



## Nourishing Kids Initiative

### First Focus: Supporting Universal Free, Breakfast in the Classroom

The Eos Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation committed to breaking the cycle of poverty by investing in children's futures. Our goal for this multi-year funding initiative is to combat childhood hunger by increasing children's access to, and consumption of, nutritious food where they live, learn, and play. Our first focus is to promote strategies that provide low-income children with **access** to a nutritious school breakfast.

Eos approaches this work with an emphasis on combating hunger, and a commitment to leveraging our finite resources with other investments for greater impact. We chose to fund school breakfast for two very practical reasons. First, working with schools in low-income communities allows us to target our efforts to reach hungry children. Second, by increasing school breakfast participation across the Commonwealth, Massachusetts stands to leverage over \$25,000,000 in federal reimbursements<sup>1</sup>; this is an estimate of the amount of money currently left on the table due to low breakfast participation across the state, and once tapped, these funds from the USDA will sustain school breakfast programs beyond grants from private funders like Eos.

Children who rely on the free and reduced meals program eat a significant percentage of their weekday calories at school, and are more likely to skip breakfast at home<sup>2</sup>. In addition to alleviating childhood hunger, evidence suggests that universal free breakfast served after-the-bell and in the classroom, is linked to the greatest increases in student participation<sup>3</sup>; increased participation in school breakfast results in additional reimbursement funds from the USDA which makes this program self-sustaining. These findings led us to establish the Nourishing Kids Initiative to support the implementation or expansion of universal free (UF), after-the-bell (ATB), breakfast in the classroom (BIC) programs in high-need school communities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

After a competitive application process, Eos selected four school districts with which to partner in school year 2013-2014. Our funds supported expansion of UF ATB BIC in 15 schools across four Massachusetts school districts: Brockton, Revere, Salem, and Worcester. The results indicate success greater than we'd targeted for the first year of this initiative:

- Over 6,000 children in grades PK-8 received access to a nutritious breakfast in the classroom enabling them to start their school days with full bellies and the energy essential to learn.
- Due to increased school breakfast participation, these schools leveraged approximately \$800,000 in previously untapped Federal reimbursements.
- All districts plan to continue, improve, and expand their UF ATB BIC programs this school year (SY 14-15).

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<sup>1</sup> May 2014 Calculations Produced by the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center

<sup>2</sup> <http://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/42320/PDF>  
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2012-june/data-feature-food-and-nutrient-intake-data.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Bernstein et al. "Evaluation of the School Breakfast Program Pilot Project: Final Report," *Nutrition Assistance Program Report Series*, No. CN-04-SBP, Alexandria, VA: 2004.

As schools across the Commonwealth swing into full gear this September, Eos is proud to announce that our Nourishing Kids Initiative will award more than \$200,000 in grants across eleven school districts in SY14-15. This funding will build upon last year's success to improve, pilot, and expand programs to serve free breakfast to more than 7,500 additional students in the classroom, and after-the-bell. Newly funded districts this year include: Chicopee, Holyoke Community Charter School, Lawrence, Malden, Somerville, Taunton, and Webster.