



MEDIA RELEASE

*Arkansas School Breakfast Month:
Eating a school breakfast each morning gives Arkansas students a
healthy boost!*

For more information contact Nancy Conley, Communications Director at nconley@arhungeralliance.org or 501.399.9999

LITTLE ROCK, AR (March 1, 2015)— The Governor has proclaimed March as *School Breakfast Month* in Arkansas. Events throughout the month will be highlighting the importance of Breakfast-After-the-Bell programs that make a nutritious breakfast part of the school day.

When breakfast moves from the cafeteria into the classroom, it removes barriers that keep students from participating, like the *low-income* stigma of eating in the cafeteria. Many students have a hard time getting to school early. Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab & Go and Second Chance Breakfast make it easier for students to get the benefits that a nutritious breakfast provides them. A teacher from the Alma School District said, *"This program is such a blessing to our school system. I wish all schools were as lucky. I feel like we are fueling those little bodies and we are getting more from their little minds in return!"*

In a press conference held in the old Supreme Court Chamber in the Capital, Daisy Bates Principal Matt Mellor shared the positive effects he is seeing in his school as a result of starting a Breakfast in the Classroom program. Schools, like Daisy Bates Elementary School, that have Breakfast-After-the-Bell programs in place are reporting **increases in the numbers of eligible students who are eating breakfast**, and that means **more federal child nutrition reimbursement dollars** to schools. *"We're seeing more of our kids eating breakfast," Mellor said, "and I think that's why some of the discipline has improved and why attendance has improved. Our breakfast eating is up 110% so we actually have more kids that come in for breakfast than we do for school lunch, and that's pretty phenomenal."*

A month-long celebration

The Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign and Midwest Dairy Council will be sponsoring the Arkansas Breakfast Challenge, which offers new grant dollars and incentives to help schools adopt Breakfast-After-the-Bell programs. Schools can apply for the Arkansas Breakfast Challenge through March 31, 2015.



There will also be an *Orange Squeeze Photo Contest*. Child Nutrition Directors from across the state will be sending creative photos of their students eating fresh oranges for breakfast on March 6th. The school with the most creative photo will receive a \$1,500 cash prize, second place will receive \$1,000 and the third place winner will receive \$500.

We know breakfast makes a difference in the educational capacity of students. According to *Ending Childhood Hunger: A Social Impact Analysis*, by Deloitte and the No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices, if 70% of Arkansas elementary and middle school students were eating a free or reduced-priced school lunch were also eating school breakfast, the potential impact could be:

- 38,789 Fewer school absences per year
- 25,859 Students scoring higher on standardized math tests per year
- 6,467 More high school graduates

Through the efforts of the Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign and partner organizations, Arkansas is getting close to that 70% goal. At the end of 2014, we had helped enough schools adopt Breakfast-After-the-Bell programs that breakfast participation had reached 60%.

That Breakfast-After-the-Bell programs are showing good results for Arkansas students is clear from the recent *School Breakfast Scorecard: 2013-2014*, a study by the Food Research and Action Center. **Arkansas went from 12th to 10th in the nation in eligible students that are participating school breakfast.**

We invite you to join the Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign and Midwest Dairy Council for the upcoming Breakfast Month kick-off events.

DATE: March 3, 2015
TIME: 7:45 – 9:00 am
WHERE: Taylor Elementary School
1401 Murrell Taylor Drive
Jacksonville, AR 72076

DATE: March 5, 2015
TIME: 7:45 – 9:00 am
WHERE: Asbell Elementary School
1500 North Sang Avenue
Fayetteville, AR 72703

Special guest: Blair Wortsmith
 Miss Teen International

Special guest: NFL star Jerry
 Franklin of the Chicago Bears

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For information on starting a Breakfast-After-the-Bell program, contact:
 Vivian Nicholson, Breakfast Program Director at vnicholson@arhungeralliance.org.