



for **ADVOCATES**
CHILDREN OF NEW JERSEY

Giving Every Child A Chance

www.acnj.org
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Food For Thought:

Healthy Food, Strong Kids Report



October 20, 2016
The Boys & Girls Club
Of Atlantic City

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Advocates for Children of New Jersey

is... An independent, non-profit, non-partisan organization working to put children's needs first at the local, state and federal levels.

ACNJ's goal: To give every child the chance to grow up safe, healthy and educated.

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How many NJ kids are hungry?

- 340,000 New Jersey children suffer from hunger, according to Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap 2014*.
- Nearly three-quarters of educators surveyed said children regularly come to school hungry.
- Half of teachers say hunger is a serious problem in their classrooms.

Healthy Food, Strong Kids

Building a Community Response to Childhood Hunger...

- Good nutrition starts with a healthy breakfast.
- The campaign started there five years ago.
- Great progress on school breakfast.
- Now expanding efforts to summer and afterschool.

Why Breakfast After the Bell?

Time constraint, transportation, early start times and other issues prevent children from getting to school with enough time to eat before the first bell rings.

Breakfast after the bell substantially increases participation in the federal school breakfast program.

Breakfast Benefits

When children eat breakfast, research shows:

- Better academic performance
- Less disruptive student behavior
- Fewer trips to the school nurse
- Increased attendance
- Reduced tardiness
- Reduced childhood obesity

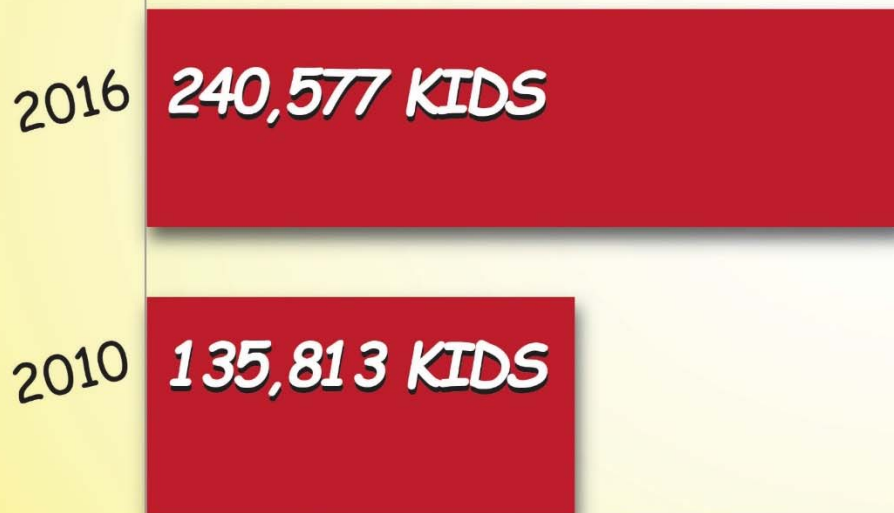
The State of School Breakfast in NJ

From October 2010 to April 2016...

- 77 percent statewide increase in low-income students receiving school breakfast.
- Nearly 105,000 more NJ children eating breakfast each school day.
- 59 percent of low-income students eating lunch also ate breakfast.

2016 NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BREAKFAST BULLETIN

OF NJ LOW-INCOME KIDS SERVED



About 105,000 more students are starting the day with a healthy meal.

77% more
NJ kids are eating
school breakfast
since 2010



300,000+
LOW-INCOME
KIDS STILL
UNSERVED



Paid Breakfast Also Increases

The number of students who do not qualify for free- or reduced-price meals also rose – **37 percent since 2010.**

This indicates that a growing number of parents who can afford breakfast prefer to have their children eat at school.

County Rankings

Top five counties:

Passaic, Cumberland, Hudson, Essex, Cape May

Bottom five counties:

Hunterdon, Bergen, Sussex, Morris, Mercer

Passaic had 57 percent participation.

Hunterdon had 16 percent participation.



More Federal Dollars

NJ school districts expected to claim **\$50 million more** in federal dollars since FY 2011.

For a total of \$98 million to feed hungry kids.

Why the rise in participation?

More districts are serving “breakfast after the bell.”

This is a more effective way to serve students.

Serving breakfast before school is ineffective. Kids aren't there.





More Work Remains

Despite the progress...

- 44 percent of eligible children received school breakfast in April 2016.
- More than 300,000 children go unserved every day.
- **Federal funding lost: \$74 million annually**



Growing Need...

The number of low-income children qualified for free- or reduced-price school meals jumped **21 percent** over past five years.

Now 542,000 NJ kids need nutritional support.

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School Breakfast Underachievers

- 44 New Jersey districts with high-poverty, low participation – average 19 percent
- 39,000 students unserved in these districts alone
- With leadership...these districts can also meet the school breakfast challenge.

High School Breakfast

While many elementary schools have switched to serving breakfast after the bell, many high schools continue to serve breakfast before school – when most students have not yet arrived.

Just 12 percent of NJ high schools served breakfast after the bell, compared to nearly one-third of elementary schools.

School Breakfast Recommendations

- School leaders should provide leadership to implement breakfast after the bell.
- State should provide fiscal incentives to expand school breakfast.
- Districts should take advantage of federal “Community Eligibility” option.
- Parents, community should advocate for breakfast after the bell.



Beyond Breakfast...

NJ Food for Thought Campaign's success in breakfast led to expansion of efforts to summer and afterschool meals.

NJ Dept. of Agriculture and campaign partners working in communities across the state to expand meal service.

Why Summer Meals?

Thousand of NJ children rely on school meals during the academic year.

The federal summer meals programs fill that nutritional gap in the summer months, when family budgets are stretched especially tight.

Available to all children in high-poverty communities.

Summer Meals Rising

NJ summer meal sites increased 21 percent from 1,100 in 2015 to 1,350 in 2016, according to preliminary state data.

Participation data not yet available.

The NJ Dept. of Agriculture and campaign partners working now to recruit summer meal sponsors and sites for 2017.

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Summer Meals

Recommendations

Partner to expand meals. Community, school, local government should team up to meet logistics of summer meals.

Reduce paperwork. NJ Dept. of Agriculture should continue to identify ways to simplify paperwork while still meeting federal requirements.

Publicize sites early in the summer.

Summer Meals

Recommendations

Conduct Effective Outreach – Sponsors, community organizations and on a statewide level.

Support Changes to Federal Law. Pending federal legislation would make it easier to operate summer meals programs. **Stay tuned at www.acnj.org.**

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The Next Frontier: Afterschool Meals

At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program provides generous reimbursements to provide snacks and dinners to children.

Efforts to increase afterschool meals occurring across the state.

Some pockets of success – Atlantic City Boys & Girls Club, Community FoodBank of New Jersey and others.

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Community Nutrition Hubs

School, community and local government work together to meet the logistics of feeding children all year long.

Bring federal dollars into towns and schools to combat childhood hunger.

Models developing in communities across New Jersey.

Paterson Schools

- ✓ Breakfast after the bell in all schools, including high schools.
- ✓ Primary provider of summer meals, serving 2,700 children each day.
- ✓ Implementing afterschool meals this school year.

Bridgeton Nutrition Hub

Bridgeton Mayor Albert Kelly leading efforts to:

- ✓ Expand summer meals
- ✓ Provide mobile feeding to children
- ✓ Work with schools to expand meal service – school breakfast and afterschool meals

Care AC Coalition

Community coalition instrumental in bringing together Atlantic City's local leaders and community organizations to expand summer meals.

Now looking to host a community-wide forum on various food programs to map out ways to create a strong nutritional safety net.

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What can you do?

Use data to convince school boards, superintendents, parent-teacher organizations and others to expand school breakfast participation.

Join or form a local coalition to expand meal service in the summer and after school. **Contact Reginald Dorsey, rdorsey@acnj.org.**

District-level data is available at www.acnj.org

www.acnj.org



Special Thanks To...

The New Jersey Departments of Agriculture and Education for providing data for this report and their continued support and leadership for combating childhood hunger in New Jersey.





More Special Thanks to...

The Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City for
its efforts to feed children after school
and for hosting this event.

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And to the generous support..

ACNJ's work on the school breakfast campaign is made possible through the generous support of the Food Research and Action Center and the New Jersey Healthy Communities Initiative, Robert Wood Johnson.

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To Our Partners...

Thanks to the NJ Food for Thought Coalition!



Their hard work and dedication make this success possible.

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Our School Breakfast Partners...

- Advocates for Children of New Jersey (*Co-chair*)
- American Dairy Association North East
- Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey
- Empower Somerset
- Evangelical Lutheran Church America
- Food Research and Action Center
- Healthy Schools Now Coalition
- Joint Committee on the Public Schools
- NJ Action for Healthy Kids/AtlantiCare
- NJ Anti-Hunger Coalition (*Co-chair*)
- NJ Association of School Administrators
- NJ Catholic Conference
- NJ Charter School Association
- NJ Department of Agriculture
- NJ Department of Education
- NJ Department of Health

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Our School Breakfast Partners..

- NJ Dietetic Association
- NJ Education Association
- The NJ Federation of Food Banks
- NJ Hunger Prevention Advisory Council
- NJ League of Municipalities
- NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids
- NJ Principal and Supervisors Association
- NJ PTA
- NJ School Boards Association
- NJ State Library
- NJ State School Nurses Association
- NJ School Nutrition Association
- NJ Urban Mayor's Association
- NJSACC: The Statewide Network for New Jersey's Afterschool Communities

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For More Information



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