



# MEDIA RELEASE

Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release.

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## ARKANSAS MAKING PROGRESS IN SCHOOL BREAKFAST

**LITTLE ROCK, AR (February 17, 2016)**— The Food Research and Action Center’s [School Breakfast Scorecard](#) report just out for the 2014-2015 school year shows Arkansas has made significant progress in increasing the number of low-income students participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP). “We are very pleased to see that Arkansas has moved in a positive direction (from 10<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation) with a 2.8 percent increase in the number of low-income students eating breakfast at school,” said Patty Barker, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign director. “Hungry kids can’t learn, so it’s gratifying to see our work helping more Arkansas students begin every school day with the nutritional boost they need to succeed.”

### Breakfast after the Bell Effective in Increasing Breakfast Participation

The FRAC report reiterates the overwhelming consensus among research studies showing that when children eat school breakfast, it leads to “improved dietary intake, reduced food insecurity, better test performance, and fewer distractions in the classroom throughout the morning.” [See [Breakfast for Learning](#) and [Breakfast for Health](#).] The report further asserts that the overall increase in breakfast participation is due in no small part to the adoption of breakfast after the bell methods— like Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab & Go and Second Chance Breakfast— that make breakfast part of the school day instead of the traditional method of serving in the cafeteria before school begins, along with the Community Eligibility Provision, which allows schools with high numbers of students from low income families to provide breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students.

With nearly [290,000 Arkansas students](#) (or 61 percent) eligible to receive free or reduced priced meals, the benefits to those children of getting a nutritious breakfast each day cannot be overestimated. “The Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign, the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Share Our Strength, Arkansas Department of Education and our other breakfast advocates have been promoting breakfast after the bell strategies like Breakfast in the Classroom, Second Chance and Grab & Go for several years,” said Barker. “Teachers, principals and parents tell us all the time that virtually everything has improved since they chose to make breakfast part of the school day...better attendance, fewer trips to the school nurse, fewer behavior issues, better concentration on classwork. It’s all good.”

### CEP Part of Breakfast Success Nationally

The Alliance and Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign are currently working with the Arkansas Governor’s Office, Arkansas Department of Education, ForwARd Arkansas and others to encourage eligible Arkansas school districts to adopt the Community Eligibility Provision. Feeding all students breakfast at no charge to them and making breakfast part of the school day means more children will be getting the food they need to achieve. According to the report, Arkansas schools are lagging behind in their decisions to sign on to CEP. With the provision’s proven

benefits to students and the fiscal advantages for school district budgets, the adoption of CEP by Arkansas's 401 eligible schools in the next school year should be on the rise.

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**The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance**

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit [www.ARhungeralliance.org](http://www.ARhungeralliance.org) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

**Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign**

The Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign was launched in 2010 as a partnership among the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the state of Arkansas and Share Our Strength to end childhood hunger in Arkansas. The Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign connects kids in need to effective nutrition programs like school breakfast, summer and afterschool meals programs and teaches low-income families to cook healthy, affordable meals through its Cooking Matters program. Visit [Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign](#) or [www.NoKidHungry.com](http://www.NoKidHungry.com) for more information.