



DISTRICT: Park County No. 6, Cody, Wyoming
DIRECTOR OF NUTRITION SERVICES: Jackie Schumacher
EXPANDING BREAKFAST PROGRAM: Grab 'n' Go, K-12

★ BACKGROUND

Aware that research has proven better student performance is linked to eating a healthy breakfast; our Health and Wellness Committee has for several years discussed the need for an in-school breakfast program. With concern that some students may not have access to breakfast for a variety of reasons, our committee conducted a household survey in an effort to gauge both interest and need. We used the survey results to determine the type of program best suited for our schools and students, then developed a budget. Our findings were presented to the Board of Education and we were granted approval for a breakfast program startup in the Fall of 2011.

★ IMPLEMENTATION

A large percentage of our students ride buses and most board the bus early each morning. We were unable to alter bus schedules. Bus arrival times do not allow for lengthy breakfast schedules. It was determined a Grab 'n' Go breakfast bag would be the best fit for our students, considering the limited time allowed for the program. Serving times were scheduled for each building, with allowances made to accommodate late bus arrivals. Grab 'n' Go items include: cereal, breakfast bar, whole-wheat bagel, PBJ, whole fruit, raisins, snack carrots, string cheese, yogurt, and choice of milk. Breakfast is served in the cafeteria and students move quickly through the serving line, taking a breakfast sack and a milk carton. Building administrators decide whether the breakfast meal is consumed in the cafeteria or allowed to be taken to the classroom.

★ IMPACT

The program continues to grow, participation has increased 35 percent. We continue to adjust to improve the program. We are collecting feedback from our building administrators, faculty and staff. Comments received to date have reinforced the value of breakfast and success of the program.

★ WORDS OF ADVICE

Fluctuating breakfast counts are expected. Inclement weather can prevent outside morning recess, which may result in increased participation. Morning athletic training at middle and high schools also affect daily numbers. We keep items ready in case we fall short of expected numbers.

In implementing a program, involve building administrators, teaching staff and school nurses. They can help problem-solve to reduce time spent waiting in line. At the elementary level, we downsized the student roster list to include those who eat breakfast most often, and we let them choose milk rather than ask what they want.

One size does not fit all. We thought breakfast would operate the same at each building. However, we learned that all buildings operate differently. Some provided staff to operate POS software, some provided rosters for the server to check off for later entry into POS. At some locations, servers are able to get there early and set up, while others arrive just in time to serve. Our initial serving time schedules have been adjusted to accommodate late buses. When the participation grew, our nutrient analysis needed adjusting. Therefore, changes to the menus were made.