



Key Findings

Breakfast is Brain Food

The 2019-2020 school year started out like any other year. Unfortunately, by mid-March 2020, schools across Missouri were forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Suddenly, students parents and teachers had to figure out how to learn and teach from home instead of in the classroom.

Still, no matter where students are learning we know one thing is true: breakfast is brain food. A nutritious school breakfast ensures students start their day ready to learn. Studies show school breakfast **improves academic performance, decreases tardiness** and **reduces behavioral issues in the classroom**. For many students, school is where they have the opportunity to get the fuel their bodies need to focus and learn.

What is high breakfast participation?

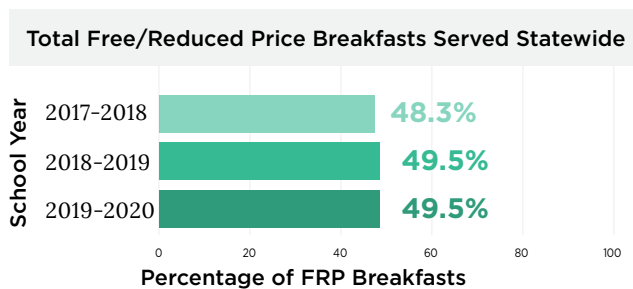
It means schools meet or exceed the national benchmark of 70 Free/Reduced Price (FRP) breakfasts served for every 100 FRP lunches.



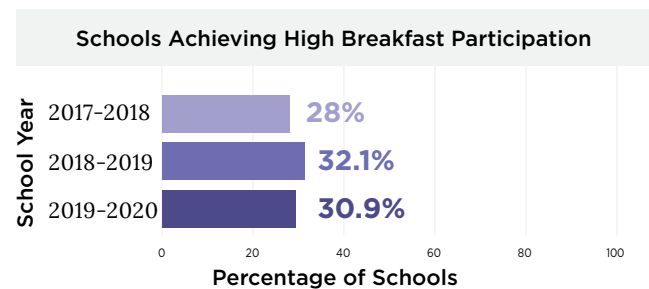
An average of 62.6 FRP breakfasts were served for every 100 FRP lunches.

During the 2019-2020 school year, an average of 62.6 FRP breakfasts were served for every 100 FRP lunches, an increase from previous years. However, significantly fewer meals were served through the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) this year as schools transitioned to alternative meal service programs as a result of the pandemic.

A Deeper Look at the Data



Participation in the SBP stayed the same this year. Of the total number of FRP breakfasts that could have been provided during the school year, only half were actually served to students.

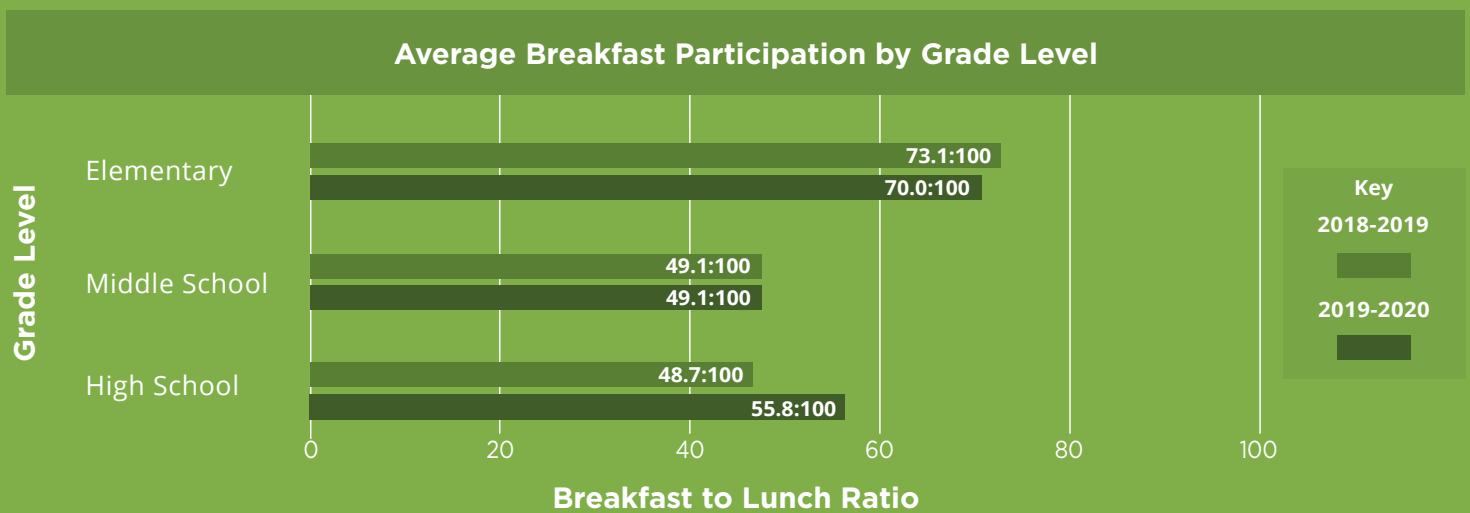


This school year, fewer schools reached the national benchmark than in the previous year with less than a third of Missouri schools achieving high breakfast participation in the 2019-2020 school year.



Breakfast Trends by Grade Level

Elementary schools saw a decline in breakfast participation in the 2019-2020 school year compared to the 2018-2019 school year. Despite this decrease, elementary schools continue to serve significantly more meals than middle schools and high schools. However, **high schools saw the largest gain in breakfast participation from the previous year.**



Grow Your School Breakfast Participation

Each day students in Missouri are missing out on an opportunity to eat breakfast at school due to barriers such as transportation, scheduling and stigma. Strategies such as the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and Breakfast After the Bell (BATB) have been shown to increase participation in the School Breakfast Program across all grade levels.



Community Eligibility Provision

Schools using the Community Eligibility Provision were **2.4x more likely to have high breakfast participation.**



Breakfast After the Bell

Schools implementing Breakfast After the Bell were **1.9x more likely to have high breakfast participation.**



Winning Combination: CEP and BATB

The average breakfast to lunch ratio for schools utilizing **both CEP and BATB is 79.1:100.**

Schools should consider adopting these best practices to ensure every student has the chance to eat a nutritious breakfast at school each morning.

MOSchoolBreakfast.org

School breakfast data was obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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