educate our neighbors in need to heal the hurt of hunger.

Operation Food Search acknowledges the generous support of the Food Research & Action Center for its work to expand and improve the School Breakfast Program in Missouri.



Data analysis was conducted in collaboration with the Social Policy Institute at Washington University in St. Louis.



Operation Food Search would like to thank the following partners:

- ▶ Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- ▶ Campbell R-II School District and Blue Springs R-IV School District for welcoming us into their schools to observe their breakfast programs

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Acronym Key

BATB: Breakfast After the Bell

CEP: Community Eligibility Provision

DESE: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

FDPIR: Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

FNS: Food and Nutrition Services

FRP: Free and Reduced-Price

NSLP: National School Lunch Program

SBP: School Breakfast Program

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture



Executive Summary

Since its inception in 1966, the School Breakfast Program (SBP) has supported students with the energy they need to learn at school. Research links school breakfast with improved attendance,¹ fewer behavioral issues,² and fewer trips to the school nurse.³ The SBP prepares students for success in the classroom and beyond. While Missouri served 60 free and reduced-price (FRP) breakfasts for every 100 FRP lunches on average during the 2017-2018 school year, there are still opportunities to reach more students and serve more meals through the program. The goal is to move the state toward the national benchmark of 70 FRP breakfasts served for every 100 FRP lunches served.

The report highlights lessons learned from schools throughout the state as well as opportunities for improvement. Qualifying schools that have adopted the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) were 2.2 times more likely to reach the national benchmark for school breakfast participation than non-CEP schools. Breakfast After the Bell (BATB) was also found to increase participation in school breakfast, but only 36% of schools in Missouri use a BATB model. Middle schools and high schools significantly lag behind elementary schools in terms of school breakfast participation. It would benefit our students, our schools, and our state to strengthen the SBP in Missouri.

The School Breakfast Report analyzes the SBP in Missouri and offers valuable insights to school administrators, nutrition advocates, and policymakers alike. This baseline report will be updated annually and is accompanied by a website, where you can explore Missouri's breakfast data in depth, learn about breakfast case studies and get the most up-to-date information about school breakfast in the state.

For more information about school breakfast in Missouri, go to MOSchoolBreakfast.org.

What is *high breakfast participation*?

It means schools have met or exceeded the national goal of 70 breakfasts served for every 100 lunches.⁴ Throughout the report unless otherwise noted, school breakfast participation refers to the ratio of FRP breakfasts to FRP lunches.

Key Findings



On average, Missouri served **60 FRP breakfasts** for every **100 FRP lunches**.



Southeast Central Region has the highest breakfast participation at **66.6:100**



Schools using the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** were **2.2x more likely** to have high breakfast participation



Schools implementing **Breakfast After the Bell (BATB)** were **1.7x more likely** to have high breakfast participation



Elementary Schools have the highest breakfast to lunch ratio at **69:100**



Why Breakfast Matters

The benefits of the School Breakfast Program (SBP) are far reaching in Missouri. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 1 in 6 children in Missouri is unsure where his or her next meal will come from.⁶ The SBP not only helps alleviate hunger for children, it also has been proven to improve academic performance,⁷ decrease tardiness, and reduce behavioral issues at school.⁸ The simple act of offering kids a healthy school breakfast can have a dramatic impact on the health of our students, the success of our schools and the economic future of Missouri.



For Students

Students who eat school breakfast achieve 17.5% higher test scores on standardized math tests.⁹ The SBP has been shown to improve concentration, comprehension, and memory for students.



For Schools

Money for our schools is being left on the table. If state-wide breakfast participation reached the national goal of 70 FRP breakfasts for every 100 FRP lunches served, Missouri schools would receive an additional \$9,499,273 each year.⁵



For Missouri

There are families with children in every Missouri county who struggle to put food on the table each night. The SBP can help students, especially in rural areas, get the nutrients they need to grow into healthy, productive Missourians. When students succeed, Missouri succeeds.



The Basics

Who administers the School Breakfast Program?



How are students certified for free or reduced-price meals?

Two main ways include:

- 1 **Direct application** through the school
- 2 **Automatic eligibility** through participation in other assistance programs

(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), foster youth, migrant/homeless/runaway youth, and the Head Start program)

Who can participate in the School Breakfast Program?

Any student attending a school that offers the program can eat breakfast! What is covered by the program and what the student pays depend on family income.

Children from families with incomes...

- Up to 130%** of the Federal Poverty Line = **Free Meals**
- Between 130-185%** of the Federal Poverty Line = **Reduced-Priced Meals** (< 30¢ per breakfast)
- More than 185%** of the Federal Poverty Line = **Paid Meals** (charges set by school)

How much are school districts reimbursed?

Schools are reimbursed at the following rate per meal served:

Free Meals	\$1.79 or \$2.14
Reduced-Priced Meals	\$1.49 or \$1.84
Paid Meals	\$0.31

The Menu

Breakfast Requirements to Qualify as a Reimbursable Meal



1 Grain



1 Fruit



1 Milk

Measuring Breakfast Participation

For this report, breakfast participation is measured by comparing the number of free and reduced-price (FRP) breakfasts served to the number of FRP lunches served. Breakfast participation also accounts for different numbers of days that breakfast and lunch were served at each school.

Example



A school serves 6,500 FRP breakfasts and 10,000 FRP lunches each month.

This translates into a breakfast to lunch ratio of 65 FRP breakfasts for every 100 FRP lunches.

$$\frac{6,500}{10,000} = 65:100 \text{ breakfast to lunch ratio}$$

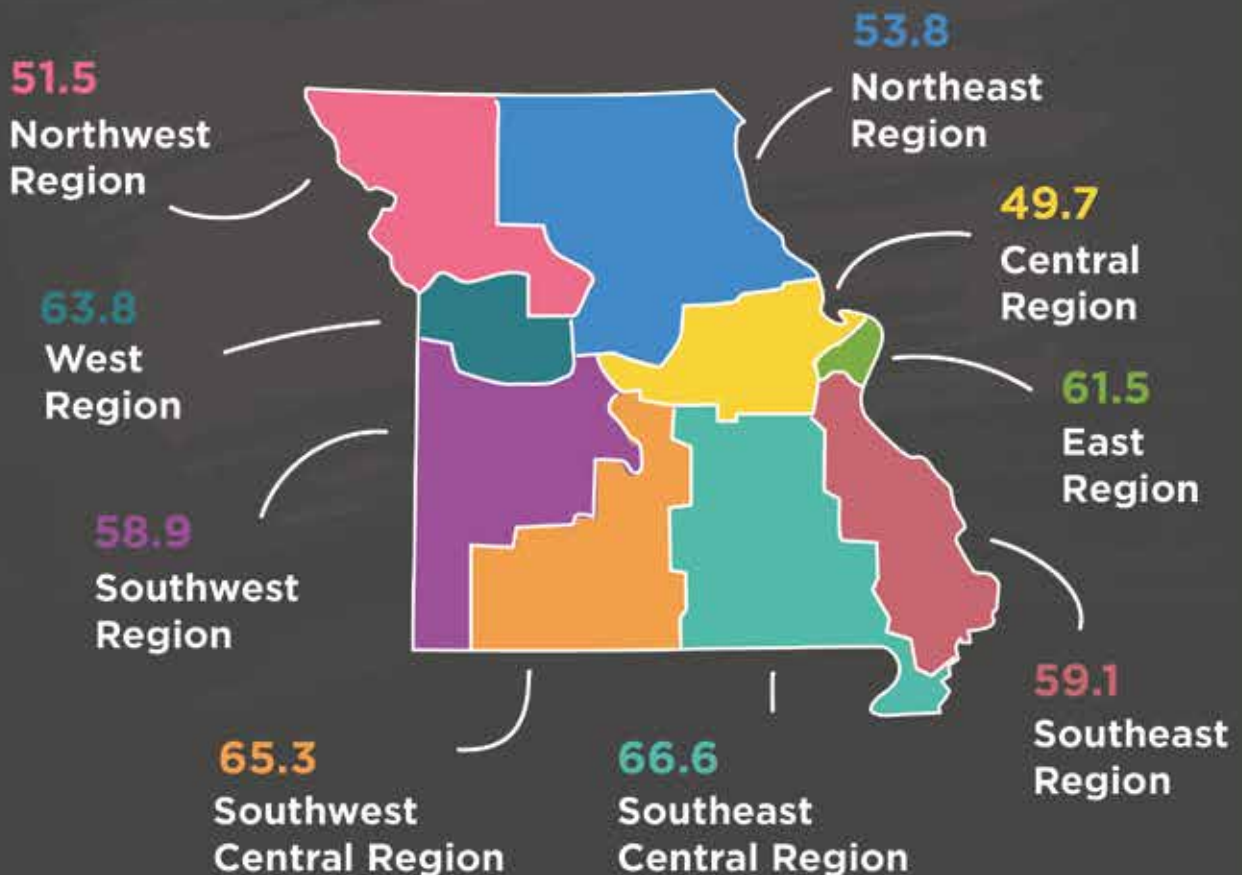
Why Measure the Meal Gap?

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and SBP are widely considered successful child nutrition programs. However, SBP has traditionally lagged behind NSLP in student participation. Lower breakfast participation can be caused by a variety of factors including the structure of the school day, location where breakfast is available, student arrival times and more. Closing the gap between FRP eligible student participation in school breakfast and lunch is meant to improve access to the nourishment needed in order to thrive at school.

School Breakfast by Region

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education divides Missouri into nine Food and Nutrition Service Regions.

Each Region and its Average Breakfast to Lunch Ratio is Shown Below:



For more information about your school or schools in your region, go to MOSchoolBreakfast.org.

Breakfast at Its Best

Traditionally, families complete an application to qualify for FRP meals and may be required to pay depending on their income. Students also have to arrive before school starts to receive breakfast. However, schools can use several strategies to overcome barriers and encourage more students to start their day with good nutrition.

Covering the Costs of Breakfast

Schools can offer breakfast at no charge to all students in order to boost participation.

- 1 Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**
Qualifying schools receive reimbursement based on the number of students directly certified for FRP meals based on enrollment in other safety net programs (SNAP, TANF and FDPIR) instead of collecting applications.
- 2 Provision 2**
Breakfast is available to all students at no charge. Schools must collect FRP applications, count, and claim meals one out of every four school years. Schools are reimbursed based on the data collected in the “base year.”
- 3 Nonpricing**
All students can receive school breakfast at no charge although they must still complete applications every year. Schools are reimbursed based on student qualifications in the various fee categories (free, reduced-price and paid).





Breakfast After the Bell

Students are more likely to participate in school breakfast if it is incorporated into the school day and available in the classroom. These BATB models have been highly successful at increasing breakfast participation.



Breakfast in the Classroom

Meals are delivered and eaten in the classroom at the start of each school day.

88% of students will eat breakfast when it's offered in their classroom.¹⁰



Grab & Go Breakfast

Students can grab prepackaged breakfast from carts or kiosks and eat them in their classrooms or common areas.

59% of students choose to eat breakfast when Grab & Go is offered.¹⁰



Second Chance Breakfast

Students are offered a "second chance" to eat breakfast after first period rather than only early in the morning before the school day begins.

58% of students will take advantage of a Second Chance Breakfast model.¹⁰

Missouri Insights



CERTIFYING MORE STUDENTS

Community Eligibility Provision

Schools, groups of schools, and school districts are eligible for CEP when they have 40% or more students eligible for FRP meals based on households enrolled in other safety net programs (SNAP, TANF and FDPIR).



CEP reduces administrative costs and burden.



CEP can increase students' willingness to participate since breakfast is offered to everyone.

Missouri Findings:

CEP schools were **2.2 times more likely** to meet the national benchmark in breakfast participation compared to schools not participating in CEP. Over half of CEP schools had high participation in breakfast.

Opportunity for Improvement:

Only half of eligible schools participated in CEP in the 2017-2018 school year. An additional **332 schools** could have used this strategy to provide meals to all students.





DELIVERY MODEL

Breakfast After the Bell

"There's not as much chaos in the morning like when we're getting the trays and people are running to the cafeteria. We don't worry about that with Breakfast in the Classroom."

- 4th Grade Student
Campbell Elementary School

Schools can make breakfast more accessible to students by using a BATB delivery model. BATB removes transportation and scheduling barriers since students do not have to arrive at school early to have breakfast.

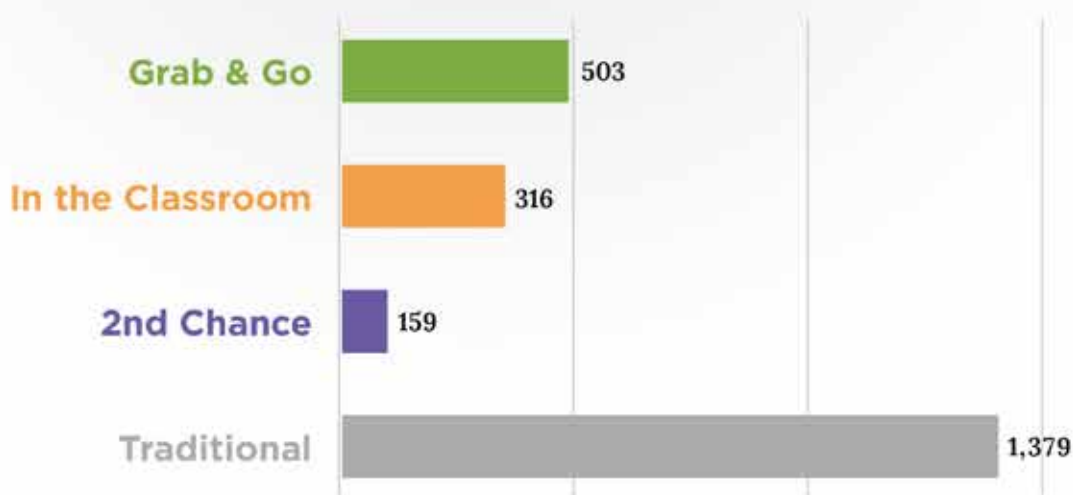
Missouri Findings:

BATB schools were **1.7 times more likely** to meet the national benchmark in breakfast participation compared to schools not offering BATB.

Opportunity for Improvement:

The majority of Missouri schools still use a traditional model for serving breakfast in the cafeteria. Just **36% of schools** reported using BATB in the 2017-2018 school year.

Delivery Models Used by MO Schools*



Participation in the three BATB models totals more than the number of schools using BATB (791 out of 2,170) because 20% (157 out of 791) of the schools using a BATB model reported utilizing multiple models.

Missouri Insights



SCHOOL LEVEL

Breakfast in Every Grade

Breakfast is important for all students, no matter their grade level. However, schools still struggle to reach older students through the current SBP.

Missouri Findings:

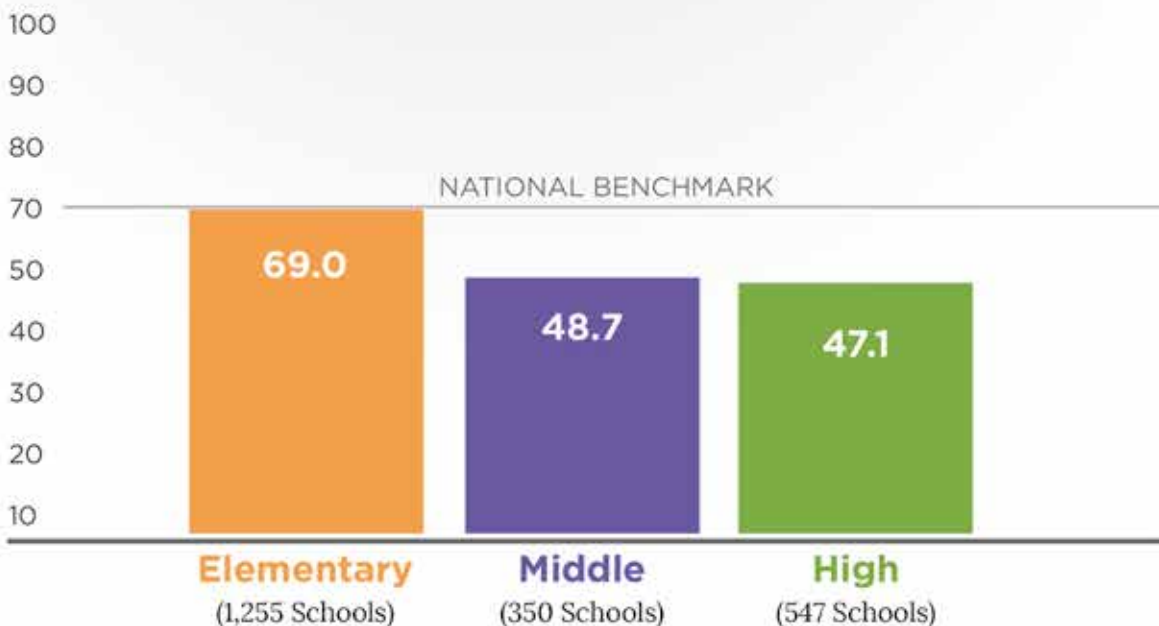
Elementary schools were **3.6 times more likely** to meet the national benchmark for breakfast participation than middle schools and high schools.

Opportunity for Improvement:

Middle schools and high schools had significantly lower breakfast participation compared to elementary schools in the 2017-2018 school year.

Average Breakfast Participation by School Level

Shown in Breakfast to Lunch Ratio





EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL BREAKFAST

Alternative Measures of Participation

Another measurement approach is to look at breakfast participation *exclusive* of lunch participation. This demonstrates that Missouri is missing out on opportunities to help students thrive.

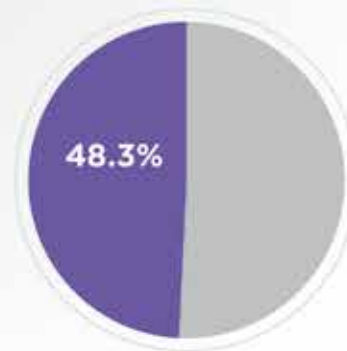
Missouri Findings:

In the 2017-2018 school year, only **31.2% of all potential breakfasts** and **48.3% of FRP breakfasts** were served at school.

Total Breakfasts Served



Total FRP Breakfasts Served



Opportunity for Improvement:

Each school day students are missing out on eating breakfast at school. When comparing the number of breakfasts served to the total number of breakfasts that could have been served at school, Missouri isn't reaching its full potential.



School Spotlight

Campbell Elementary School

Campbell R-II, Southwest Central Region

With an enrollment of 535 students in the entire district, Campbell R-II proves that Breakfast After the Bell programs are manageable for districts of all sizes and beneficial in a multitude of ways. In addition to giving students greater access to nutritious meals at the beginning of the day, which is proven to improve behavior and test scores, eating breakfast in the classroom fosters a sense of community.

In Mrs. Bunting's Fourth Grade classroom, she uses the time while everyone is eating to play the "Six Minutes Together" podcast, which has become a favorite of the students. "I like that it's less chaotic and we're able to create a routine to get the day starting off well," says Mrs. Bunting.

Food Services Secretary Deanna Treat agrees. "It's a really good program, especially for low-income communities," she says. "Everyone eats breakfast free," she beams, "including teachers."

The program also enables students who may be running late in the morning to still eat breakfast, something traditional, cafeteria-based, school breakfast doesn't allow.

"We had a few building meetings about it and said, 'If it's going to benefit our kids, then let's try it,'" explains Jay Thornton, Campbell R-II Superintendent. "Our participation rates are up considerably." Since starting the program in January 2017, they witnessed overall breakfast participation numbers increase more than 80% with the program. "We went in head first," says Thornton, "and it's been good for the kids."



“We went in head first, and it’s been good for the kids.”

- Jay Thornton
Campbell R-II Superintendent





School Spotlight

Moreland Ridge Middle School

Blue Springs R-IV District, West Region

When the bell rings at Moreland Ridge Middle School, students enter the building and find Grab & Go carts waiting for them. They take a brown bag breakfast, add a juice or milk, and punch in their student codes. Within 15 minutes, 200 students have purchased breakfast and moved along to their classrooms, flanked by teachers who stay nearby to show their support for the program and help destigmatize the experience.

“Before this program, kids were late to class just trying to eat breakfast,” says Leah Anne Luethje, Assistant Director. “This way, students are tardy less often, and the teachers are on board with kids eating in their classrooms if it means they will be on time.”

In addition to their Grab & Go style breakfast, Blue Springs R-IV also waives the reduced-price fee for the students in their district, which is considered a best practice for boosting breakfast participation. It has been very successful.

Since implementing the new model, the school has seen a significant increase in the number of students who eat breakfast. “We’ve seen big improvement by taking the meals to the students instead of making them come to the cafeteria, where there might be stigma or it’s simply out of their way,” says Brian Harris, Administrator of Student Wellness & Nutritional Services. “We are constantly looking for new ways to reach our students, especially those who might not have the opportunity to eat before they come to school.”

The kitchen manager, Jessica Martinez, is a big supporter of the effort. “As a mother of a middle schooler, I know how important this program is to the students at this school,” she says. “I just want the kids to be fed and learn better.”

“We are constantly looking for new ways to reach our students.”

- Brian Harris
Administrator of Student Wellness
& Nutritional Services



Food for Thought



Opportunities to Grow School Breakfast in Missouri

There are numerous benefits to students, schools, and Missouri when more students have the opportunity to eat a healthy, nutritious breakfast at school each morning. Here's how you can help grow the SBP in Missouri:

School Administrators

- Adopt a Breakfast After the Bell delivery model
- Consider utilizing CEP or Provision 2 in order to provide meals at no costs to all students, while also reducing paperwork and administrative costs
- Promote school breakfast throughout the year with teachers, students and parents
- Collaborate with other school administrators on best practices to increase participation, especially participation in middle school and high school

Policymakers

- Create a statewide grant and technical assistance program to support schools who wish to transition to BATB
- Assist schools to eliminate the reduced-price category for school meals
- Help spread the word to constituents and schools in your district about the importance of school breakfast

Operation Food Search provides technical assistance to schools throughout Missouri. To request technical assistance for your breakfast program, please visit MOSchoolBreakfast.org.





Introducing the Missouri School Breakfast website!

— MOSchoolBreakfast.org —

Looking to get involved or learn more about school breakfast in Missouri?

Check out our website where you can:

- Explore Missouri's breakfast data in more depth through an interactive map
- Read case studies to learn innovative strategies for increasing breakfast participation
- Get the most up-to-date information about school breakfast in our state
- Request technical assistance for your school's breakfast program



Technical Brief

Data for this report was obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for the 2017-2018 Academic Year for 2411 schools and education facilities around Missouri.

Raw Data Overview

Data obtained included county, district name, agency type, academic year, building name, claim year, claim month, and for both breakfast and lunch: meal served days, average daily attendance, enrollment, number of students eligible to participate in free, reduced, and paid lunch, and the number of free, reduced, and paid lunch meals served.

Additional data was obtained from DESE that identifies school reimbursement models (i.e. CEP and Provision 2) and self-reported school data regarding implementation of free breakfast offered to all students and innovative breakfast models (second chance breakfast, grab and go, and breakfast in the classroom).

Inclusion Criteria

This analysis includes schools that were listed by DESE as public, private, and public charter schools (which are exclusive to the East and West regions in Missouri). Excluded for purposes of this analysis were other learning and educational facilities such as vocational and technical schools, early childhood learning centers, juvenile detention facilities, and other alternative schools. Manual coding of missing data for a small subset of schools was completed to determine school type or level. The total number of schools included in the analysis is 2170.

It is important to note that breakfast to lunch and additional metrics at the individual school level may not capture structural differences in the school's breakfast/lunch service and thus at an individual school level of analysis not represent a fully accurate comparison of achievement or difficulty in free and reduced-price breakfast participation for students.

Formulas used for calculation of breakfast participation rate and breakfast/lunch ratio.

$$\frac{\sum \text{breakfasts}_i}{\sum \text{breakfastADA}_i \times \text{breakfast_days}_i} = 31.2\% \text{ Total Breakfast Participation}$$

$$\frac{\sum \text{breakfasts}_i}{\sum \text{breakfastenrollment}_i \times \left(\frac{\text{breakfastADA}_i}{\text{breakfastenrollment}_i} \right) \text{breakfast_days}_i} = 48.3\% \text{ Total FRP Breakfast Participation}$$

Breakfast to lunch ratios:

By total meals: $\sum \frac{\text{breakfasts}_i}{\text{lunches}_i} \times 100 = 50.0$

By FRP meals only: $\sum \frac{\text{FRPbreakfasts}_i}{\text{FRPlunches}_i} \times 100 = 60.4$

Adjusted F&RP that reflects differences in reported enrollment and days served:

$$\frac{\frac{\sum \text{FRPbreakfasts}_i}{\sum \text{breakfastdays}_i}}{\frac{\sum \text{FRPlunches}_i}{\sum \text{lunch_days}_i}} \times 100 = 60.0$$

Regional Breakfast to Lunch ratio for individual schools:

$$\frac{\frac{\sum \text{FRPbreakfasts}_i}{\sum \text{breakfastdays}_i}}{\frac{\sum \text{FRPlunches}_i}{\sum \text{lunch_days}_i}} \times 100$$

Suggested Citation: Ragain, T., Ritter, S., Wilbers Cavender, L., Hsu, Y., Ferris, D. Missouri School Breakfast Report: School Year 2017-2018. Operation Food Search, Volume 1, March 2020.

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