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# MEDIA RELEASE

## Governor Asa Hutchinson Proclaims March School Breakfast Month

### *Supports breakfast as part of the school day*

**Little Rock, AR (March 2, 2016)**—Governor Asa Hutchinson joined the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Department of Education, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign stakeholders, members of ForwARd Arkansas, legislators and area educators to kick-off Arkansas School Breakfast Month.

The Governor and others emphasized the importance of breakfast and encouraged Arkansas school districts to adopt the two proven strategies for increasing the number of students getting a nutritious start to their days: 1) [Breakfast after the Bell programs](#), which make breakfast part of the school day and 2) [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\)](#), which allows high poverty school districts to feed all children breakfast and lunch at no charge to the students.

“The benefits to children of participating in the School Breakfast Program have been shown repeatedly,” said Patty Barker, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign director. According to the Food Research and Action Center recent report, the School Breakfast Program leads to healthier dietary intake, reduced food insecurity, better test performance and fewer distractions in the classroom. (FRAC, School Breakfast Scorecard, 2016) When schools move breakfast out of the cafeteria and make it part of the school day, the number of children eating breakfast increases substantially. Coupling Breakfast after the Bell with CEP is considered the most effective means of maximizing the number of children who get the nutritional boost they need to learn and succeed. School superintendents, Jon Collins, West Memphis School District and Jim Lloyd, Two Rivers School District, told the Governor and attendees the successes their schools are having with both Breakfast after the Bell and CEP.

“The Community Eligibility Provision saved the West Memphis School District more than \$418,000 for the 2014-15 school year,” said Superintendent Collins. He added, “The increased revenue from the increased participation rate allowed [us] to replace older equipment and increase the servings of fresh fruits and vegetables, as required by USDA.”

“This program has significantly increased the number of students eating breakfast and lunch at school,” said Superintendent Loyd. “These programs have allowed our food service program to operate in the black, which is important to the overall school budget. I would encourage any school considering the Community Eligibility Provision to make the commitment and do it for their students.”

To see Breakfast-After-the-Bell programs in action, watch our video [Breakfast = Success in Arkansas](#).

“As an integral part of the Governor’s Healthy Active Arkansas 10-Year Plan and the ForwARd Arkansas educational vision, alternative breakfast models such as Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab & Go and Second Chance Breakfast substantially increase breakfast participation and are considered *quick wins* in the process of raising academic achievement in Arkansas communities,” said Cory Anderson of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

The work of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign, and Share Our Strength has resulted in more than 450 Arkansas schools adopting Breakfast after the Bell models. While the state is lagging behind national figures in signing on to CEP, these groups are committed to redoubling their efforts along with partners at the Arkansas Department of Education to increase the number of schools feeding all children school lunch and breakfast at no charge.

“Arkansas has moved from 10<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the percentage of students participating in the school breakfast program,” said Barker. “That’s an increase of almost 3 percent, and we couldn’t be more pleased, but we still have a ways to go for all kids to start their days with a nutritious breakfast.”

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#### **About 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