

# Ohio School Breakfast Program: Implementation and Effectiveness



**OFFICE OF NUTRITION**

# Implementation and Effectiveness of the Ohio School Breakfast Program

## 2021-2022 School Year

State law<sup>1</sup> requires the Ohio Department of Education to report on the implementation and effectiveness of the School Breakfast Program using the following data measures.

- (1) The number of students and participation rates in the free and reduced-price breakfast program for each school building;
- (2) The type of breakfast model used by each school building taking part in the breakfast program; and
- (3) The number of students and participation rates in free or reduced-price lunch for each school building.

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) beginning in March 2020 and continuing through the 2021-2022 school year, schools significantly shifted school meal operations. Using U.S. Department of Agriculture child nutrition program [waivers](#), schools could continue breakfast and lunch meal service through the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), serving the meals either in the school buildings or through non-congregate methods as needed such as drive-thru pickup at school buildings and community pickup locations. To ensure these flexibilities remain available, the program waivers are extended through June 30, 2022.

While the shift in meal service under the Seamless Summer Option allowed continuation and simplification of breakfast and lunch meal services in school year 2021-2022, the shift affects data measure reporting on the implementation and effectiveness of the School Breakfast Program. Most schools are not operating the traditional School Breakfast Program; thus, meal program data does not categorize the meals as “School Breakfast Program” meals. This results in two disparate data sets:

- 1) Data from October 2019 to February 2020 reflecting School Breakfast Program meals; and
- 2) Data from March 2020 onward reflecting summer meal program meals.

For the reasons outlined above, data from the first set (prior to March 2020) provides the most reliable measure of recent School Breakfast Program operations. **Therefore, data used in this report specifically referencing School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program meals is from the October 2019-February 2020 data set.**

The Ohio Department of Education prepared this report with data collected through the Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System (CRRS).

## Impact of COVID-19 on the School Breakfast Program

Ohio’s strategic plan for education, [Each Child, Our Future](#), and Ohio’s [Whole Child Framework](#) recognize each child is unique and has basic needs — including nutrition — that must be met to enable learning. As discussed previously, most schools operating child nutrition programs in school year 2021-2022 changed traditional meal service operations and practices to help diminish the spread of COVID-19 while continuing to provide nutritious meals.

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.818

For the 2021-2022 school year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture permitted the Ohio Department of Education to implement flexibilities allowing schools to operate the Seamless Summer Option through June 30, 2022. The Seamless Summer Option enables schools to serve breakfast and lunch to all children at no cost, while substantially reducing paperwork and administrative burden. Resources regarding the 2021-2022 school year meal service options are available on the Ohio Department of Education's [Child Nutrition Technical Assistance webpage](#).

## School Breakfast Program Background

The Ohio Department of Education's Office of Nutrition administers the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs in Ohio. Piloted by the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, the School Breakfast Program reimburses public and nonpublic schools that serve nutritious breakfasts to children in prekindergarten through grade 12. United States Congress made the School Breakfast Program permanent in 1975. Schools taking part in Ohio's School Breakfast Program collectively serve more than **71 million breakfasts to 1.7 million enrolled children** per year.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows that healthy, nutritious diets help children grow and succeed, and healthy meals are an important factor in school performance. Evidence shows that regularly eating breakfast before or during school significantly correlates with positive academic outcomes<sup>3</sup> for children. According to pediatricians, a good diet gives children better verbal skills, better memory and a more consistent focus in the classroom. Additionally, breakfast positively correlates with student attendance. Research shows that students who receive breakfast regularly also attend nearly two more days of school per year than students who go hungry.<sup>4</sup>

## Schools that Adopt Breakfast Programs

This report illustrates three types of data:

1. The total percentage of schools offering morning meals through the Ohio School Breakfast Program;
2. The program participation rate at those schools; and
3. The numbers of schools feeding students under a variety of breakfast service models.

The report includes trends in Ohio School Breakfast Program eligibility and participation. Graphs in the report show both past and current Ohio School Breakfast Program data. See the [full data set for each school building](#) included in this report on the Department's website.

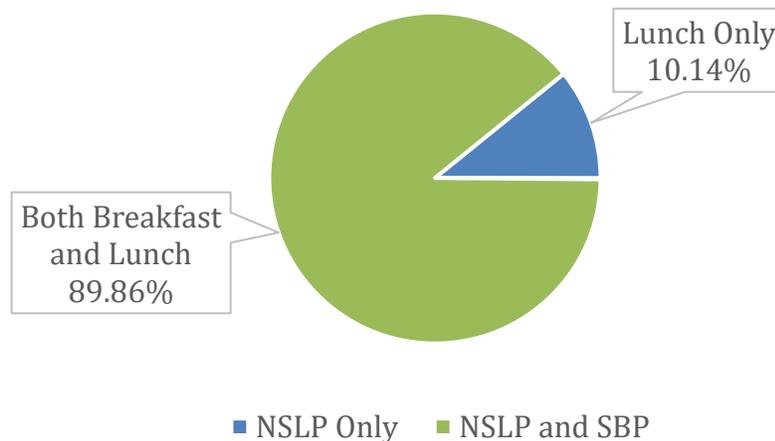
In the 2020-2021 school year, **3,612 Ohio schools** offered USDA nutrition programs. **In a typical school year, more than 89 percent of these schools** operate both the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program. As the majority of Ohio schools are operating the Seamless Summer Option for the 2021-2022 school year rather than the School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program, the percentage of schools operating the programs is not available for the 2021-2022 school year report.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Monthly meal counts in the Ohio Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System.

<sup>3</sup> Hossein M. et al (2019). The relationship of breakfast and snack foods with cognitive and academic performance and physical activity levels of adolescent students. *Biological Rhythm Research*.

<sup>4</sup> Taras H. (2005). Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*.

### School Breakfast (SBP) and School Lunch (NSLP) Program Adoption in Ohio Schools 2019-2020 School Year



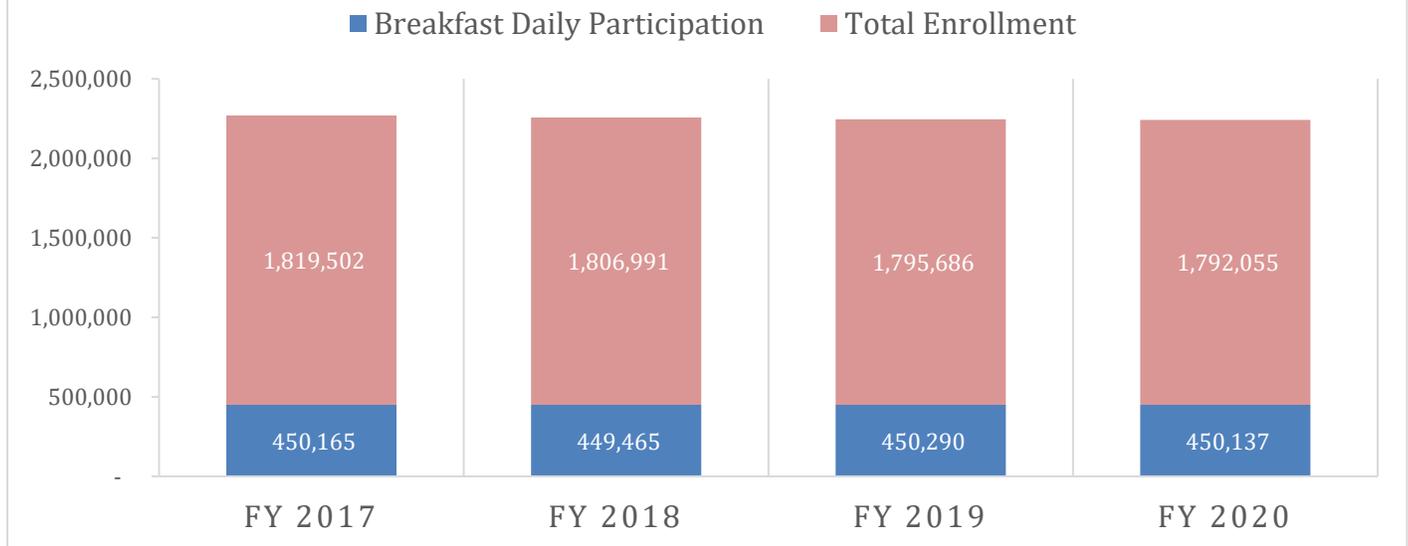
## School Breakfast Participation

Using data from the 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 school years, the Department divided School Breakfast Program average daily participation<sup>5</sup> (blue bar below) by Ohio's statewide student enrollment<sup>6</sup> (red bar) to calculate the percentage of students who take part in the School Breakfast Program. Due to school participation in the Seamless Summer Option, School Breakfast Program participation data for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years is not available. Complete enrollment data for the 2021-2022 school year is not yet available. As noted previously and due to March 2020 COVID-19-related school closures, school year 2019-2020 data used for this analysis is through February 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Advanced Report Cards

## SCHOOL BREAKFAST DAILY PARTICIPATION VS ENROLLMENT



The School Breakfast Program participation rates by year for 2017-2020 are as follows:

- Statewide School Breakfast Program participation rate in 2017: 24.7%;
- Statewide School Breakfast Program participation rate in 2018: 24.9%;
- Statewide School Breakfast Program participation rate in 2019: 25.1%;
- Statewide School Breakfast Program participation rate in 2020: 25.1%.

As of the most recently published data, School Breakfast Program participation rates have remained stable across the four-year sample despite a small decline in overall statewide school enrollment.

See the full [data set for each school building](#) on the Ohio Department of Education's website.

## Breakfast Model in Each School as of October 2021

Annually, the Ohio Department of Education collects data from each school that serves breakfast. Schools report the breakfast models they are using in each building. As a result of transitions to the Seamless Summer Option and COVID-19 safety protocols, many schools shifted service models from traditional cafeteria settings to alternative service model methods.

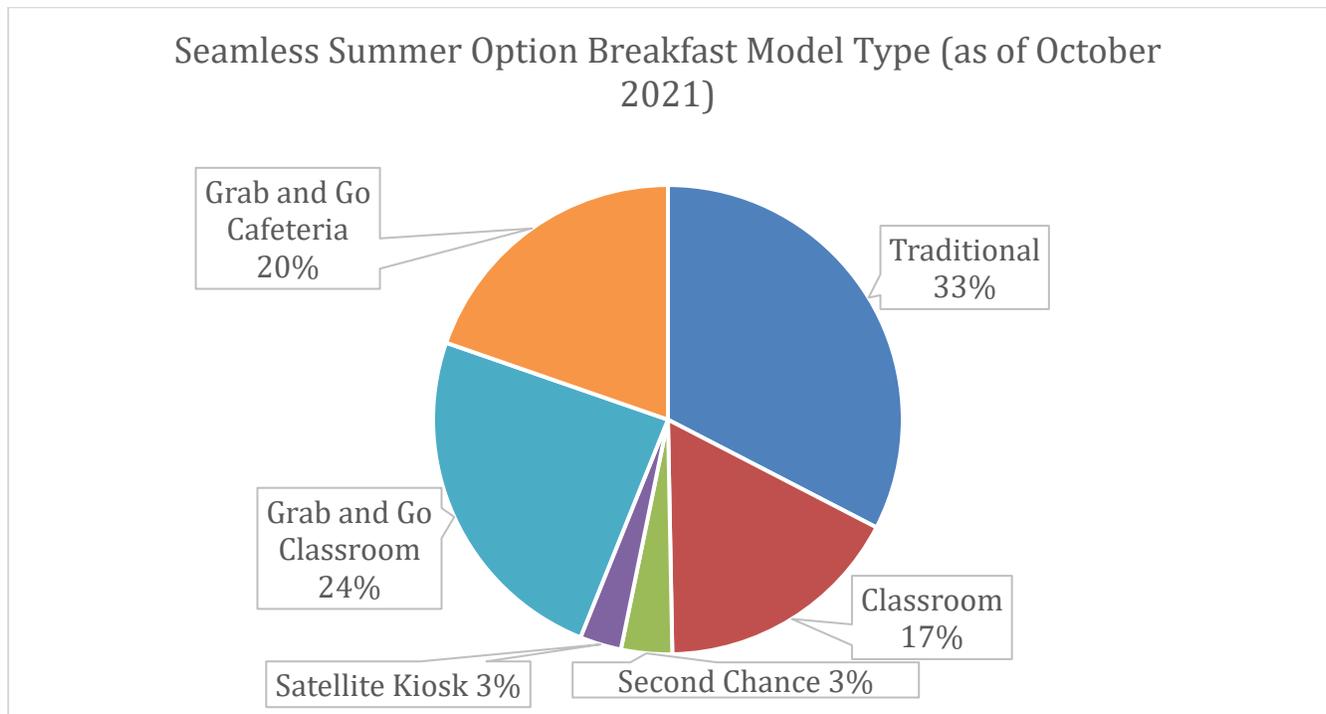
For the 2021-2022 school year, Ohio schools participating in the Seamless Summer Option provided breakfast service model responses. The data and graph below reflect the breakfast service models used at each school as of October 2021.<sup>7</sup>

Breakfast models include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Traditional: Breakfast served in the cafeteria on a traditional serving line before the school day begins;

<sup>7</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Claims Reimbursement and Reporting System

- Breakfast in the Classroom: Bagged or boxed breakfasts served in the cafeteria or classroom containing the required nutritional components. Students can eat in the classroom before or during the first class period;
- Second-Chance Breakfast: Students eat breakfast after the school day begins, generally after the first period, in the cafeteria;
- Satellite Breakfast/Breakfast Kiosk: Students pick up bagged breakfasts in the hallway on their way to classes;
- Grab and Go – Cafeteria: Students pick up bagged breakfasts and eat in the cafeteria; or
- Grab and Go – Classroom: Students pick up bagged breakfasts and eat in the classroom.



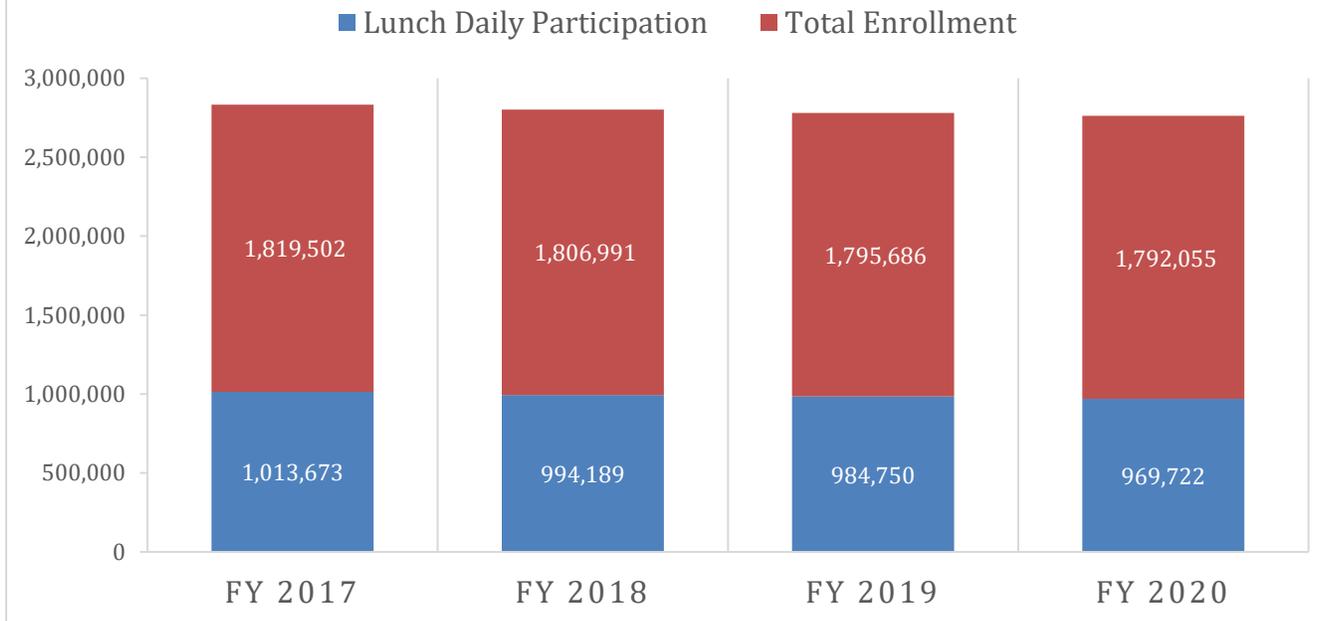
## School Lunch Program Participation

Using data from the 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 school years, the Ohio Department of Education reviewed total statewide enrollment and National School Lunch Program participation to determine participation rates. The participation rate is determined by dividing National School Lunch Program average daily participation<sup>8</sup> (blue bar below) by the statewide school enrollment for Ohio<sup>9</sup> (red bar). National School Lunch Program participation data for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years is not available. Complete enrollment data for the 2021-2022 school year is not yet available. As noted previously and due to March 2020 COVID-19-related school closures, school year 2019-2020 data used for this analysis is through February 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>

<sup>9</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Advanced Report Cards

## SCHOOL LUNCH DAILY PARTICIPATION VS ENROLLMENT



The School Lunch Program participation rates by year for 2017-2020 are as follows:

- Statewide Lunch Program participation rate in 2017: 55.7%
- Statewide Lunch Program participation rate in 2018: 55.1%
- Statewide Lunch Program participation rate in 2019: 54.8%
- Statewide Lunch Program participation rate in 2020: 54.1%

See the full [data set for each school building](#) on the Department’s website.

### Summary

This report illustrates the statewide implementation and effectiveness of school breakfast in Ohio. The full data set for each school building is available on the Ohio Department of Education’s website. In Ohio, more than 89% of schools with USDA nutrition programs serve breakfast, including those operating in person or providing remote learning. In the 2019-2020 school year, 25.1% of enrolled children participated in the School Breakfast Program and 54.1% participated in the National School Lunch Program. In attempt to minimize risk and exposure of students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of Ohio schools adopted the Seamless Summer Option in school year 2021-2022. This program shift results in limited school year 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 School Breakfast Program data; however, schools did provide school year 2021-2022 breakfast service model responses in the Seamless Summer Operations. Traditional breakfast service remains the most popular breakfast model, followed by Grab and Go – Classroom or Grab and Go – Cafeteria.