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Food for Thought: 7th Annual New Jersey School Breakfast Report



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Giving Every Child A Chance[®]

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Led by Advocates for Children of New Jersey and the New Jersey Anti-Hunger Coalition, the New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign is driven by a statewide steering committee that includes the New Jersey Departments of Agriculture, Education and Health, anti-hunger and health groups and New Jersey's major education associations. The campaign's national partners are the Food Research & Action Center and the American Dairy Association North East.

The statewide committee is working to build support for school breakfast expansion, assist local efforts to expand participation and expand summer meals to children across New Jersey. For more information, visit www.njfoodforthought.org.

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Despite Persistent Childhood Hunger, Fewer Students Served School Breakfast

By Nancy Parello

For the first time since the New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign launched in 2011, the number of low-income students eating breakfast at school fell, dipping 2 percent from 2016 to 2017.

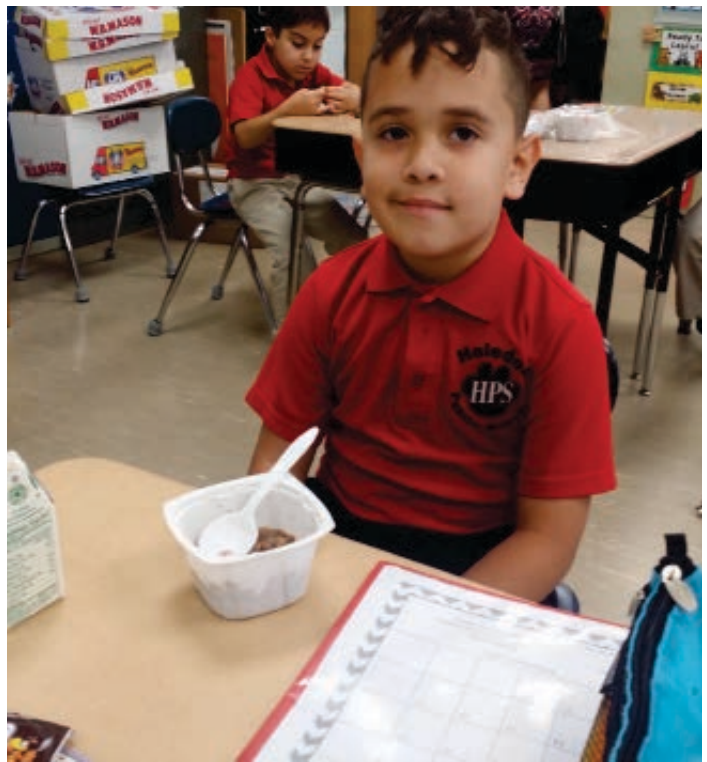
That translates to 304,000 children living in low-income families who are missing out on this all-important morning meal. These students are enrolled in the breakfast program, but are not receiving the meal because many districts continue to serve breakfast before school — when most students have not yet arrived.

When breakfast is served during the first few minutes of the school day, all students have the opportunity to eat and begin their day with a healthy meal. This relatively simple change causes participation to skyrocket.

The statewide decrease in breakfast participation is alarming because it means that several thousand students who were benefiting from this morning nutrition are now likely going hungry or eating unhealthy breakfasts. In New Jersey, nearly 540,000 students are living in families that qualify for free and low-cost school meals. These families struggle to stretch tight household budgets and meet their children's basic needs.

Teachers witness childhood hunger in their classrooms every day.

A recent national survey found that three out of four educators teach students who regularly come to school hungry, according to *Hunger in Our Schools*¹, a 2017 report by No Kid Hungry. Nearly half — 46 percent — of these teachers see hungry students arrive in their classroom almost every day, the report found. The problem is so severe that about 60 percent of respondents said they use their own money to buy food for their students.



“When kids are hungry it truly impairs their ability to focus on their academics. They’re focused on their hunger.”

—Kristin Brucia, Bound Brook teacher.

Many of these teachers know that hunger hurts their students' school performance, with 80 percent of teachers saying hungry students are unable to concentrate. Seventy-six percent see poor academic performance, 62 percent notice behavioral and discipline problems and 47 percent say hunger damages their students' health.

Many New Jersey teachers echo the survey's findings, with some educators saying they know certain students arrive at school without having eaten since lunch the day before.

Breakfast after the bell, typically served in the classroom during the first few minutes of the school day, is one of the most effective ways to combat hunger in the classroom, says Kristin Brucia, a Bound Brook teacher.

“Students ask for the breakfast immediately when they walk into the classroom in the morning,” she says. “They're hungry. When kids are hungry it truly impairs their ability to focus on their academics. They're focused on their hunger.”

Brucia keeps her students busy while they're eating with a "do-now" exercise, usually a review of previous work, to get them warmed up for the academic day.

"I really can't imagine our day without the breakfast," she says. "It's a big deal here. It's just one thing off the list of concerns students have to deal with and it's a great way to start the day on a full stomach. They're hungry, growing children."

No Kid Hungry's survey also backs this up. About three-quarters of children surveyed say school meals help them pay attention and behave in the classroom, while also reducing headaches and upset stomachs. Seventy-one percent of student respondents say school meals improve their grades.

The Benefits of Breakfast After the Bell

When children eat breakfast, research shows the following results:

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

New Jersey invests billions of dollars each year in K-12 education. The federal School Breakfast Program provides federal dollars to school districts for each meal served, meaning most high-poverty districts can serve all students using only federal funds.

Despite overwhelming evidence of the need and the existence of a cost-efficient way to meet that need, far too many school leaders remain resistant to changing breakfast service to offer the meal when all students are in school and can eat. New Jersey districts that serve breakfast after the bell have far higher participation rates than schools where breakfast is served before school.

In districts with at least 20 percent of students qualifying for free and low-cost school meals, state law requires that breakfast be offered. That means many districts are spending staff time and resources to operate a breakfast program that fails to reach the vast majority of children who would benefit — while leaving an estimated \$89 million in federal funds on the table.

To qualify for free breakfast, a family of four in the 2016–17 school year could earn no more than \$31,590 per year, and no more than \$44,955 for a reduced-price meal, according to federal guidelines.

Breakfast by the Numbers

Each year, ACNJ examines school breakfast participation data on the state level and for all districts with at least 20 percent of students eligible for free or low-cost school meals.ⁱⁱ

This year, the data show that in 46 high-poverty districts, where more students can benefit from school breakfast, the meal is being served to less than one-third of children. (See "School Breakfast Under-achievers," on pages 6, 7). Despite widespread evidence that breakfast after the bell works, leaders in these districts have resisted making the change, primarily because of logistical concerns.

Equally as alarming, 13 of New Jersey's largest high-poverty school districts saw a decline in participation from 2016 to 2017.

Other districts, however, remain committed to ensuring that all students receive a nutritious morning meal, recognizing the profound affect this can have on their students' academic performance. ACNJ's Top 20 Breakfast Champs lists show the districts that excel at feeding children. (See pages 8 and 9).

These districts — and many others — have proven that breakfast after the bell is doable and benefits students, teachers, parents and the entire school community.

School Breakfast Across the Garden State

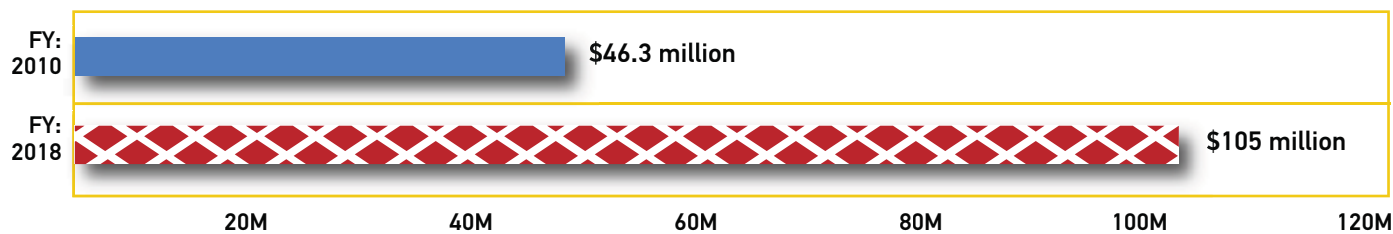
The number of students receiving free and low-cost school breakfast dropped 2 percent from April 2016 to April 2017 when about 235,000 of these students received the meal on an average day. The number of children receiving a reduced-price breakfast actually rose slightly, but this was offset by a slight decline in free breakfasts served.

Despite this setback, school breakfast participation is still up 13 percent since 2010 — the year before the start of the New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign’s statewide effort to expand breakfast participation. That means about 100,000 more children are receiving breakfast each school day.

This dramatic increase in meals served will bring an estimated \$105 million federal dollars back to New Jersey schools to feed hungry children, according to the FY 2018 state budget. That is more than double the \$46.3 million that New Jersey school districts received in FY 2010 to serve students breakfast.



Federal Reimbursements:



While fewer low-income students received school breakfast, a steadily growing number of students from higher-income families are taking advantage of a morning meal at school. From 2016 to 2017, New Jersey schools saw a 5 percent increase in breakfast participation among students whose parents did not qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Since

2010, an additional 49 percent of these students received breakfast at school.

The decline in statewide participation, while small, is still alarming and threatens the tremendous gains that New Jersey schools have made over the past six years.

New Jersey Statewide School Breakfast Totals

	2010	2016	2017	Percent Change 2016-2017	Percent Change 2010-2017
Total Student Enrollment	1,364,495	1,374,372	1,370,196	0	0
Total Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price School Meals	448,306	542,146	539,576	0	20
Percent Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price School Meals	33	39	39	0	20
Total Number Students Served Free School Breakfast	123,293	223,635	219,777	-2	78
Total Number Students Served Reduced-Price School Breakfast	12,520	15,481	15,642	1	25
Total Number Students Served Free/Reduced-Price School Breakfast	135,813	239,116	235,419	-2	73
Total Number Students Served Paid School Breakfast	26,387	37,608	39,384	5	49
Total Number of Students Served School Breakfast	162,200	276,724	274,803	-1	69
Percent of Eligible Students Served School Breakfast	30	44	44	-1	44
Percent of Eligible Students Served Breakfast as a Percent of Those Served School Lunch	38	59	59	0	56

Sources: NJ Department of Education October enrollment counts for the 2009-10, 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, and NJ Department of Agriculture participation data from October 2010, April 2016 and April 2017. NJ Department of Education enrollment and eligibility counts accessed on 6/22/17. Column totals for 2016 updated since prior report. Totals include vo-tech, special services districts and charter schools.

Falling Participation in Large Urban Districts

The statewide dip in school breakfast participation is due, in part, to a decline in breakfasts served in 13 of the state's 20 largest high-poverty school districts. In these 20 districts, average participation dropped from 61 to 58 percent of low-income students. This translates to a decrease of about 6,300 children.

North Bergen, Passaic and Camden saw the steepest drops in participation rates, at 21, 18 and 17 percent, respectively. Other districts with double-digit declines include New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, Plainfield, Union City and West New York.

Changes in district leadership, challenges of serving breakfast in high school and attendance issues may be contributing to this disappointing decrease, according to ACNJ interviews with school officials in several of these districts.

The success of breakfast after the bell is largely dependent on support from the district's top leaders. New administrators who do not view the program as essential to education may allow principals to curtail breakfast after the bell in their schools, local officials said.

In addition, in at least one district, expansion of breakfast after the bell to high school became problematic because it was cutting too deeply into instructional time and was rolled back. But, officials there say they are working on finding scheduling solutions because they recognize that high schoolers also need to begin their day with a healthy meal.

ACNJ and its partners on the New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign will continue to further explore reasons for these declines and work with school officials to reverse this trend.

Breakfast Participation in 20 Largest Schools Districts with at Least 50% of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals, 2016 vs. 2017

County	School District	# Students Served Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast April 2016	# Students Served Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast April 2017	% Eligible Students Served April 2016	% Eligible Students Served April 2017	% Change # Students Served Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	% Change as a % of Eligible Students Served
Atlantic	Atlantic City	4,817	4,938	84	85	3	2
Hudson	Bayonne	3,006	2,758	50	46	-8	-7
Camden	Camden City**	5,948	4,729	64	53	-20	-17
Passaic	Clifton	1,034	1,065	17	17	3	1
Essex	East Orange	4,261	4,163	66	83	-2	25
Union	Elizabeth	11,204	11,071	51	50	-1	-1
Essex	Irvington	3,427	3,419	61	59	0	-4
Hudson	Jersey City***	13,268	12,218	65	61	-8	-6
Union	Linden	662	701	20	21	6	2
Middlesex	New Brunswick**	6,062	5,032	73	62	-17	-16
Essex	Newark	18,693	19,115	67	67	2	0
Hudson	North Bergen	1,702	1,408	35	27	-17	-21
Passaic	Passaic City**	7,908	6,630	59	49	-16	-18
Passaic	Paterson**	17,980	18,091	72	71	1	-1
Middlesex	Perth Amboy	5,673	5,540	67	60	-2	-10
Union	Plainfield	4,494	4,100	74	64	-9	-13
Mercer	Trenton	4,293	4,569	43	47	6	8
Hudson	Union City**	7,931	7,019	74	67	-11	-10
Cumberland	Vineland	4,140	4,033	60	66	-3	10
Hudson	West New York	3,877	3,407	61	51	-12	-15
	Total/Average	130,380	124,006	61	58	-5	-5

**Indicates full implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

***Indicates partial implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Jersey City became a CEP participant for the 2016-17 school year.



School Breakfast Underachievers

Another factor contributing to New Jersey's lack of progress on school breakfast participation are high-poverty districts that continue to resist the change to serving breakfast after the bell, resulting in very low student participation in these districts.

This year's "School Breakfast Underachievers" list shows 46 districts where at least half of students lived in low-income families, but fewer than one-third of these students, who are already enrolled in the program, were receiving breakfast.

Most of these districts have been on this list for years, despite overwhelming evidence that breakfast after the bell works in dozens of high-poverty districts across New Jersey. In many cases, New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign partners have attempted to engage and assist school leaders in changing the way they serve breakfast but have been unsuccessful.

In these districts alone, nearly 43,000 of New Jersey's neediest children did not receive school breakfast, harming their chances for school success.

If all of these low-income students received breakfast each school day, these districts would collect an estimated \$15 million more in federal funding to support school breakfast each year. This money would go directly to feeding hungry students, combating the childhood hunger that impedes learning. (These funds can only be used for school breakfast and cannot offset other educational expenses.)

On ACNJ's Underachievers List, seven districts reported feeding 10 percent or fewer of their low-income students. These were: Queen City Academy Charter School, Guttenberg, Kearny, Lodi, Englewood on the Palisades Charter School, Trenton STEM-to-Civics Charter School and Fairview. The rest served between 11 and 30 percent of students on an average day in April 2017.

Resistance from school leaders, principals and teachers remains a major barrier to making this very doable change. It is especially important for superintendents to provide leadership on this front. School officials with effective programs say that superintendent support is essential to school breakfast success.

School Breakfast Underachievers

County	School District	# of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	Eligible Students as % of Total Enrollment	% Eligible Students Served	# Eligible Students NOT Served Breakfast	Total Possible Federal Reimbursement*
Union	Queen City Academy Charter School	268	83	5	254	\$92,135
Hudson	Guttenberg	828	81	7	773	\$279,796
Hudson	Kearny	3,176	56	7	2,947	\$1,054,652
Bergen	Lodi	1,830	58	8	1,676	\$593,152
Bergen	Englewood on the Palisades Charter School	140	56	9	128	\$45,868
Mercer	Trenton STEM-to-Civics Charter School	190	90	9	173	\$62,014
Bergen	Fairview	1,094	79	10	990	\$358,128
Essex	Newark Prep Charter School**	429	100	11	381	\$139,903
Essex	Belleville	2,764	62	12	2,446	\$869,530
Cape May	North Wildwood	135	53	12	119	\$43,049
Essex	Paulo Freire Charter School	145	54	12	127	\$46,094
Essex	The Gray Charter School	227	65	13	198	\$70,708
Monmouth	Keyport	564	54	14	487	\$174,641

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School Breakfast Underachievers

County	School District	# of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	Eligible Students as % of Total Enrollment	% Eligible Students Served	# Eligible Students NOT Served Breakfast	Total Possible Federal Reimbursement*
Passaic	Prospect Park**	852	92	15	721	\$264,751
Essex	People's Preparatory Charter High School**	364	96	15	308	\$113,098
Hudson	M.E.T.S Charter School	372	72	16	314	\$112,331
Hudson	Great Futures Charter High School for the Health Sciences	192	67	16	162	\$58,892
Middlesex	Academy for Urban Leadership Charter School	407	82	16	343	\$123,412
Burlington	Benjamin Banneker Prep Charter School	112	64	16	94	\$32,951
Hudson	Jersey City Golden Door Charter School	332	60	16	278	\$99,220
Burlington	Riverside	808	58	17	674	\$241,553
Passaic	Clifton	6,188	57	17	5,123	\$1,850,224
Essex	Robert Treat Academy Charter School	508	74	18	417	\$148,208
Bergen	Palisades Park	757	50	18	621	\$222,523
Hudson	Hudson Arts and Science Charter School	206	58	19	166	\$59,281
Somerset	Manville	710	50	20	570	\$202,608
Bergen	Cliffside Park	1,776	58	20	1,416	\$509,620
Union	Linden	3,416	56	21	2,715	\$966,983
Morris	Wharton	432	55	22	336	\$119,221
Morris	Dover	2,501	78	23	1,928	\$687,874
Hudson	Hoboken	898	52	23	688	\$248,530
Camden	Woodlynne **	384	100	23	294	\$107,957
Hudson	University Academy Charter School	312	73	24	238	\$84,856
Hudson	Dr. Lena Edwards Academic Charter School	346	89	24	262	\$94,748
Mercer	Paul Robeson Charter School	359	94	26	264	\$95,699
Essex	Marion P. Thomas Charter School	1,199	90	27	871	\$315,673
Hudson	North Bergen	5,132	67	27	3,724	\$1,342,559
Bergen	Garfield	3,182	67	28	2,297	\$817,322
Burlington	Burlington City	1,040	61	28	750	\$270,864
Camden	Bellmawr	633	53	28	455	\$161,838
Monmouth	Neptune City	191	59	28	137	\$48,740
Somerset	North Plainfield	2,122	66	29	1,509	\$538,396
Essex	North Star Academy	3,901	87	29	2,770	\$989,928
Essex	University Heights Charter School**	605	87	29	429	\$157,529
Camden	Pine Hill	1,045	56	30	732	\$261,338
Atlantic	Somers Point	629	67	30	438	\$158,242
Total/Average		53,699	65	20	42,741	\$15,336,637

NOTE: Supplemental data for People's Preparatory Charter High School came directly from school officials. The 2016-17 school year was the last operational year for Newark Prep Charter School and Paulo Freire Charter School.

*Based on all eligible students eating breakfast all 180 school days.

**Indicates full participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

Breakfast Champions: The Top 20

When districts commit to serving breakfast after the bell in most or all of their schools, they serve many more students each school day. ACNJ's Top 20 Breakfast Champs lists spotlight both high-poverty districts and those with fewer students qualified for free and reduced-price meals that are successfully serving breakfast.

In the high-poverty districts, which have at least half of their students eligible for free or low-cost school meals, the average participation rate was 82 percent in

April 2017 — almost double the statewide average of 44 percent. These districts served nearly 17,000 students.

Four charter schools top this list — Cresthaven Academy Charter School, Greater Brunswick Charter School, Merit Preparatory Charter School and Discovery Charter School — followed by Bound Brook and Atlantic City.

All of these districts should be commended for their efforts to ensure that their students begin the school day with a healthy meal.

School Breakfast Champions, Top 20 Districts of those with 50% or More Eligible Children

County	School District	# of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	Eligible Students as % of Total Enrollment	# Students Served Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	% Eligible Students Served
Union	Cresthaven Academy Charter School	67	89	63	94
Middlesex	Greater Brunswick Charter School	340	87	315	93
Essex	Merit Preparatory Charter School**	336	88	309	92
Essex	Discovery Charter School	105	93	94	90
Somerset	Bound Brook	1,328	70	1,161	87
Atlantic	Atlantic City	5,781	83	4,938	85
Passaic	Community Charter School of Paterson**	797	89	669	84
Essex	East Orange	5,012	63	4,163	83
Passaic	Philip's Academy Charter School of Paterson	53	90	43	81
Cape May	Wildwood**	849	100	675	80
Camden	Environment Community Charter School**	136	90	107	79
Atlantic	Atlantic Community Charter School	285	98	224	79
Camden	KIPP: Cooper Norcross Academy**	856	100	669	78
Atlantic	Egg Harbor City	392	78	304	78
Essex	Pride Academy Charter School	239	83	184	77
Salem	Salem City**	1,156	100	876	76
Cumberland	Bridgeton Public Charter School	101	89	76	75
Cumberland	Fairfield**	580	93	432	74
Camden	Brooklawn	168	55	123	73
Monmouth	Asbury Park**	1,986	98	1,451	73
Total/Average		20,566	79	16,876	82

Note: Supplemental data for Discovery Charter School, KIPP: Cooper Norcross Academy and Bridgeton Public Charter School came directly from school officials. The 2016-17 school year was the last operational year for Merit Preparatory Charter School.

**Indicates full participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

More Breakfast Champs

Even some districts with fewer students living in low-income families recognize the importance of providing breakfast at a time when it is accessible to all students. Some of these districts may use a mixed approach to serving breakfast by providing it free to qualified students, while charging a small fee — usually about \$1 — to students whose parents can afford to pay. This is likely one factor behind the rise in students receiving paid breakfast, which has grown 49 percent since 2010.

Montague, Greenwich and National Park are the highest performers for serving a higher percentage of students in districts with eligible students ranging from 20 to 49 percent of district enrollment.

On average, 56 percent of low-income students in these districts received school breakfast, outpacing the statewide average of 44 percent in April 2017.

School Breakfast Champions, Top 20 Districts of those with 20-49% Eligible Students

County	School District	# of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	Eligible Students as % of Total Enrollment	# Students Served Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	% Eligible Students Served
Sussex	Montague	98	40	81	83
Cumberland	Greenwich	19	31	14	74
Gloucester	National Park	111	43	81	73
Hudson	Jersey City Global Charter School	175	49	123	70
Burlington	New Hanover	85	45	57	67
Gloucester	Greenwich	166	38	111	67
Bergen	East Rutherford	271	33	172	63
Gloucester	Franklin	510	36	316	62
Middlesex	Edison	3,235	21	1,929	60
Cumberland	Millville Public Charter School	122	40	72	59
Cumberland	Vineland Public Charter School	150	37	88	59
Somerset	Franklin	3,462	48	2,025	59
Hunterdon	Hampton	44	34	23	52
Cumberland	Maurice River	181	43	94	52
Ocean	Little Egg Harbor	722	46	373	52
Ocean	Long Beach Island	53	24	27	51
Sussex	Newton	557	36	283	51
Ocean	Brick	2,750	31	1,373	50
Salem	Quinton	127	37	63	50
Cape May	Lower Cape May Regional	656	48	315	48
	Total/Average	13,493	32	7,620	56

Note: Supplemental data for Jersey City Global Charter School came directly from school officials.

High-Poverty Districts Making Progress

Some New Jersey school officials are working to improve their school breakfast participation. During the 2016-17 school year, 21 high-poverty school districts, with at least half of students eligible for free and low-cost school meals, achieved a minimum 15 percent increase in their school breakfast participation. This excludes districts still serving 30 percent or fewer eligible students, even if they made substantial gains over the previous year.

Four districts more than doubled their participation rate. Burch Charter School of Excellence, Carteret, Discovery Charter School and Haledon achieved increases ranging from 248 to 146 percent. All except Discovery Charter School, which fed slightly more than

30 percent of eligible students last year, were on ACNJ's Underachievers List last year.

Three of these districts — International Academy of Atlantic City, Lawnside and Haledon — adopted the federal Community Eligibility Provision, allowing them to feed all students for free. This likely contributed to the increase.

Haledon was a prime example of how school leadership can transform breakfast service, with Superintendent Miguel Hernandez making breakfast after the bell a top priority when he took the helm about two years ago.

These districts should be commended for stepping up to meet the school breakfast challenge.

High-Poverty Districts Making Progress, with at Least 30% Student Participation

County	School District	% Eligible Students Served April 2016	% Eligible Students Served April 2017	% Change
Essex	Merit Preparatory Charter School**	47	92	95
Essex	Discovery Charter School	33	90	175
Essex	East Orange	66	83	25
Cape May	Wildwood**	56	80	43
Camden	Brooklawn	61	73	20
Hudson	BelovED Community Charter School	52	70	34
Camden	Freedom Prep Charter School**	52	69	33
Essex	Lady Liberty Academy Charter School**	51	69	35
Atlantic	International Academy Of Atlantic City**	40	67	67
Camden	Lawnside**	44	66	50
Cumberland	Commercial**	47	63	36
Camden	Kingdom Charter School of Leadership	36	63	76
Essex	East Orange Community Charter School	45	60	34
Essex	Burch Charter School Of Excellence	17	59	248
Middlesex	Carteret	19	56	203
Camden	Lindenwold	43	52	20
Union	Barack Obama Green Charter School	37	48	30
Salem	Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional	39	46	18
Passaic	Haledon**	16	40	146
Union	Union County TEAMS Charter School	33	40	19
Atlantic	Chartertech High School	31	37	19

Note: Supplemental data for Discovery Charter School came directly from school officials.

**Indicates full participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2016-17 school year. The 2016-17 school year was the last operational year for Merit Preparatory Charter School.

Breakfast in Community Eligibility Districts

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a relatively new federal option that allows high-poverty schools to provide free meals to all students. In exchange, these schools receive increased federal reimbursements and reduced paperwork requirements.

A growing number of New Jersey districts are using the CEP option. In 2016-17, 44 New Jersey school districts used this option, compared to just 16 districts two years ago, according to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Most New Jersey districts apply this option to all schools, but three districts — Hackensack, Great Oaks Legacy Charter School and Jersey City — were using CEP in only select, high-poverty schools.

Because these districts can feed all children for free, the expectation is that they will have above-average school meals participation rates.

That was the case for 12 New Jersey CEP districts that had breakfast participation at or exceeding 70 percent of low-income students in April 2017. Merit Preparatory Charter School, Community Charter School of Paterson and Wildwood were the three highest, with student participation rates of 92, 84 and 80 percent, respectively.

The other districts all had rates below 70 percent. Five districts — University Heights Charter School, Woodlynne, People's Preparatory Charter High School, Prospect Park and Newark Prep Charter — were all below 30 percent student participation.

All CEP districts should be serving breakfast after the bell to all students to maximize participation and ensure all children begin their day with a healthy meal.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) District Participation, April 2017

County	School District	# of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	Eligible Students as % of Total Enrollment	# Students Served Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	% Eligible Students Served
Essex	Merit Preparatory Charter School	336	88	309	92
Passaic	Community Charter School of Paterson	797	89	669	84
Cape May	Wildwood	849	100	675	80
Camden	Environment Community Charter School	136	91	107	79
Camden	KIPP: Cooper Norcross Academy	856	100	669	78
Salem	Salem City	1,156	100	876	76
Cumberland	Fairfield	580	93	432	74
Monmouth	Asbury Park	1,986	98	1,451	73
Ocean	Lakewood	5,854	100	4,218	72
Camden	Camden Prep Inc. (Uncommon Schools)	388	100	277	71
Passaic	Paterson	25,457	100	18,091	71
Cumberland	Bridgeton	5,820	100	4,061	70
Camden	Mastery Schools of Camden	1,694	100	1,176	69
Camden	Freedom Prep Charter School	856	100	592	69
Essex	Lady Liberty Academy Charter School	429	96	295	69
Atlantic	International Academy of Atlantic City	304	100	204	67
Hudson	Union City	10,495	88	7,019	67

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Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) District Participation, April 2017

County	School District	# of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	Eligible Students as % of Total Enrollment	# Students Served Free/Reduced-Price Breakfast	% Eligible Students Served
Cape May	Woodbine	184	80	123	67
Camden	Lawnside	244	75	162	66
Camden	Camden Community Charter School	851	100	542	64
Cumberland	Commercial	487	87	309	63
Gloucester	Paulsboro	893	78	565	63
Passaic	Paterson Charter School for Science/Tech	829	78	517	62
Middlesex	New Brunswick	8,139	90	5,032	62
Hudson	Jersey City***	20,148	74	12,218	61
Essex	Roseville Community Charter School	277	88	154	56
Passaic	Passaic County Manchester Regional	636	74	347	55
Camden	Camden City	8,888	100	4,729	53
Essex	New Horizons Community Charter School	465	97	237	51
Passaic	Passaic City	13,634	96	6,630	49
Bergen	Hackensack***	3,566	63	1,699	48
Essex	Great Oaks Legacy Charter School***	1,154	89	538	47
Hudson	Jersey City Community Charter School	431	77	193	45
Essex	Orange	3,879	75	1,561	40
Passaic	Haledon	734	70	295	40
Burlington	Beverly	228	77	91	40
Camden	Hope Community Charter School	193	100	70	36
Ocean	Seaside Heights	210	100	71	34
Mercer	International Academy of Trenton Charter School	452	80	150	33
Essex	University Heights Charter School	605	87	176	29
Camden	Woodlynne	384	100	90	23
Essex	People's Preparatory Charter High School	364	96	56	15
Passaic	Prospect Park	852	92	131	15
Essex	Newark Prep Charter School	429	100	48	11
Total/Average		127,149	89	77,855	61

Note: Supplemental data for KIPP: Cooper Norcross Academy, Great Oaks Legacy Charter School and People's Preparatory Charter High School came directly from school officials. The 2016-17 school year was the last operational year for Merit Preparatory Charter School and Camden Community Charter School.

*** Indicates partial participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

Effective Ways to Serve School Breakfast

■ **Breakfast in the Classroom**

Classroom breakfast dramatically increases school breakfast participation. Typically, food services staff members pack meals into insulated containers for each classroom and deliver to the classrooms before the first bell rings. Some districts have student monitors who deliver breakfast to the classrooms. Students come into the classroom, grab their meal and sit down to eat. When breakfast is over, students dispose of their trash in garbage cans for custodial staff to collect.

■ **Grab-and-Go Breakfast**

Breakfast carts are stationed at the entrance of the school or in other high traffic areas. Upon entering the building, children “grab” a nutritious breakfast and “go” to their first period class. This model is often used in middle and high schools.

■ **Second Chance Breakfast**

Often, teenagers are not hungry when they arrive at school. Serving breakfast after first period, commonly known as “Second Chance Breakfast,” allows students to eat when they are hungry. Students are offered meals, often grab-and-go style, either between classes or during a “nutrition break” that occurs later in the morning.



Data Sources/Technical Notes:

- i Hunger in Our Schools, 2017, No Kid Hungry, https://www.nokidhungry.org/pdfs/HIOS_2017.pdf
- ii Participation data is supplied by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, while eligibility data is taken from the New Jersey Department of Education October enrollment counts for most districts. ACNJ used the USDA formula for calculating students eligible for free/reduced-price meals in districts that use the federal Community Eligibility Provision, which allows them to feed all students for free.

Breakfast Boosts — Help is available!

New Jersey school districts may qualify for grants and other technical assistance through various organizations to more effectively serve school breakfast.

- The New Jersey Department of Agriculture can provide guidance on planning and implementation. Contact Arleen Ramos-Szatmary at (609) 984-0692 or arleen.ramos-szatmary@ag.state.nj.us;
- The American Dairy Association North East provides technical assistance and grants to school districts, visit dairyspot.com.
- Advocates for Children of New Jersey has compiled a list of school officials with successful breakfast programs who are willing to assist other neighboring districts with tackling the logistics of breakfast after the bell. Contact Nancy Parello at nparello@acnj.org.

For more information and resources, visit njfoodforthought.org.

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