

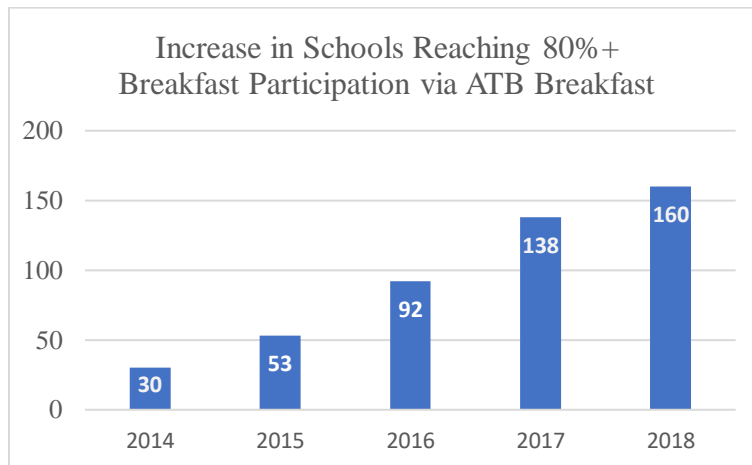
# After the Bell (ATB) Breakfast Questions, Answered

## Background

There are approximately 638 high poverty schools in the state, those counting 60%+ free- and reduced- (F/R) meal eligible student populations. By Eos Foundation's estimates, approximately 215 operate after the bell (ATB) programs, leaving 423 that do not. If all of these schools launched ATB programs and reached 80% participation rates, collectively over **150,000 more low-income students would receive a free nutritious meal** at the start of each learning day, and the state would **tap into nearly \$32 million in USDA reimbursements** each year – money currently forfeited due to low breakfast participation.

The Eos Foundation has worked with high-poverty schools to transition to ATB breakfast programs since SY13/14. We have long funded anti-hunger work and began to support ATB breakfast because it is proven to eliminate morning hunger at **no cost to the state** via the USDA breakfast reimbursement. Notably, schools operating before the bell breakfast average less than 40% participation and miss out on significant USDA reimbursements, while those operating well-run after the bell breakfast programs average 80%+ participation and tap into significant USDA funds.

Eos provides up to \$10,000 per school along with technical assistance to support the planning and implementation of programs that are proven to reach 80% participation. Over 160 schools across the Commonwealth are reaching 80%+ of their students with breakfast participation.



## How ATB breakfast works

An ATB breakfast allows children 10-15 minutes to eat breakfast in the comfort and safety of their classrooms while completing a morning assignment or conversation with their teacher and classmates.

Three ATB delivery models are known to achieve 80% participation while meeting [time on learning requirements](#). These include ATB Delivered to the Classroom (D2C) and Grab and Go to the Classroom. While most Grab and Go models average 40-50% participation, **the Chicopee Model** reaches 90% of students. For middle and high schools with block schedules, Eos suggests districts consider **the Springfield Model**, which creates a 10-minute advisory period at the start of the school day, allowing a D2C model. Another option for block schedules is **the Salem Model**, which uses a Grab and Go as students enter school followed by a Second Chance breakfast between 2nd and 3rd periods. Salem sees 40% of kids take the Grab and Go when they enter the building and another 40-50% take the Second Chance later for a total 80%+ participation rate.

This [School Breakfast Models video](#) profiles ATB programs in action.

## After the Bell (ATB) Breakfast Questions, Answered

### **Question: Does ATB breakfast solve a problem?**

**Answer: Yes, ATB breakfast reduces morning hunger, leveling the playing field for learning.**

In Massachusetts, 1 in 8 children struggles with hunger, many of them in our high-poverty schools. Hunger impedes learning, results in students visiting the school nurse in the morning for headaches and stomachaches, and poor health outcomes.

Research shows that when children eat school breakfast, they are healthier and ready to learn. Specific findings include:

- Lower rates of absences and tardiness. The Gomes PreK-5 School in New Bedford reported a 33% increase in attendance after switching to breakfast after the bell.
- Improved test scores. In one study, math scores of children who ate school breakfast increased by 17.5 percent compared to children who did not eat school breakfast.
- Fewer visits to the school nurse. Parker Middle School in Taunton reported a 24% decrease in nurse visits once the after the bell program was introduced. This equates to approximately 18,000 minutes of additional learning time for students.
- Improved dietary intake, better health outcomes, and specifically, lower body mass index.

### **Question: Does ATB breakfast bring in money?**

**Answer: Yes, and high participation ATB programs bring in millions of dollars to the state.**

Schools counting a 60%+ F/R population fall into the “severe need” category. A severe need school breakfast is reimbursed by the USDA at \$2.14 per meal.

- When New Bedford Public Schools expanded ATB breakfast across all elementary and middle schools, they fed an additional 4,600 students each day and saw their annual USDA breakfast reimbursement jump from **\$1.3 million to \$3.4 million**.
- To date, Springfield Public Schools is the first and only district in the state operating ATB in all 60+ of its PreK-12 schools. USDA breakfast reimbursements increased from **\$2.5 million to over \$5.7 million**, and the district has **created over 35 nutrition department jobs with benefits** to meet increased food production and service. Increased revenues are being invested into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Culinary and Nutrition Center that will support scratch cooked and baked meals across the district and region, expand farm to school operations, provide student-learning and co-op opportunities, and create **additional 15 full time benefited positions**.

### **Question: Does ATB breakfast cost the state money to operate?**

**Answer: No, grant funds are available for start-up costs to launching ATB programs.**

The Eos Foundation commits to fund one-time start-up costs up to \$10,000 per school to launch ATB programs. Several districts, including Everett, have launched ATB programs independent of grant funding with all start-up costs recouped once the program was up and running optimally.

Example: Memorial Elementary school in Winchendon has a F/R student population just below 60%. When breakfast was served before school, participation averaged 25%. At the beginning of SY17/18, with a \$5,000 Eos start-up grant, Memorial launched an ATB “Deliver to the Classroom” program (also known as breakfast in the classroom). Within the first month of operation, participation jumped to 80% reaching as high as 90%. Financially, the district’s school breakfast net revenue increased from \$1,100 to nearly \$8,000 in one year. Increased revenues more than covered the program’s start-up costs and no monies we required of the state.