



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: June 19, 2019  
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School, and Renaissance School Project Leads  
From: Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D, Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Education  
Douglas H. Fisher, Secretary  
New Jersey Department of Agriculture

### **School Breakfast Program Mandate Reminder**

The New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture have partnered to communicate the importance of school breakfast programs and the positive impact they have on student learning, health and academic achievement. Legislation signed by Governor Phil Murphy on May 30, 2018 ([N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.3](#)) requires implementation of a “breakfast after the bell” program no later than September 2019 in schools where 70 percent or more of the enrolled students are eligible to receive free or reduced priced meals.

The [New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign](#) provides a host of information related to the “breakfast after the bell” program, including guidelines and resources for implementing a school breakfast program and success stories from New Jersey schools currently participating in the program.

Some important directives from the new breakfast legislation include:

- School districts that have been notified by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture that they must serve breakfast after the bell were required to submit a school breakfast implementation plan to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture by May 31, 2019.
- The school breakfast implementation plan must include all grades in all schools where at least 70 percent of children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals as of October 31, 2018.
- Breakfast after the bell must be implemented in all identified schools at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.
- School leaders can decide which “breakfast after the bell” service method works best in their schools: classroom breakfast, grab-n-go, or a “second chance” program in which a breakfast break is held during a morning break or homeroom (an approach that works well in many high schools).

According to a report by [Hunger Free New Jersey](#) and the [Food Research & Action Center](#), New Jersey ranked 19<sup>th</sup> nationally in 2018 for student participation in school breakfast, up from its rank of 46<sup>th</sup> in 2010. Despite this great stride, approximately 300,000 eligible New Jersey school students continue to miss out on a healthy breakfast at school. The new “breakfast after the bell” state law will require qualifying schools to incorporate breakfast programs as part of the school day, usually during an allotted time in homeroom or first-period class. It is important to note that serving breakfast after the start of the school day counts toward instructional time.

The “breakfast after the bell” service method has been shown to significantly boost student participation in the federal School Breakfast Program, which ensures consumption of balanced, nutritious meals. It also provides federal dollars to feed breakfast to low-income students. When participation increases, so do federal dollars claimed.

For further information or additional questions, please contact the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Food and Nutrition, School Nutrition Programs at (609) 984-0692.

c:       Members, State Board of Education  
          NJDOE Staff  
          Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
          Garden State Coalition of Schools  
          NJ LEE Group