

# HELP STUDENTS POWER UP WITH A BREAKFAST BRAIN BOOST



What's an easy formula for better grades? Here's a hint: milk, cereal, banana. You know the answer. It's breakfast! And if students are leaving their homes without munching on something, they could be spelling out trouble for themselves in the classroom.

More than 50 percent of students report they skip breakfast at some time during the week, reports the American Dietetic Association. Numerous studies show children perform better in the classroom when they have eaten that morning meal. A recent study from the Maryland State Department of Education revealed students who ate breakfast in school had a 9 percent increase in standardized test scores and a 40 percent improvement with good behavior and attitude when they ate breakfast at school.



Realizing school cafeteria managers are pressed for time and yet want children to eat a nutritious breakfast, DAIRY COUNCIL offers the "Expanding Breakfast," program which presents quick and easy alternatives to the traditional breakfast. You get the tools to create the right expanded breakfast program for your school, including:

- **Breakfast in the Classroom**—Bring breakfast to students so that they can eat at their desks.
- **Grab 'n' Go Breakfast**—You can offer easy, prepackaged meals such as cheese biscuits for children on the go.
- **Breakfast After 1st Period**—Once classes have started, invite children to pick up breakfast during morning breaks.

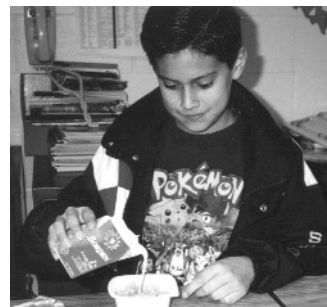
One school enjoying an alternative breakfast plan is Parkway Elementary in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

"Kids like eating in the classroom," said Twyla Padgett, cafeteria manager at Parkway. "They're not rushed, and they can talk with their friends. They like the menu, which includes a rotation of about 12 different items."

Every day at Parkway, 400 to 500 students grab breakfast-in-a-bag at four serving stations throughout the building. The meals are 75 cents. When the students arrive, they go to their classrooms, pick up meal cards and then get a bagged breakfast and milk at the closest station. They return to the classroom to eat and be counted for attendance. About 70 percent of the school's students participate.

"I can't imagine why more schools don't use this method to serve breakfast. The longer we do this, the better I like it," Principal Rosanne McDaniel said, noting an improvement in students' behavior.

Since the start, Maryville High School in Maryville, Tennessee, has had great success with its alternative breakfast. When the school changed to block



scheduling three years ago, Martha Henry, coordinator of food services, seized upon the chance to get teenagers charged up with breakfast. A break after the first set of classes allowed Henry and her staff to offer a bagged

breakfast program, which features easy, healthy meals, like yogurt or cereal with milk to name a few.

"No one participated in breakfast when we offered it before school...[Teens] just stayed in bed," Henry said, adding a third of the student body munches school breakfast. And teachers notice a difference with teens being more alert in class, Henry said.

Courtesy of

