

# STUDENTS REAP BENEFITS OF ALTERNATIVE BREAKFAST METHODS IN ANOKA MINNESOTA

It's well documented that during high school, nutritious eating habits decline as students are provided more choices. It's also well documented that breakfast can significantly help teens meet their nutritional requirements, enhancing good health and learning, and providing them a jump-start for the day. That's why the Midwest Dairy Council and other Dairy Councils nationwide offer the Expanding Breakfast program -- to take breakfast to the students instead of having them come to the cafeteria, so every student has the opportunity to eat breakfast.



Crossroads High School, a small alternative high school within the Anoka-Hennepin School District, in Anoka, Minnesota, took advantage of the program. The student body of 144 is offered Grab 'n' Go Breakfast that they can take to the classroom. Having Breakfast in the Classroom is something the district currently doesn't allow. However, according to Allison Bradford, the district's school foodservice director, the district decided to use Crossroads as a test site for this alternative serving method. The administration felt the students at Crossroads would benefit greatly, and the school's principal was supportive, too.

So far, it's working great. Before implementing the Grab 'n' Go Breakfast program, the average breakfast participation at the school was only 16 percent. Now,

participation is at more than 25 percent and continues to grow. The students love the flexibility. Their breakfast comes in brown bags, and they can choose between cereal and muffins. Every meal comes with milk and juice, and the students have the opportunity to buy a la carte milk, too. The teachers are very supportive of the program and have found that the students who have eaten breakfast are more awake and participate more in class.

Studies show that students who eat a nutritious breakfast have improved test scores and are more attentive in class. Also, behavior problems diminish and absenteeism and tardiness decrease.

So for this smaller school, the breakfast program has made an impact even beyond the student body in creating a healthy school environment. Dairy Council is committed to helping schools create healthy environments with nutrition education programs like Expanding Breakfast. For more information, visit [www.nutritionexplorations.org](http://www.nutritionexplorations.org) or [www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org).



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