



## **Impacts of the Denver Public Schools *Breakfast in the Classroom* Program: Parent Feedback**

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# Impacts of the Denver Public Schools *Breakfast in the Classroom* Program: Parent Feedback

## BACKGROUND

Researchers have shown that breakfast in the classroom programs can significantly improve student attentiveness, attendance, tardiness, suspensions and test scores. Breakfast programs have also been shown to improve the eating habits of students, while enhancing their nutritional intake. More broadly, offering breakfast in the classroom increases participation in school-based meal programs and provides food to those students who face shortages at home.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Breakfast in the Classroom within Denver Public Schools*

Within the Denver Public School system, the *Breakfast in the Classroom* Program (DPS-BIC) has been in place since 2007, growing from eight initial schools to a current total of 83 schools.

Passage of the *Breakfast after the Bell Nutrition Program* by the Colorado Legislature in May 2013 has led to further program growth. Starting in the 2014-15 school year, Colorado schools where 80 percent or more of students are eligible for the Federal free and reduced lunch (FRL) program must provide universal free after-the-bell breakfast programs. In 2015-16, this requirement expanded to include schools where 70 percent or more of students are FRL eligible.

## Methods

As part of a broader evaluation of the DPS-BIC program,<sup>2</sup> parents were asked their opinion regarding the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program. The Center for Research Strategies (CRS) developed a survey that focused on the following topics:

- Patterns by which children eat breakfast
- Opinions regarding the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program
- Perceived benefits of the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program and
- Recommendations for any changes in the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program.

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<sup>1</sup> American Association of School Administrators. (2013) Improving attendance, health and governance: moving breakfast out of the cafeteria. **School Governance and Leadership**. Vol. 8: Number 1.

<sup>2</sup> Surveys were distributed in 2014 to determine the experience of teachers in whose classrooms the DPS-BIC program had been implemented. In 2015, a similar survey was distributed to DPS nurses, counselors, psychologists and social workers to gauge their opinions regarding the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program.

With assistance from staff members from the DPS Enterprise Management Office, over 5,000 paper surveys were distributed between January and March 2016 to parents in schools where the DPS-BIC program has been operating. In addition an electronic survey was made available in those DPS-BIC schools that communicate with parents via email. In both formats the survey was made available in English and Spanish.

In addition, CRS completed three focus groups with 35 parents to explore ways that the program might be improved particularly related to communication with the parent community.

## Overall Response

Parents returned a total of 879 paper surveys; an additional 127 surveys were received electronically for a total return of 1,006 surveys with an estimated response rate of 23%. Table I below provides a breakdown of the parents who answered the survey either electronically or via a paper survey and the proportion of English versus Spanish speaking respondents.

**Table I: Parent Responses by Language and Type of Survey (N=1,006)**

	Number	Percent
Electronic survey in English	116	11.5%
Electronic survey in Spanish	11	1.1%
Paper survey in English	569	56.6%
Paper survey in Spanish	310	30.8%

As detailed in Appendix A, of the 83 schools within the Denver Public School system, survey responses were received from parents with students enrolled in 51 school sites or 61% of all school sites participating in the DPS-BIC program.

Appendix B profiles the distribution of parent respondents by the grade levels of their children. Survey responses were obtained from parents representing students at all grade levels from prekindergarten to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The highest proportion of responses were obtained from parents of students in the elementary grades for both English and Spanish speaking parents.

- Nearly half (or 48.5%) of English speaking parent respondents had children who were either in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten (33.9%) or 1<sup>st</sup> grade (14.6%).
- Over a third (or 39.3%) of Spanish speaking parent respondents had children who that were either in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten (16.2%) or 1<sup>st</sup> grade (23.1%).

## BREAKFAST EATING PATTERNS

Parents were asked how often their children eat breakfast. Nearly three out of four parents (or 70%) indicated that their children eat breakfast daily.

- In combination, 83% of parents report that their children either eat breakfast daily (70.1%) or four-five times per week (13.1%).

- Relatively few parents report that their children never eat breakfast (1.3%) or only once per week (1.8%).

### How Often Does Your Child Eat Breakfast?

<b>N=1,006</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Never	13	1.3%
Once a week	18	1.8%
2-3 times a week	114	11.3%
4-5 times a week	132	13.1%
Daily	<b>705</b>	<b>70.1%</b>
<i>Don't Know or Left the Question Blank</i>	24	2.4%

A majority of parents report that their children eat breakfast at school (45.5%), although a third (36.8%) indicated that they eat breakfast both at home and at school. Slightly more than one in ten (or 14.6%) of students eat breakfast only at home.

- High proportions of both English and Spanish speaking parents confirmed that their children eat breakfast at school. This was true for 41.8% of English speaking parents and 53.6% of Spanish speaking parents.
- Children of English speaking parents were slightly more likely to eat breakfast both at home and at school (38.8%) as compared to 32.4% of children with Spanish speaking parents.

During the focus groups, some parents explained that they offer their children a hot breakfast at home, wanting to assure that their children start the day with a nutritious meal. Some children also take advantage of the breakfast food offered at school in the classroom. Parents believe that their children are hungry and active enough that consuming additional food is not a problem. Parents also want to assure that their children are able to have breakfast at home in the event that they do not choose to eat the breakfast that is being served at school.

### Where Does your Child Eat Breakfast Most Often?

<b>N=1,006</b>	<b>All Parents #</b>	<b>All Parent %</b>	<b>English Speaking % (N=685)</b>	<b>Spanish Speaking % (N=321)</b>
Home	147	14.6%	16.5%	10.6%
School	<b>458</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>53.6%</b>
Both	370	36.8%	38.8%	32.4%
Other	9	0.9%	1.3%	
<i>Don't Know or Left the Question Blank</i>	22	2.2%	1.6%	3.4%

Parents were able to choose multiple reasons why their children do not eat breakfast at school. A total of 586 reasons were selected. Of these comments, a quarter (24.2%) indicated that

their children eat breakfast at home. The second most common reason was that their children do not like the food that is served (16.6%).

***If your Child Does Not Eat Breakfast at School, Why Not? (Check all that apply.)***

<b>N=586</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
My child eats breakfast at home.	<b>243</b>	<b>24.2%</b>
My child doesn't like the food that is served.	167	16.6%
I am unhappy with the food that is served.	82	8.2%
My child is not hungry before school.	69	6.9%
I didn't know the school served breakfast.	25	2.5%

- Percentages are calculated based on the total number of parent respondents (1,006)

***Value of the Traditional DPS Breakfast Program***

Almost all parents (or 91.5%) believe that eating breakfast is very important. This was equally true for both English and Spanish speaking parents. Additionally 2.7% reported that eating breakfast is somewhat important. Only 5% of parents either had a neutral opinion (1.5%) or indicated that they believe that eating breakfast is either somewhat unimportant (0.6%) or very unimportant (2.9%).

***To What Extent Do You Believe Eating Breakfast is Important?***

<b>N=1,006</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	<b>920</b>	<b>91.5%</b>
Somewhat Important	27	2.7%
Neutral	15	1.5%
Somewhat Unimportant	6	0.6%
Very Unimportant	29	2.9%
Don't Know or Left the Question Blank	9	0.9%

Almost all English and Spanish speaking parents know that their children have the opportunity to eat a free, nutritious breakfast in the classroom every day, with 92.0% of parents reporting this awareness. Three out of four parents (or 76.0%) indicated that they are aware that the breakfast meals served by DPS must follow Federal regulations related to calorie/sodium content, the use of whole grains and the amount of fruit that is served. This was equally true for both English and Spanish speaking parents.

Relative to their participation in SNAP or the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, slightly more English speaking parents (or 30.7%) are enrolled in this program, compared to 28.0% of Spanish speaking parents. Of note, a higher proportion of Spanish speaking parents (19.0%) were unsure whether their family participates in SNAP, compared to 10.5% of those who are English speaking.

### Knowledge of Breakfast Programs and Participation in SNAP

N=1,006	All Parents #	All Parent %	English Speaking %	Spanish Speaking %
Are you aware that your child has the opportunity to eat a free, nutritious breakfast in the classroom every day?	926	92.0%	92.8%	92.2%
Are you aware that the breakfast meals served by DPS must follow Federal regulations related to calorie/sodium content, the use of whole grains and the amount of fruit that is served?	765	76.0%	76.4%	75.4%
Does your family participate in the (SNAP) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program?	300	29.8%	30.7%	28.0%

### Overall Impacts of the Breakfast in the Classroom Program

Parent opinions regarding the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program tend to be positive, with 70.1% of parents having a very positive view and 13.7% having a somewhat positive view of the program. Among all parents, only 3.7% have a somewhat negative view while 1.7% have a very negative view of the program.

- Among English speaking parents, two out of three (or 67.6%) had a very positive view while 13.6% had a somewhat positive view of the program.
- Ratings of the program were higher among Spanish speaking parents with 75.4% having a very positive view and 14.0% having a somewhat positive view of the program.

### What is Your Opinion of the Breakfast in the Classroom Program?

	All Parents # (N=1,006)	All Parents %	English Speaking Parents % (N=685)	Spanish Speaking Parents (N=321)
Very Positive	705	70.1%	67.6%	75.4%
Somewhat Positive	138	13.7%	13.6%	14.0%
Neutral	69	6.9%	7.4%	5.0%
Somewhat Negative	37	3.7%	4.7%	1.6%
Very Negative	17	1.7%	2.5%	0
No Opinion	23	2.3%	2.3%	2.2%
Left the Question Blank	17	1.7%	1.9%	1.2%

Parents at three separate DPS schools (Maramma, Swansea and Trevista at Horace Mann) provided support for these overall conclusions. Summary observations from these focus group participants confirm the perceived value of the BIC program.

- *Focus group parents are appreciative of the program because their children are provided breakfast every day. They believe breakfast is an important meal.*
- *Parents say their children like the program. They don't eat all of the foods, but they eat most of what is served.*
- *The program provides an essential service for families in need. In some schools many families would not be able to provide their children breakfast at home. Others serve breakfast at home and believe their children are hungry enough to eat a second breakfast at school.*
- *Parents believe serving breakfast in the classroom is a good idea. It allows all the kids to eat breakfast, even if they come to school late. Also, eating in the classroom creates a community atmosphere and provides a time for the kids to socialize and be together before the school day starts.*

### **BIC Program Impacts on Student Behavior**

Parents of DPS students were asked to identify how the *Breakfast of the Classroom* program impacts specific aspects of their students' health and behavior. The results demonstrate that parents view the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program as having an overall beneficial contribution on students in the following areas:

- Three out of four parents report that the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program helps to encourage their children to **get to school on time** (70.4%). This was true for 67.3% of English speaking parents and 76.8% of Spanish speaking parents.
- Almost all of the parents (or 88.9%) report that the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program assures that their children **start the day with breakfast**, with agreement from 87.9% of English speaking parents and 91.0% of Spanish speaking parents.
- Similarly, most parents (or 80.7%) agreed that the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program helps to assure that their **children have a nutritious breakfast**. Agreement was strong for both English speaking parents (79.4%) and Spanish speaking parents (83.5%).
- Another benefit recognized by 80.8% of parents is that the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program helps to assure that their **children are not hungry**. Among English speaking parents 78.4% agreed with this statement while 86.0% of Spanish speaking parents also believed this statement to be true.
- The *Breakfast in the Classroom* program is seen as making a positive contribution on **keeping children from feeling sick due to hunger** by 70.5% of all parents, 72.3% of English speaking parents and 66.7% of Spanish speaking parents.

- Almost all parents (or 84.6%) believe that the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program is **improving the ability of their children to pay attention in class**. Comparable levels of agreement were 82.6% among English speaking parents and 88.8% for Spanish speaking parents.
- Finally, almost all parents (or 85.5%) agreed that *Breakfast in the Classroom* program is **improving the ability of their children to learn**, with 83.6% of English speaking parents and 89.4% of Spanish speaking parents agreeing with this statement.

**Table 8: Perceived Impacts of the *Breakfast in the Classroom* Program (N=1,006)**

To what extent do you think the <i>Breakfast in the Classroom</i> program impacts the following aspects of student learning and behavior?				
Positive Contribution				
	# All Parents	% All Parents	% English Speaking Parents	% Spanish Speaking Parents
<b>Classroom Benefits</b>				
Encourages my child to get to school on time	708	70.4%	67.3%	76.8%
Assures my child starts the day with breakfast	894	88.9%	87.9%	91.0%
Assures my child has a nutritious breakfast	812	80.7%	79.4%	83.5%
Assures that my child is not hungry	813	80.8%	78.4%	86.0%
Keeps my child from feeling sick due to hunger	709	70.5%	72.3%	66.7%
Improves the ability of my child to pay attention in class	851	84.6%	82.6%	88.8%
Improves the ability of my child to learn	860	85.5%	83.6%	89.4%

- Parents responding “strongly agree” or “agree.”

### **Recommended Changes**

More than half of the DPS parents (or 59.6%) who answered questions about continued DPS support for the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program believe the program should be continued as it is. This was true for 58.8% of English speaking parents and 61.4% of Spanish speaking parents.

- More than half (or 54.3%) agreed that the program should offer more breakfast choices, with agreement from 49.9% of English speaking parents and 63.6% of Spanish speaking parents.
- Just under half (or 44.6%) recommended that the program be expanded to more schools. Among the English speaking parents, 44.1% agreed with this concept as did 45.8% of the Spanish speaking parents.



- Slightly less than half (or 41.7%) believe that the type of breakfast should be improved. This was true for 35.5% of the English speaking parents and 55.1% of the Spanish speaking parents.
- Relative to offering students more information, only one in four of the parents (or 28.8%) believe this should be made available, including 26.3% of the English speaking parents and 34.3% of the Spanish speaking parents.
- One in three parents (or 37.2%) agree that parents should have more information about the breakfast program and the foods that are being offered. Similarly, 33.6% of English speaking parents believe more information should be available as did 44.9% of Spanish speaking parents.

## Recommendations for Additional Support

**In the next few years, what support should Denver Public Schools provide to the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program? (Check all that apply.)**

	All Parents # (N=1,006)	All Parents %	English Speaking Parents % (N=685)	Spanish Speaking Parents % (N=321)
Continue the program as it is	600	59.6%	58.8%	61.4%
Expand the program to more schools	449	44.6%	44.1%	45.8%
Offer more breakfast choices	546	54.3%	49.9%	63.6%
Improve the type of breakfast that is served	420	41.7%	35.5%	55.1%
Offer students more information about the breakfast program	290	28.8%	26.3%	34.3%
Offer parents more information about the breakfast program and what foods are offered	374	37.2%	33.6%	44.9%

- *Parents were able to check more than one answer.*

Focus group participants provided additional insight into possible ways in which the BIC program could be improved. In particular many parents were not fully aware about the breakfast meals that are being served. They believe that the breakfast meals should be nutritious and balanced, offering a variety of food choices. Latino parents provided suggestions as to the types of foods that would appeal to Hispanic students.

- *Parents believe that the district should have the best interest of the children in mind and should serve the most nutritious foods and balanced meals as possible. Families depend and expect the schools to provide for their children.*
- *Parents feel they do not have enough information about the program. They would like to see menus. Having menus posted on the website is not sufficient. Many families don't have internet at home. Posting menus in the classrooms is a good idea. Parents would then know what is being served and the quality and variety of foods being served.*
- *Latino parents suggested serving Hispanic foods that appeal to Latino families since they're the majority population at some schools. They mentioned bean and other types of burritos and avena (hot Mexican oatmeal that's like porridge)*

Possible options for sharing more information with parents are detailed below:

- Newsletters
- Posting information in the classroom or via teacher hand out information sheets to take home
- Text messages of menu items
- Providing a number parents can call to find out the menu for the day
- Conducting satisfaction and recommendation surveys for parents and children to complete. There are issues related to what the children prefer to eat and what their parents would like them to eat, so both should be surveyed. Surveys can be available in the classroom for parents to complete weekly to record their opinions of the week's meals. (Latino parents)
- Making a suggestion box available in the classrooms for parents and children to use. (Latino parents)
- Hosting joint parent and child classes held at the school, or outreach to the home, for them to learn about nutrition and healthy eating, taste menu items, and offer recommendations. Parents are not always aware of healthy eating options, so education would provide a valuable service. (Latino parents)

## **Parent Comments Regarding the BIC Program**

When asked for if they had any additional comments, one in ten parents (or 108) provided positive accolades regarding the program, expressing their gratitude and appreciation that the program is being offered. All parent comments in this category are provided in Appendix C.

### **Positive Comments**

***Please share with us any additional thoughts you might have about the Breakfast in the Classroom program.***

#### **Thank You! The Program is Great**

- *Thank you for the breakfast. I volunteer and some kids really need that food. Some get off the bus starving.*
- *Thanks for helping families that can't afford food for their children*
- *Your program is an amazing blessing to my 3 sons. Thank you so much.*
- *Thank you for feeding (my son); it important and your help is needed.*
- *I'm so happy for the kids. I think this is very important for any one. Thanks so much.*

#### **Great program! I'm so glad DPS does this!**

- *I think this is a great way to start the day, breaking bread together and building community while giving nutrition.*
- *It is a great idea kids always need to be encouraged to eat to keep their thought process going.*
- *Great option for busy morning or running late circumstances. Really like the part that is free.*
- *As a parent I know breakfast is the most important meal of day, so with that it furthers a child's education.*

- *I believe the program is great for kids without a good focus.*

**Please keep the program. It's a lot of help with kids breakfast in the morning.**

- *Please continue this program. I remember as a student that school lunch was my first meal of the day. It was torture to wait that long.*
- *It is something the school should continue some children depend on this program and it helps kids focus a lot better with something in their tummy*
- *I actually think this is a very helpful program and they make sure no child is left hungry*
- *I'm happy to know this is an option for my child and other children who may not have the opportunity to eat at home before leaving for school*
- *Encourage more parents to lean about the Breakfast in the Classroom program, this way it's more accessible to other children that don't currently participate.*
- *I think that every child should eat breakfast before class starts. It wakes them up, and they are not hungry.*

**I think it's good because breakfast is the most important meal of the day.**

- *I think it's a good thing because there are a lot of children that don't eat or can't be fed before school.*
- *I am happy to know my child has breakfast helps her pay attention in class.*
- *Breakfast is the most important food of all day.*
- *I will now get my son to school a bit early for breakfast*
- *Gives children another chance to socialize with each other and (their) teachers*

## General Recommendations

An additional 10 percent of parents (or 91) offered recommendations as to how the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program might be changed. A full listing of these comments is provided in Appendix D.

### Would like more information

- *I would like to know what he has for breakfast every day*
- *More parent information on what kind of food is served would be helpful.*
- *Providing an informative flier with example of what the students' choices are.*

### Give students more time to eat

- *They should give more time. At least 45 minutes.*
- *It's a great program, the only problem is they only give the kids 5 min to eat. School starts at 8 am and by 8:04 the kids have to clean up. What's the point in breakfast if they can't eat (it).*

### Maybe a little larger amount, doesn't always fill my daughter.

- *My kids complain that they don't receive enough for breakfast at school that is why sometimes they have to eat breakfast at home and at school.*
- *Breakfast in the Classroom is okay, but we need to make sure that we have enough of every item on the menu for everyone.*

### More variety the better. Ask your legal aid if advertising for donations or car washes or bake sales to help provide specific schools with breakfast funding for DPS to help supply more varieties.

- *I really like the program, I just would like to see more choices for breakfast.*

- If you are going to serve breakfast in the classroom, then it needs to be independent family style. And stop limiting the options. The children get bored with the same cereal, breads, and breakfast bars.
- Change the food and not give the same thing every other day.

**I understand breakfast needs to be manageable for food prep but variety and healthy choices need to be considered for our kids' health.**

- I like the idea, but the quality of the food needs to be improved so kids actually want to eat it every day.
- I realize for some low income children eating at school might be their only meals. It would be nice to know that they we healthy nutritious meals. Not overly processed high carb high sugar foods that they currently get.
- In theory it is great. The quality of what is offered needs to be improved.
- Please stop serving children GMO's and cancer causing preservatives!

**Less packaged food. No more pancakes and French toast in a bag.**

- I think a hot breakfast option should be served.
- Is the warm food frozen and stored? Schools should have better quality foods.
- Please make sure that everything is cooked correctly and the temperatures are right.
- Please cook at correct temperatures and serve at correct temperatures.
- Provide a hot breakfast pancakes egg muffin egg

**Children do not like the breakfast, serve more food they like.**

- Sometimes there is food my kids can't eat.
- Offer yogurt! Pay attention to the foods that come back and no one eats.
- Ask kids what they like or if had enough.
- Serve more of the popular breakfast items.

**I like the program but the amount of food that ends up in the trash is outrageous.**

- Donate unused/unopen food to organizations instead of throwing it away

**Would like the breakfast in the lunchroom**

- Breakfast should be in cafeteria
- I actually liked the kids having breakfast in the cafeteria better.
- I think it is distracting to have kids take breakfast to class. My daughter has math first hour and I have seen her learning suffer from having to try to eat and do math at same time. I prefer old system.
- I do not like that our school cafeteria does not cook the meals in house. We run out of food every day. If we made the breakfast in the school it would taste better and be received better.
- I think it was better in the lunch room. My daughter enjoyed the breakfast time better than in the classroom, she tells me some of the food isn't very good.
- I would like for kids that arrive late to school to be allowed to eat bf somewhere else. I believe that if they are late most likely they didn't have a chance to eat bf bcc they woke up late.
- Kids need to eat breakfast before school.

**Other**

- Maybe initiate a nutrition lesson with a classroom-prepared breakfast once per semester; i.e., the whole class watches the process of making a smoothie, learns why the items included are healthy choices, learns why these particular vitamins assist with: healthy skin, run faster, etc. I know when my child makes it, he eats it. :) I imagine other kids are the same. This takes a lot of coordination but if it's offered 1-2 times/year, it'd make an impact!

- Try making breakfast fun. For the kids to get excited to eat and not go play and skip breakfast.

## Parent Recommendations regarding Food Items on the BIC Menu

As part of the surveys, parents were asked to specify if there were any food items they would like to see on the BIC menu. Twenty eight parents responded that they were pleased with the current offerings:

- Everything they give is just perfect.
- I like your breakfast. At times there isn't much variety, but that's not important. This is a very good program.
- What you serve is nutritious, I am fine with the menu.
- I'm very satisfied with what they serve, but have more fruit.
- What they provide is good because they provide variety and always have fruit.
- I think that it's a very great idea, and more schools throughout the US should do the very same thing.

A third of parents (or 345) provided menu recommendations. The table below summarizes the broad categories of recommendations, organized by the primary suggestion offered. A full listing of all menu suggestions has been provided to DPS-BIC program staff. Among all food categories, parents most typically recommended that more fresh fruit be served.

## Food Item Recommendations

Please specify any food items you would like to see on the BIC menu.				
	English Speaking Parents	Spanish Speaking Parents	Electronic Survey Respondents	TOTAL
Cereal	5	15	5	25
Eggs	6	13	4	23
French Toast	5			6
Fresh Fruit	20	48	10	78
More Fresh Fruit	8	10	2	20
Less Juice/Sugar	5	2	3	10
More Juice	2			2
Milk/Juice	1	9	2	12
Oatmeal	8	6	3	17
Burrito/Pizza	7	18	3	28
Pancakes	16	9	2	27
Yogurt	6	9	3	18

Focus group participants echoed these same themes, stressing the importance of serving fresh fruit, protein-enriched foods and a variety of food selections. They were concerned that many of the food choices appear to be high in sugar, offering limited protein. Parents stressed the importance of serving students a variety of foods.

- *Some parents thought the food served was healthy, but many complained that the cereal served was served too often and that there wasn't enough variety served.*
- *More fresh fruit, protein and a variety of foods should be served. It would be better to serve hot fresh breakfasts rather than cold breakfasts. Some of the breakfast items served have been frozen or raw/undercooked.*
- *Among parents who knew what was being served, they thought that too many high sugar foods and foods with no protein (e.g. Cinnamon Crunch cereal, sweet bread) were being served.*

## **Conclusion**

During the 2015-16 school year, a survey was sent to parents with students enrolled in schools participating in the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program. The survey was distributed in English and Spanish and made available via a paper survey as well as through an email link. Responses were obtained from 1,006 parents, representing 51 DPS schools. Of the surveys returned, 685 were received from English speaking parents while 321 were answered by Spanish speaking parents.

Highlights of the survey results are detailed below:

- Nearly three out of four parents (or 70.1%) indicated that their children eat breakfast daily. In combination, 83% of parents report that their children either eat breakfast daily (70.1%) or four to five times per week (13.1%).
- A majority of parents report that their children eat breakfast at school (45.5%), although a third (36.8%) indicated that they eat breakfast both at home and at school. Slightly more than one in ten (or 14.6%) of students eat breakfast only at home.
- Almost all parents (or 91.5%) believe that eating breakfast is important. In addition, almost all (92.0%) are aware that their children have the opportunity to eat a free, nutritious breakfast in the classroom every day. Three out of four parents (or 76.0%) are aware that the breakfast meals served by DPS must follow Federal regulations.
- Parent opinions regarding the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program tend to be positive with 70.1% of parents having a very positive and 13.7% having a somewhat positive view of the program.

- ✓ Almost all parents (or 88.9%) report that the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program **assures that their children start the day with breakfast**. Most (or 80.7%) agreed that the program helps to assure that the breakfast is nutritious.
- ✓ Most parents (or 80.8%) believe that the *Breakfast in the Classroom* helps to **assure that their children are not hungry**. In addition, 70.7% agree that the program is keeping children from feeling sick due to hunger.
- ✓ Almost all parents (or 84.6%) believe the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program is **improving the ability of their children to pay attention in class**. Moreover, 85.5% believe that the program is **improving the ability of their children to learn**.

Relative to program improvements, more than half of parents (or 54.3%) believe that the program should offer more breakfast choices while 41.7% indicated that the type of breakfast served should be improved. A third of parents offered recommendations regarding items that could be included on the BIC menu. Among all food categories, parents most typically recommended that more fresh fruit be served.

## APPENDIX A: Distribution of Parent Survey Responses By School

	English Email	Spanish Email	English Paper	Spanish Paper
Abraham Lincoln High School	1			
Ashley Elementary			59	32
Bradley International School	1			
BRIC	1			
Bruce Randolph Middle School	14	5		
Bryant Webster Dual Language	1			
Cheltenham Elementary			25	8
CLA	1			
CMS				2
Cole Arts & Science Academy	1			
Compassion Road Academy	1			
DCIS Fairmont	1			
Denver Discovery School	1			
Denver Language School	13			
Denver School of Science and Technology	1			1
Eagleton Elementary		1		
Escalante Biggs Academy	1			
Florence Crittenton High School	2			
Florida Pitt Waller K-8	1			
Force Elementary	1			
Gilpin Montessori Elementary	9		1	
Goldrick Elementary	2			
Godsman Elementary			10	
Greenlee Elementary	1			
Gust Elementary	3			1
Henry World Middle School	3			
High Tech Early College	2			
Hill Campus of Arts and Science	1			
Johnson Elementary				1
McAuliffe International School	1			
McGlone Elementary	5			
McMeen Elementary	11			
Marie Greenwood K-8		1		
Marramma Elementary			113	21
Martin Luther King Early College	1			
Montclair Elementary	20	1		
Monroe Elementary			5	
Munroe Elementary	1		30	25
Newlon Elementary			68	62
Noel Community Arts School	2			
Palmer Elementary	2			
Park Hill Elementary	1			
Pascual La Doux Academy			55	26
Schmitt Elementary	1			
Steele Elementary	2			
Swansea Elementary		2	98	97



Trevista Elementary			80	13
Valdez Elementary	1			
Westerly Creek Elementary	1			
William Roberts Elementary	1			
<b>TOTAL</b>	113	10	544	289

- Total survey returns from all parents equal 1006.
- Three English speaking parents did not indicate a school on the email survey. Their total email survey return was 116.
- One Spanish speaking parent did not indicate a school on the email survey. Their total email survey return was 11.
- Twenty-five English speaking parents did not indicate a school on the paper survey. Their total paper survey return was 569.
- Twenty-one Spanish speaking parents did not indicate a school on the paper survey. Their total paper survey return was 310.

## APPENDIX B: Distribution of Parent Survey Responses By Grade Level Of Their Children

	# English Speaking Parents	% English Speaking Parents	# Spanish Speaking Parents	% Spanish Speaking Parents
<b>Prekindergarten or Kindergarten</b>	220	33.9%	40	16.2%
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>	95	14.6%	57	23.1%
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b>	97	14.9%	40	16.2%
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>	59	9.1%	44	17.8%
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	87	13.4%	35	14.2%
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	59	9.1%	26	10.5%
<b>6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Grades</b>	18	2.8%	-	
<b>9<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> Grades</b>	14	2.2%	5	2.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	649	100%	247	100%

## APPENDIX C: General Comments

**Please share with us any additional thoughts you might have about the *Breakfast in the Classroom* program.**

### **Thank You! The Program is Great**

- *Thank you for the breakfast. I volunteer and some kids really need that food. Some get off the bus starving.*
- *Thanks for helping families that can't afford food for their children*
- *Your program is an amazing blessing to my 3 sons. Thank you so much.*
- *Thank you for feeding (my son); it important and your help is needed.*
- *I'm so happy for the kids. I think this is very important for any one. Thanks so much.*

### **Great program! I'm so glad DPS does this!**

- *I think this is a great way to start the day, breaking bread together and building community while giving nutrition.*
- *It is a great idea kids always need to be encouraged to eat to keep their thought process going.*
- *Great option for busy morning or running late circumstances. Really like the part that is free.*
- *As a parent I know breakfast is the most important meal of day, so with that it furthers a child's education.*
- *I believe the program is great for kids without a good focus.*

### **Please keep the program. It's a lot of help with kids breakfast in the morning.**

- *Please continue this program. I remember as a student that school lunch was my first meal of the day. It was torture to wait that long.*
- *It is something the school should continue some children depend on this program and it helps kids focus a lot better with something in their tummy*
- *I actually think this is a very helpful program and they make sure no child is left hungry*
- *I'm happy to know this is an option for my child and other children who may not have the opportunity to eat at home before leaving for school*
- *Encourage more parents to lean about the Breakfast in the Classroom program, this way it's more accessible to other children that don't currently participate.*
- *I think that every child should eat breakfast before class starts. It wakes them up, and they are not hungry.*

### **I think it's good because breakfast is the most important meal of the day.**

- *I think it's a good thing because there are a lot of children that don't eat or can't be fed before school.*
- *I am happy to know my child has breakfast helps her pay attention in class.*
- *Breakfast is the most important food of all day.*
- *I will now get my son to school a bit early for breakfast*
- *Gives children another chance to socialize with each other and (their) teachers*

## **APPENDIX D: Recommendations**

### **Would like more information**

- *I would like to know what he has for breakfast every day*
- *More parent information on what kind of food is served would be helpful.*
- *Providing an informative flier with example of what the students' choices are.*

### **Give students more time to eat**

- *They should give more time. At least 45 minutes.*
- *It's a great program, the only problem is they only give the kids 5 min to eat. School starts at 8 am and by 8:04 the kids have to clean up. What's the point in breakfast if they can't eat (it).*

### **Maybe a little larger amount, doesn't always fill my daughter.**

- *My kids complain that they don't receive enough for breakfast at school that is why sometimes they have to eat breakfast at home and at school.*
- *Breakfast in the Classroom is okay, but we need to make sure that we have enough of every item on the menu for everyone.*

### **More variety the better. Ask your legal aid if advertising for donations or car washes or bake sales to help provide specific schools with breakfast funding for DPS to help supply more varieties.**

- *I really like the program, I just would like to see more choices for breakfast.*
- *If you are going to serve breakfast in the classroom, then it needs to be independent family style. And stop limiting the options. The children get bored with the same cereal, breads, and breakfast bars.*
- *Change the food and not give the same thing every other day.*

### **I understand breakfast needs to be manageable for food prep but variety and healthy choices need to be considered for our kids' health.**

- *I like the idea, but the quality of the food needs to be improved so kids actually want to eat it every day.*
- *I realize for some low income children eating at school might be their only meals. It would be nice to know that they we healthy nutritious meals. Not overly processed high carb high sugar foods that they currently get.*
- *In theory it is great. The quality of what is offered needs to be improved.*
- *Please stop serving children GMO's and cancer causing preservatives!*

### **Less packaged food. No more pancakes and french toast in a bag.**

- *I think a hot breakfast option should be served.*
- *Is the warm food frozen and stored? Schools should have better quality foods.*
- *Please make sure that everything is cooked correctly and the temperatures are right.*
- *Please cook at correct temperatures and serve at correct temperatures.*
- *Provide a hot breakfast pancakes egg muffin egg*

### **Children do not like the breakfast, serve more food they like.**

- *Sometimes there is food my kids can't eat.*
- *Offer yogurt! Pay attention to the foods that come back and no one eats.*
- *Ask kids what they like or if had enough.*
- *Serve more of the popular breakfast items.*

### **I like the program but the amount of food that ends up in the trash is outrageous**

- *Donate unused/unopen food to organizations instead of throwing it away*

#### **Would like the breakfast in the lunchroom**

- *Breakfast should be in cafeteria*
- *I actually liked the kids having breakfast in the cafeteria better.*
- *I think it is distracting to have kids take breakfast to class. My daughter has math first hour and I have seen her learning suffer from having to try to eat and do math at same time. I prefer old system.*
- *I do not like that our school cafeteria does not cook the meals in house. We run out of food every day. If we made the breakfast in the school it would taste better and be received better.*
- *I think it was better in the lunch room. My daughter enjoyed the breakfast time better than in the classroom, she tells me some of the food isn't very good.*
- *I would like for kids that arrive late to school to be allowed to eat bf somewhere else. I believe that if they are late most likely they didn't have a chance to eat bf bcc they woke up late.*
- *Kids need to eat breakfast before school.*

#### **Other**

- *Maybe initiate a nutrition lesson with a classroom-prepared breakfast once per semester; ie, the whole class watches the process of making a smoothie, learns why the items included are healthy choices, learns why these particular vitamins assist with: healthy skin, run faster, etc. I know when my child makes it, he eats it. :) I imagine other kids are the same. This takes a lot of coordination but if it's offered 1-2 times/year, it'd make an impact!*
- *Try making breakfast fun. For the kids to get excited to eat and not go play and skip breakfast.*