

Frequently Asked Questions

School Breakfast Program Mini-Grants



The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Division of Food and Nutrition announced that school districts across the State would be eligible to apply for a school breakfast program mini-grant. The grant is part of the Pennsylvania School Breakfast Initiative for a Hunger-Free Pa. Approximately \$900,000 was awarded to approximately 223 schools across the state (22 from Allegheny County). The goal of the initiative is to attain 60% of students benefiting from free/reduced priced school meals to be participating in school breakfast by the year 2020. Priority was given to schools that have a free/reduced eligibility of 40%-60%. The maximum grant per school building was \$5,000. Riverview was awarded two \$5,000 mini-grants for the Verner Elementary School and the Jr/Sr High School. The purpose of the grant is to improve breakfast participation in schools by implementing or expanding the use of alternative breakfast program delivery models. The delivery models include: Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab n Go, Second Chance Breakfast, or a combination or hybrid program that meets the needs of an alternative breakfast delivery model.

Q. What is the difference between the alternative breakfast programs?

A. The three very common programs that schools across the country are using to make school breakfast an integral part of their school day are as follows:

Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) – This initiative is prepared by the school food service staff using “breakfast packs”. The packs are then placed in insulated bags to be transported to each classroom. Students eat during the first 10-15 minutes of class during morning announcements. Student volunteers, teachers, or food service staff distribute the meals to students. Records are kept as to which students eat breakfast for reimbursement and billing purposes. Clean-up is simple, small wheeled garbage cans are provided to each classroom for discarded breakfast food and paper products. Sanitary wipes, sanitizers, etc. are also often available in the classrooms for clean-up of desks and hands.

Grab & Go Breakfast – This initiative is prepared by the school food service staff by using “breakfast packs”, wrapped sandwiches, smoothie drinks, etc. that can be picked up by students at their point of building entrance via a kiosk or cart and taken within them to their lockers and homeroom periods. Recordkeeping and clean-up is handled similar as described above with the Breakfast in the Classroom Initiative.

Second Chance Breakfast – Depending on the model used, students can either eat in the cafeteria or grab a bagged breakfast that can be eaten between classes or during their next period. The distribution of this style of meal can occur via a kiosk or cart, or by a student visiting the cafeteria. Recordkeeping and clean-up is handled similar to how traditional breakfast programs are currently handled.

Q. Is my child required to participate in these programs?

A. No. Your child is not required to participate in these programs. Your child may choose to eat at home. Your child may choose to bring a breakfast from home. Your child may choose just not to participate. Your choice is important.

Q. Can I choose to opt-out of the breakfast programs?

A. Absolutely. However, if you opt-out from the program, the school can't provide your child with a breakfast at any time. If you would like to opt-out, please email the food service manager at: foodservice@rsd.k12.pa.us. The food



service department will code the classroom roster to note the opt-out choice, and no breakfast will be sent for your child. Parents should explain to their children that they have chosen not to participate. Eating breakfast in the classroom with your classmates is fun; and we, of course, would encourage you to permit your child to participate. The goal is to support the elimination of hunger and encourage the importance of eating breakfast.



Q. How will student allergies be handled?

A. Please know that allergies are very important to the food service department and the school district. As with the traditional breakfast program that is served in a large cafeteria setting, these new breakfast models also implement all of the current safety features in place to safeguard students who struggle with allergies to foods, etc. For instance, our food service department is peanut free. They currently do not use any peanut-based products and use alternative products such as “sunbutter” in place of peanut butter. Similar to the cafeteria setting, when food is shared in a classroom setting, parents are notified of an allergy in the classroom and only some foods are prohibited from sharing with the classroom students.

Q. How much is breakfast? Is financial assistance available?

A. Breakfast prices have remained the same for several school years. Currently the cost is \$1.50 at the secondary level grades 7-12, \$1.25 at the elementary level grades K-6. Reduced breakfast prices at both the elementary and secondary levels is \$0.30. Financial assistance is available. To see if you qualify for free & reduced price school meals please complete a household application.

<http://www.rsd.k12.pa.us/Downloads/Free%20Reduced%20Lunch%20Application.pdf>.

The district also offers the EZSchoolpay option, which provides the convenience of using a debit or credit card to make payments on your student’s meal account. <https://www.ezschoolday.com/Pages/Home/Dashboard.aspx>

Q. What is the goal of implementing these new breakfast models?

A. Breakfast participation is very low at this time. The goal for Pennsylvania is 60% participation in school breakfast. Currently participation at Verner Elementary is 37%, participation at Tenth Street Elementary is 7% and participation at the Jr/Sr High School is 10%. Verner Elementary has a 68% free/reduced eligible meal population and the Jr/Sr High School has a 36% free/reduced eligible meal population. The goal is to grow the participation to help stop hungry stomachs. Using the grant funds to defray the costs of implementing these new breakfast models in two of our school buildings in 2018-2019 will help move us in the right direction. The goal for next school year is free breakfast in both elementary buildings for all grades and moving Tenth Street Elementary to the Breakfast In the Classroom Program as well. At the Jr/Sr high school the goal is to provide a fresh, healthy, and quick breakfast opportunity to our busy students that enforces the importance of eating breakfast as a great start to their day.

Q. Will my school still offer special breakfast incentives as in the past such as “Very Important Person” (VIP) breakfast at Verner Elementary School, or “Muffins with Mom” at Tenth Street Elementary School?

A. Absolutely. These special breakfast incentives are sponsored by the PTO and will continue. You will receive more information regarding them as they become planned out later in the school year.

Q. Will the time of the school day change at Verner Elementary?

A. No. The time of the school day will remain the same 8:30 a.m. - 3:05 p.m. However, the serving time for breakfast will be 8:20 a.m. and breakfast will be served in the homeroom classroom rather than in the cafeteria.