

**EVALUATION OF THE 2005-2006 PROVISION 2 PILOT
IN MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004-2005, only 11% of Milwaukee Public School students ate school breakfast even though 73% qualified for free and reduced price lunch. Provision 2 is an option under the national school lunch and school breakfast programs that can potentially benefit students and schools or districts with high poverty levels and low breakfast participation.

Under Provision 2, free meals are served to all students regardless of their income. In 2005, Milwaukee Public Schools approved implementation of the Provision 2 program at six pilot schools for the 2005-2006 school year. Hunger Task Force agreed to evaluate the impact of the pilot in these six schools in order to inform future considerations regarding expansion of universal free meals. This report details the findings from the evaluation of the 2005-2006 Provision 2 pilot in Milwaukee Public Schools.

- There is a great need and high level of support for Provision 2 at the six pilot schools. Ninety percent of school staff and 64% of parents reported it is extremely important for all students to get free breakfast and lunch at their school.
- Ninety-two percent of staff and 98% of parents at the pilot schools highly support expansion of universal free meals to the entire district.
- Provision 2 positively affects families of children attending the pilot schools. More than 60% of parents indicate that the program reduced time, stress, and financial burdens.
- School breakfast greatly influences student behavior, learning, health, and socialization. At least 70% of school staff report positive impacts on these variables.
- Hunger in the pilot schools decreased 60% in 2005-2006 according to staff members. In the previous year, 92% of staff heard students complain of hunger at least occasionally.
- Breakfast participation was limited by the new 7:45 am start time and student tardiness. Participation increased significantly at two schools, increased marginally at two schools and decreased at two schools.
- Breakfast in the classroom increases breakfast participation. Breakfast participation doubled at the two schools where breakfast is served in the classroom.
- Quantitative measures of changes in attendance and behavior proved inconclusive. Attendance, behavior, nurse visits, and test scores will be revisited during the 2006-2007 school year.
- Although meal application outreach efforts are labor intensive, they were highly successful. More than 90% of applications were returned at all 6 schools.

INTRODUCTION

The school meals program in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) has deep roots in local community lobbying efforts and national public policy change. In 1905, the local Women's School Alliance requested permission from the Milwaukee Public School Board to serve soup lunches in the schools. In 1946, the U.S. government established the National School Lunch Program, enabling schools to receive federal reimbursement for lunches served and establishing school lunch services as a sustainable operation.

Congress followed in 1966 by introducing the School Breakfast Program, first initiated as an experimental program to provide morning meals for 'nutritionally needy children.' Locally, a group of community members called the Citizens for Central City School Breakfast (which later became Hunger Task Force) petitioned the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) Board to start a school breakfast program as well. Three elementary schools became the sites of MPS' first breakfast program in 1970. Today, 36 years later, *all* Milwaukee Public Schools offer the School Breakfast Program.

In spite of these diligent community efforts to establish school meals programming and the current availability of school breakfast at all schools within the Milwaukee Public School District, very few Milwaukee Public School students eat school breakfast. In 2004-2005, only 11% of Milwaukee Public School students participated in school breakfast¹. In the same period of time, the state of Wisconsin ranked last in the nation in school breakfast participation, despite an improvement in participation numbers.²

Evidence abounds proving that hunger is a serious problem in Milwaukee. In 2004, the most common reason for calls to the 211 resource and referral phone hotline was to request information on where to obtain food assistance.³ Furthermore, within the Hunger Task Force network of 73 food pantries and congregate meal sites, a monthly average of 65,145 hot meals are served at soup kitchens, with an additional monthly average of 39,363 households receiving emergency food from a food pantry. Federal nutrition program participation further indicates the need for food assistance, as 141,504 residents of Milwaukee County received food stamps in 2005, comprising 40.1% of the Wisconsin state's food stamp recipients.⁴

Childhood hunger is also prevalent in Milwaukee. Summer meal programs provide food to needy children during vacation periods when they do not receive free or reduced-price school meals. Through the "Fueling Young Minds Summer Meals Initiative," 432,403 meals were served to needy children in 2005.

¹ MPS Child Nutrition Report, 2004-2005

² Only 26.5% of Wisconsin children who qualify for free and reduced price school meals ate breakfast at school in compared to 43.9% nationally. *2005 FRAC School Breakfast Report Card*.

³ 211 @ Impact. *Sign of the Times. A Report Card to the Community*. Copyright 2005., p.20.

⁴ DHFS, <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/rsdata/recipientsbycity/fs-recipients-cy05.xls>

During the 2005-2006 school year, 73.4% of Milwaukee Public School students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Free school meals are available only to households at or below 130% of the federal poverty level, which translates to \$20,917 per year for a family of three in the 2005-2006 school year. Reduced-price meals are only available to households with incomes between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty level (between \$20,917 and \$29,767 in the 2005-2006 school year). At these income requirements, with 73.4% of Milwaukee Public School students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals, the existence of poverty in Milwaukee is indisputable. With 41.3% of Milwaukee children (18 years and younger) living in poverty,⁵ child poverty is a particularly daunting problem for Milwaukee's schools.

Hunger is a symptom of poverty. Also contributing to hunger are issues including high unemployment, high housing costs, and low wages. In 2004, the unemployment rate was 7.1% for Milwaukee compared to 4.7% for Wisconsin.⁶ Also a concern in Milwaukee are housing costs. The Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that housing expenses should not total more than 30% of an individual's income, but with a "fair market rent" of \$706 in Milwaukee County, no single individual receiving Wisconsin's minimum wage of \$5.70 an hour could afford this rent unless he or she worked 95 hours a week.⁷

Besides the cost of rent, the cost of utilities poses additional burden for residents in a poverty-stricken city. Electric rates were expected to increase about 11% within the months of January and February 2006 for customers of Wisconsin's largest utility company.⁸ Moreover, despite warmer weather in the winter of 2005-2006, utility companies expect an increase in natural gas prices compared to past winter seasons, prompting the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* to predict "this will be by far the most expensive heating season."⁹ This situation does not bode well for the seventh poorest city in the nation that is also the fourth poorest city for children.¹⁰

UNIVERSAL FREE MEALS

Low participation among Milwaukee Public School (MPS) children in school breakfast (only 11% participate in school breakfast according to the *MPS 2005 Child Nutrition Report*) is cause for concern. A plethora of research has demonstrated the importance of breakfast, showing that eating breakfast is correlated with less behavioral problems,¹¹ improved math grades¹² and standardized test scores,¹³ and less tardiness and absences.¹⁴

⁵ US Census Bureau, *2004 American Community Survey*.

⁶ Department of Workforce Development http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/oea/unemploy_rates_labor_stats.htm.

⁷ *Out of Reach 2005*, National Low Income Housing Coalition. <http://www.nlihc.org/oor2005/>

⁸ Content, Thomas "Rise in Heating Costs is Easing", *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, January 6, 2006.

⁹ Content, Thomas "Rise in Heating Costs is Easing", *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, January 6, 2006.

¹⁰ Held, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, August 30, 2005.

¹¹ Murphy JM, Pagano M, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman R. "The Relationship of School Breakfast to Psychosocial and Academic Functioning." *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 1998;152:899-907.

¹² Murphy JM, Pagano M, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman R. 1998.

Furthermore, the USDA has shown that for all children, eating breakfast is associated with higher consumption of grains, fruit, and milk.¹⁵ However, eating school breakfast specifically is associated with even higher indicators of diet quality.¹⁶ A reason for this may be the fact that school breakfast and school lunch are held accountable to USDA nutrition guidelines, which outline the required amounts of vitamins and minerals and the limits on fat content.

Despite the benefits of breakfast, not all children have the time, money, or opportunity to eat a nutritious breakfast at home. This is especially true for low-income children in MPS where poverty is very high, but can be as true for children not living in poverty. Research demonstrates that providing children with nutritious school meals feeds students' bodies so their minds can succeed academically.

OVERVIEW OF PROVISION 2

One means to address low school breakfast participation rates is through implementation of Provision 2. Provision 2 is a regulatory option set forth by the USDA as a different means to offer the school breakfast or school lunch program. Under Provision 2, school districts can offer *free* breakfast and lunch to all students at a school or district, regardless of a student's income eligibility. This is why the term Provision 2 is sometimes used interchangeably with universal free meals.

In the standard breakfast program, students submit meal applications every year in order to qualify for free, reduced-price, or full-price meals based on their household income. By contrast, during the first 'base' year of Provision 2, families still fill out these meal applications which are screened for student eligibility for free, reduced, or full-price meals; however, after the first year, applications do not need to be collected again for three years. Thus, Provision 2 works on a four-year cycle. At the end of this four-year cycle, schools have to collect applications again for the first year of a new cycle, or they may request an extension of their cycle.

Meal applications are vital because they provide a basis for reimbursing the school or district for the free meals they serve through Provision 2. The first year that applications are collected determines the percentages of students in three categories: free, reduced, or full-price meals. Federal reimbursement dollars are distributed based on these

¹³ Murphy JM et. al. "Maryland Meals for Achievement Year III Final Report." Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA, 2001.

¹⁴ Cook JT, Ohri-Vachaspati P, Kelly GL. "Evaluation of a Universally-Free School Breakfast Program Demonstration Project, Central Falls, Rhode Island." Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University, Medford, MA, 1996.

¹⁵ USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, Nutrition Insights. "Eating Breakfast Greatly Improves Schoolchildren's Diet Quality." December 1999.

¹⁶ A reason for this may be the fact that school breakfast and school lunch are accountable to USDA nutrition guidelines. Specifically, school breakfasts and school lunches must provide 1/4th and 1/3rd respectively of the daily Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA). This includes calcium, protein, iron, and Vitamins A and C. Furthermore, less than 30% of school meal calories may come from fat and less than 10% of the calories may come from saturated fat.

percentages with free or reduced-price meals receiving higher reimbursements than full-price meals. A school with a high percentage of 'free meal' students must maximize the number of returned meal applications to receive the highest amount of federal reimbursement. Thus, Provision 2 is most financially feasible for schools with a large number of poor students.

Under Provision 2, once applications are processed at the beginning of the first year, all students at the school receive free school meals. Money is no longer collected in the meal line, nor do teachers and food service staff call parents to remind them to submit their child's meal money or pay overdue meal bills. Schools forward applications to the district level where they are processed for the first year. No applications are collected in years two to four.

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF PROVISION 2

Provision 2 reduces paperwork and administrative costs associated with meal applications at the district level. It also reduces paperwork for parents since they do not have to fill out an annual meal application. Provision 2 also lessens paperwork for food service managers, because they do not have to balance accounts or collect overdue school meal money from parents (because everyone receives free meals).

Another potential benefit of Provision 2 is the opportunity to increase breakfast participation and thereby remove social stigma. Students who ordinarily qualify for reduced-price meals will no longer be faced with choosing between paying for lunch or paying for breakfast when financial resources are limited. Struggling parents who formerly paid for reduced-price meals could then spend money on rent, clothing, and medical costs. Furthermore, stigma can be eliminated as a barrier to breakfast participation. Some students are embarrassed to eat breakfast at school because it is seen as only necessary for children who are 'truly poor.' With everyone receiving a free meal, students will no longer fear being labeled or standing out from other children simply because they eat breakfast at school, since no child will be identified as a 'free,' 'reduced' or 'full price' student.

A third benefit of Provision 2 is that it allows for alternatives to serving breakfast in the cafeteria. Breakfast participation has been shown to increase when students have the opportunity to eat breakfast in classroom. As Provision 2 allows for all children to be served, staff no longer have to take verify categorical meal counts for three out of four years. This allows for all children, regardless of income, to have a healthy start to their school day, and increase the total number of children eating breakfast.

One limitation of Provision 2 is that it requires the collecting of meal applications from all students, including those who pay full fare for meals. Under Provision 2, there is little incentive for parents to turn in meal applications since all children receive free meals regardless of whether an application is turned in to the school. Thus, special outreach efforts must be made to encourage all parents to turn in meal applications, plan creative

ways to motivate parents to turn in meal applications, and/or raise awareness of why it is vital to the program to turn in a meal application.

Another limitation of Provision 2 is that it works best only for schools with high percentages of free and reduced-price students. Higher percentages of free and reduced-price student means higher reimbursement amounts coming to the school and/or district providing free meals under Provision 2. However, if a school or district does not have a high percentage of free and reduced-price students, the cost to provide free meals for all students may be too high to warrant implementation of Provision 2.

HISTORY OF PROVISION 2 PILOT PROGRAM IN MILWAUKEE

After the 2004 Child Nutrition Act expanded the authority for Provision 2 implementation to include entire school districts, Hunger Task Force (HTF) saw an opportunity to improve the low school breakfast participation rates in MPS. HTF began researching the Provision 2 option in the summer of 2004. In the fall and winter of 2004, Hunger Task Force met with MPS district officials to discuss examples of other Midwest school districts that offered this program and to advocate for starting Provision 2 in MPS. Numerous interest groups supported this campaign, including Milwaukee City Council PTA, Milwaukee Dietetic Association, Milwaukee Jewish Council, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, SEIU Local 150, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, City of Milwaukee Health Department, and WI School Nutrition Association. As a result of the campaign, in the MPS fiscal year 2006 budget released in April 2005, Superintendent William Andrekopolous proposed implementation of Provision 2 as an experimental pilot program at six elementary schools. This proposal included \$150,000 to cover costs associated with the pilots. Following a series of public school board hearings at which community input was gathered, the MPS School Board approved the Provision 2 pilots as outlined in the proposed budget. Hunger Task Force agreed to coordinate outreach to publicize the Provision 2 program at the six pilot schools in the summer of 2005. The evaluation of the pilot program began in September 2005 by Hunger Task Force staff members and volunteers.

PROVISION 2 PILOT SCHOOLS

The six Provision 2 pilot schools were chosen for several reasons. All schools had very high free and reduced-price eligibility rates, an indication of high poverty in the district. All schools also had strong infrastructures that could support implementation of the pilot program.

The six pilot schools include: Allen-Field School, Mary McLeod Bethune Academy (formerly known as 37th Street School), George Washington Carver Academy¹⁷, H.W. Longfellow School, 38th Street School, and Phillis Wheatley Elementary. Two schools

¹⁷ Carver Academy is a new school; the student population is a combination of Garfield Elementary and Palmer Elementary students as well as new students who did not attend either of those schools.

are on the south side of Milwaukee (H.W. Longfellow and Allen-Field School) and four schools are on the north side of Milwaukee (Bethune Academy, Carver Academy, 38th Street School, and Wheatley Elementary).

While all the pilot schools offer free breakfast under the Provision 2 program this year, they differ in the method used to serve breakfasts. Two pilot schools (Carver and Wheatley) offer breakfast in the classroom. The rest of the pilot schools (Allen-Field, Bethune, Longfellow, and 38th Street) serve breakfast in the cafeteria. This research finds that at times, there are differences in the impact of the pilot on the schools depending on the particular method of serving breakfast. Further specifics on each school can be observed from Figure 1.

Figure 1

Breakfast Participation and Breakfast Serving Methods

	Enrollment	Breakfast Serving Method	Breakfast start	School start	2004-2005 Free and Reduced Eligibility
Carver	532	Classroom	7:45	7:45	92%
Wheatley	263	Classroom	7:20	7:45	94%
Allen Field	866	Cafeteria	7:15	7:45	N/A
Bethune	362	Cafeteria	7:30	7:45	94%
Longfellow	670	Cafeteria	7:30	7:45	86%
38th Street	231	Cafeteria	7:35	7:45	86%

METHODOLOGY

The current assessment of six Provision 2 pilots was completed from September 2005 to December 2005. Written and oral surveys and quantitative data were used to evaluate the pilot program.

The research subjects included parents, students, school and district staff (see Figure 2). One staff member at each school was surveyed. Only four school nurses were surveyed since not all schools had a nurse on duty. At least one teacher per grade was surveyed except for Allen Field, where two teachers per grade were interviewed (due to their larger school size). Teachers were randomly selected to be interviewed.

Figure 2

People Surveyed	# of Respondents
Students	564
Parents	646
School Staff and District Staff	95
Teacher	58
Principal	6
Social Worker	6
School Nurse	4
Building Engineer	6
Food Service Manager	6
Food Service Employee	6
MPS Nutritionist	1
MPS Chief Financial Officer	1
MPS Superintendent	1

Oral interviews were completed with school staff, district staff and students and recorded by research staff and volunteers. Originally, the researchers sought to interview students during their meal time but principals did not prefer this setting. Instead, the researchers interviewed children during the school day. Students were pulled out of class individually for a few short minutes to answer survey questions and promptly sent back to class. Students were randomly selected to be interviewed.

As for the district and staff surveys, in-person interviews took place at the individuals' convenience. Compared to pencil and paper surveys, in-person interviews offer individuals a chance to expand upon answers to survey questions or to address issues not raised in the survey itself. Thus, as will be seen in description of the study's findings, some staff members will offer comments not addressed by any particular question in the survey. These anecdotal responses are synthesized and common themes outlined.

Parent opinions were gathered by pencil and paper surveys. Three methods were used to gather these surveys from parents: handouts at school events, backpack distribution, and postal service. Surveys were made available at school open houses, parent meetings and classes, and parent-teacher conferences. If the required number of parent surveys were not gathered through this means (as occurred at 5 schools), surveys were also sent home with students. Accompanying the survey was a letter signed by the principal explaining the program evaluation. Parents were asked to place the completed survey back in an envelope and return it with their child to their teacher, thus eliminating the need for parents to take an extra step and mail anything back.

Of the parent surveys sent home with students, 31.4% (n= 415) were returned. Returned survey mailers comprised 62.4% of total parent surveys collected, while 35.8% were collected through parent events.

It was necessary to collect a minimum of 336 student surveys and 336 parent surveys to reach a confidence interval of 5 at the 95% confidence interval. The confidence interval means that if another random sample of the population of students and parents were selected, the new survey results would be within plus or minus 5% of the current results. This confidence interval was surpassed, with a total of 564 parent surveys and 646 student surveys collected.

Quantitative data was also collected to compare impact on attendance and behavior measures between the 2004-2005 school year and the 2005-2006 school year. Quantitative information was initially requested from schools but due to unavailable data at the school level and inconsistencies in where individual schools were obtaining information, the data was collected from MPS District Central Services. The data was gathered for the period of September 1- December 17, 2004 and September 1-December 21, 2005, both of which are the periods from the beginning of the school year to the beginning of winter break.

Free, reduced and paid meal eligibility counts and breakfast participation rates were obtained to assess the effect of the pilot on application return rates and breakfast participation rates. The information was collected from MPS Central Service databases and the MPS 2004-2005 Child Nutrition Report. Furthermore, meal application outreach profiles were collected from schools to describe outreach efforts implemented by each pilot school. Finally, food service profiles were collected from school food service managers as descriptions of each school's meal operations.

FINDINGS FROM THE PILOT EVALUATION

The findings from the 2005-2006 evaluation will be discussed in four broad categories. These categories will explore the:

- Stated need and support for Provision 2,
- Impact on Students and Families,
- Impact on Meal Operations and Breakfast Participation, and
- Impact on the Meal Application Process.

STATED NEED AND SUPPORT FOR PROVISION 2

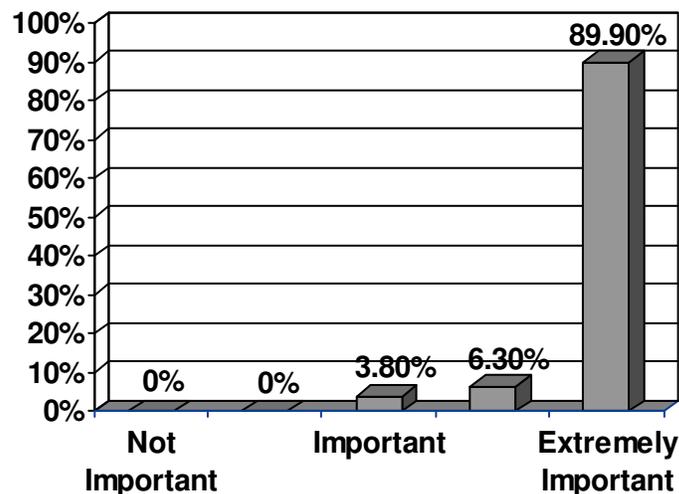
Staff and parents at the six pilot schools were surveyed to assess the need for Provision 2 at their school.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES

As illustrated in Figure 3, an overwhelming 90% of school staff members (n=79) expressed that it is extremely important for their entire student population to receive free breakfast and lunch. The staff members surveyed included teachers, principals, social workers, school nurses, and food service managers. Similarly, 100% (n=12) of school food service employees and building engineers surveyed agreed it is important to serve free breakfast and lunch to kids at their school.

Figure 3

How important it is for all students at your school to receive free breakfast and free lunch?



School staff responses (teachers, principals, social workers, school nurses, food service managers)

When asked, “why is it important for all students to receive free breakfast and lunch,” staff gave five main reasons:

- Student population is very low-income
- Students may not have access to meals or nutritious meals at home
- Students face stress due to uncertainty that they will be fed at home
- Students who do not qualify for free/reduced-price meals have difficulty paying full-price
- Students face social turmoil or stigma

Staff members at the pilot sites were acutely aware of the importance of school meals to their students (with 86% to 94% of all pilot-school students qualified for free or reduced-price meals). Since these students come from poor households, staff members believe many may not have access to food at home. One Longfellow teacher explained, “they’re more concerned about where their next meal is coming from than algebra or the founding fathers.”

Staff members have observed food insecurity during home visits, seeing households with “no food, no ketchup, anything.” And even when students do have access to food outside of school, it may not be healthful, nutritious food. Staff members base this belief on observations of children bringing junk food to school for breakfast. Hot Cheetos, soda, donuts, lollipops, and candy bars were all foods staff have seen children bring to school. Staff members’ beliefs that students are not receiving nutritious food at home are also based on what they have heard from students in regard to what they eat for dinner. Thus, staff believe free school meals for all students is important because it relieves stress for children who come to school hungry and are worried about being fed.

“Knowing that it’s there puts them at ease. Some of them are smart enough to know that after lunch it stops. For dinner they might just get chips and juice.”

—Wheatley teacher

Another reason given by staff as to why free meals are important for all students is that sometimes families that do not qualify for free or reduced-price meals still have difficulties paying full-price for school meals. As one teacher explained, “[They] could have money today. Tomorrow is not the same way. For single moms who have no health insurance, if someone gets sick they have to use money for that. Migrant workers and factory workers always change from work to work. Forms don’t take into consideration payment of rent, the payment of life.”

Other staff explained that families are sometimes just above the cutoff for the free and reduced-price eligibility but still struggle to make ends meet.

Finally, staff explain that it is very important for all students to receive free meals because doing so relieves the social turmoil and stigma students otherwise face. Usually

under the school lunch program (without Provision 2), at the beginning of a new school year, students who qualified in the previous year for a free or reduced-price meal have a forty-five day period to turn in their new meal application. When the forty-five day grace period ends, some students still have not turned in an application to verify they are still eligible for a free or reduced-price meal. These students may show up to school without any lunch money and without the necessary application to prove they should not have to pay for lunch. In this case, students are not turned away from eating lunch but receive a peanut butter and jelly sandwich rather than what is on the lunch menu for that day. This serves as an incentive for parents to turn in their child’s lunch application.

Some staff members have described this experience as being traumatic for children. As one food service manager explained, when this happens, “No matter what their grade, you see tears. Or fits.” From another food service manager’s account, students tease these children who receive the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Thus some staff members believe that it is important for all students to receive free meals because they say everyone eating for free results in everyone being treated equally. Students will not stand out or be identified internally or publicly as different.

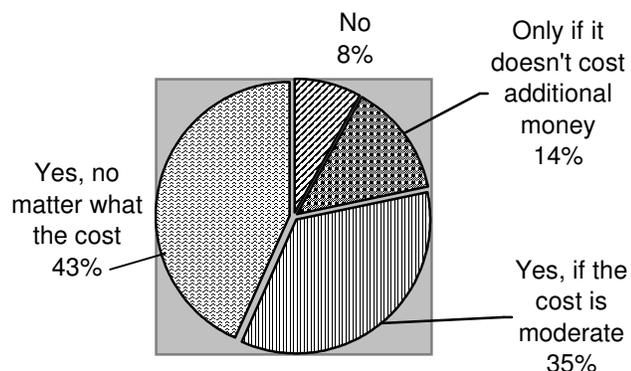
“As much as we try not to, it still identifies kids whose parents don’t have money. Still has an effect on a child – around 4th, 5th grade, they start to become self-conscious. When they come to the computer, they know they have a free lunch. [Free meals for all] removes the stigma.”

—Food Service Manager

School staff support for the program can be inferred from the fact that an overwhelming percentage felt free breakfast for all was extremely important at their school. Besides this piece of evidence, a number of staff indicated their appreciation for the pilot and expressed that they felt the program was a great idea. Several food service managers expressed their excitement to find out their school had been chosen for the pilot. A teacher from 38th Street School expressed her support for the Provision 2 program by stating: “I’m in full support of it. It’s great. It’s a strong, positive thing about our school. I would like to see program continued. A few families are affected very positively. They are very, very happy. It’s a world of difference for them. Especially for parents without a lot of money, with 3 to 4 kids, \$2 a kid, \$10 to \$12 a day.”

School staff (teachers, principals, social workers, nurses, food service managers and employees, building engineers, n=86) and district staff (nutritionist and superintendent, n=2) were asked whether they think the district should also provide free meals to all students in MPS. The results are portrayed in Figure 4. Only 8% of school and district staff

Figure 4



surveyed indicated that the school district should not provide free meals to all students in the district. One teacher noted her sentiment that it was the school’s responsibility to feed children, stating “There’s no way to expect them to learn if they’re hungry and their parents can’t produce them meals. As a public school it’s our responsibility to take that on.”

One principal highlighted the connections between nutrition and learning, remarking “If meals and proper nutrition are important for learning and these are correlated, then we need to ensure children received proper nutrition. Then we should provide this just as we provide teachers and textbooks. It would be different for a district with a low poverty rate.”

PARENT PERSPECTIVES

“Some parents like myself earn very low wages so we are not always able to provide for our children.”

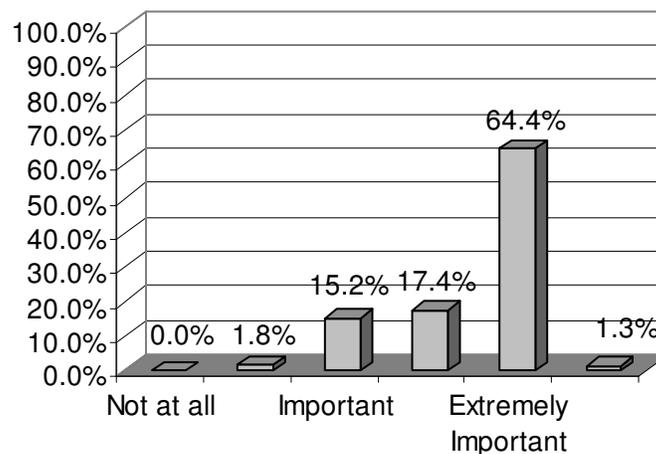
—Longfellow Parent

Parents were asked their views on the importance of free breakfast and lunch. As illustrated in Figure 5, **64.4% (n=627) of parents reported that it was extremely important for students to get breakfast at school.**

A lower percentage of parents rated Provision 2 as extremely important (64.4%) than did school staff (89.9%). This may be a result of parents focusing only on their child or children, while staff members may see the need for breakfast for all children, including those most in need.

Figure 5

How important it is for all students at your school to receive free breakfast and free lunch?



Parent Responses

To assess overall reactions to the pilot program, **parents were surveyed and 98.8% (n=608) stated that the pilot program is a good idea.** When asked why, common responses included:

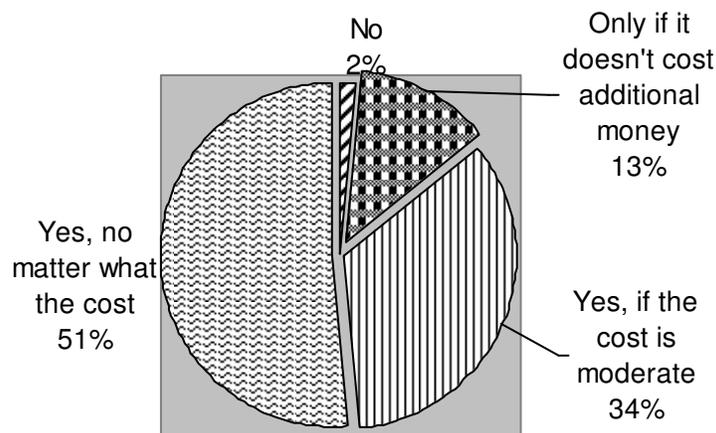
- Parents lack time in the morning to give children breakfast
- Parents lack food at home or money for food
- Parents have multiple children and paying for all their school meals is difficult
- Parents who don't qualify for free or reduced-price meals may still have difficulty affording full-price meals
- Children may not get nutritious meals at home
- Parents work very early and children left alone tend not to eat breakfast

“As a single working mother it takes a big burden off not having to pay full price for lunch.”

-Parent

Like staff, parents (n=609) were also asked their opinion of whether all kids in the District should be getting free meals. As seen in Figure 6, only 2% of parents did not express support for offering free meals.

Figure 6



“Sometimes we don't have enough money to buy groceries so it is a relief to know that my child's school provides food to the students.”

-Parent

IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

The second main finding from this evaluation focused on the impact of school breakfast on families and students. To assess the impact on families, opinion surveys were gathered to learn from parents whether school breakfast alleviates time, stress, and financial burdens or if it provides an incentive for children to get up for school. To assess the impact on students, opinion surveys were conducted to provide insight into changes in student hunger, health, learning, behavior, and socialization. Quantitative measures were also collected to further evaluate the pilot’s impact on student behavior and attendance.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST ON FAMILIES

As stated in the introduction, Provision 2 may potentially benefit parents by reducing the financial costs of paying for breakfast and lunch. Considerations of Provision 2 aside, finding time to give children breakfast in the morning may be difficult for parents of any income level, especially with the new MPS 2005-2006 7:45 am school starting time at the pilot sites. To assess the impact of this pilot on families, parents were asked to what extent the availability of free school breakfast relieves time, stress, and financial burdens at home. Parents were also asked what effect school breakfast had on convincing their children to get up for school.

Some parents are having hard times with paying rent and making sure their children get the things they need. -Parent

Over 64% of parents stated that school breakfast has a moderate to enormous impact on reducing time, stress, and financial burdens.

Figure 7

Impact of School Breakfast on Families: Parent Responses

	<i>No Effect</i>	<i>Small Effect</i>	<i>Moderate Effect</i>	<i>Large Effect</i>	<i>Enormous Effect</i>	Total Responses
Amount of time	139, 22.6%	80, 13.0%	152, 24.8%	155, 25.2%	88, 14.3%	614
Stress	162, 26.6%	95, 15.6%	136, 22.4%	132, 21.7%	83, 13.7%	608
Amount of money for other needs (food, clothing, rent)	132, 21.7%	82, 13.5%	117, 19.2%	161, 26.5%	116, 19.1%	608
Convincing child to get up for school	167, 27.1%	78, 12.6%	137, 22.2%	156, 25.3%	79, 12.8%	617

Specific findings to note include:

- 64.3% of parent respondents rated the availability of school breakfast as having at least a moderate to enormous effect on the amount of time they had for other concerns.
- For 57.7% of parents, the availability of school breakfast had a moderate to enormous effect on reducing stress in their lives.
- 64.8% of parent respondents reported that the availability of school breakfast had a moderate to enormous effect on the amount of money they had for other expenses including food, clothing, and rent.
- 60.3% of parents reported that school breakfast had a moderate to enormous effect on convincing their children to get up for school.

However, one-fifth of parents responded that school breakfast had no effect on several home factors. It is important to note that parent surveys were distributed via parent events or sent home with students. Thus, survey respondents were a self-selecting population. The effect of school breakfast at home may actually be higher than was reported. Those parents who attended the parent events and consequently were offered a survey or those parents who took the time to fill out a survey may be less likely to be parents at the margins who are especially in need and likely to be the most positively affected by a free school meals program.

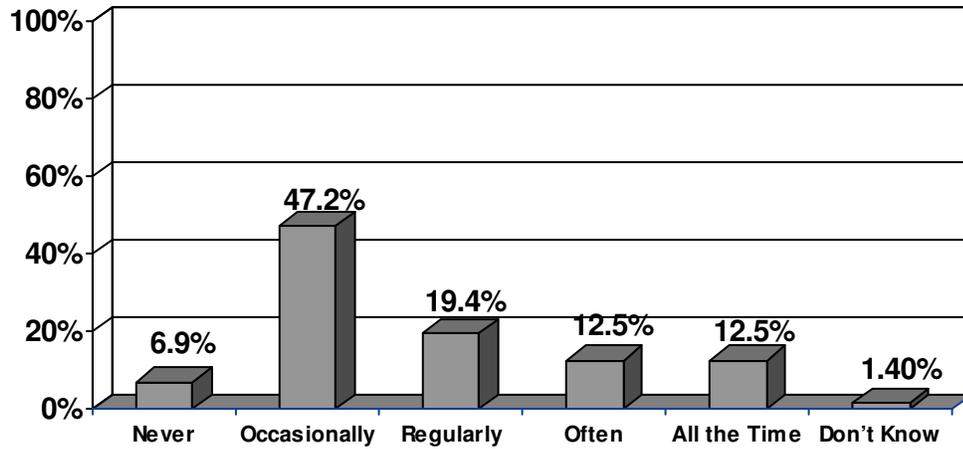
IMPACT OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST ON STUDENTS

IMPACT OF PILOT ON HUNGER

School staff opinions were collected to assess the extent of hunger among students and the potential impact of the pilot on hunger. School staff members (n=72) were asked to report on the frequency of student hunger complaints in 2004-2005 school year. **An overwhelming 91.6% reported that they heard students complain of hunger at least occasionally in 2004-2005.** As seen in Figure 8, the breakdown of responses shows 47.2% of school staff reporting that students complained of hunger occasionally, and 25.0% reporting that students complained of hunger often or all the time. Only 6.8% of school staff reported never hearing complaints of hunger.

Figure 8

Before this year, how often did students complain of hunger during school?



School staff (Teachers, principals, social workers, nurses, food service managers, food service employees)

While these statistics indicate that hunger has been an existing problem amongst students, the amount of hunger the children face may actually be underestimated. The staff reports depended on student verbalization of their hunger, yet some staff pointed out that students may feel ashamed of bringing this to their teachers' attention. Furthermore, some students may not complain of hunger specifically but may complain of its symptoms, for example, headaches or illness. These complaints may not immediately be identified as hunger-related. For these two reasons, the prevalence of hunger may have even been greater than what the staff interviews already show.

As seen in Figure 9, **the majority of school staff members (60.3%) report hunger complaints so far have decreased during the Provision 2 pilot**, while a smaller percentage (37.0%) reported that hunger complaints have stayed the same. A number of teachers further reported that there have been no complaints of hunger so far this year. While there may be different reasons for the decrease in hunger, it may be attributable in part to the fact that all students this year are able to partake in free breakfast and lunch.

Before this year, have your students complained about being hungry?

“Yes, kids who were late and missed breakfast.”

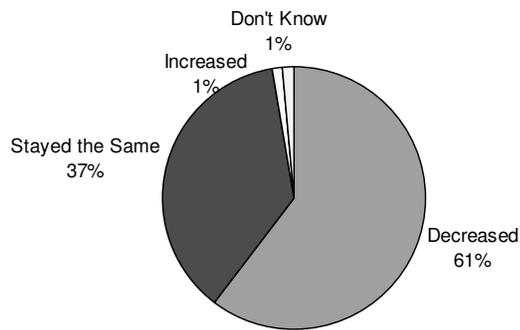
– Wheatley Teacher

“Especially on Mondays. [It made me] kind of wonder what they ate over the weekend- or didn't.”

– Wheatley Teacher

Figure 9

This year, the number of hunger complaints:



How do the number of complaints of hunger this year compare to last year?

*“None this year. At least half of my students partake in breakfast.”
–Teacher*

School staff (Teachers, principals, social workers, nurses, food service managers, food service employees)

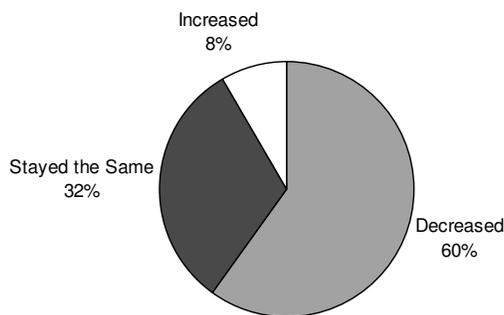
When students complain of hunger or exhibit signs of hunger, some school staff take it upon themselves to give snacks to the children. Several staff members pointed out that the money for snacks did not come from the school but out of the teacher’s own pockets. Staff members (n=60) were asked how often they have handed out snacks to kids due to their hunger. **Compared to last year, 60% of staff report a decrease so far this year in the need to give out snacks to hungry children.** As noted by some staff members, giving out snacks to children less frequently this year results in saving them money and saving them time that would have been taken out of class to address the need.

“In the past, I had to give out snacks, otherwise they can’t focus.”

--38th Street Teacher

Figure 10

This year, the frequency of giving out snacks to hungry children:



Surveyed School Staff

“When I would give them carrots, they were all over if. And they’re not just taking food just because it’s there, they’re taking it because they’re really hungry. [This year] I bought snack bars and was all set. I ended up giving them away—because of the program I didn’t need them.”

--Social Worker

IMPACT OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST ON BEHAVIOR, LEARNING, HEALTH

The link between breakfast consumption and reduced hunger is fairly obvious. However, how does eating breakfast correspond with factors such as student behavior, learning, and health? Voluminous research has demonstrated the importance of breakfast, showing that eating breakfast is correlated with less behavioral problems¹⁸ and increased math grades¹⁹ and standardized test scores.²⁰

School staff were surveyed to evaluate the impact of school breakfast on student behavior, student ability to learn, and student health.

- **An overwhelming 85% of staff members surveyed reported that school breakfast affects behavior of students at their school.**

When asked to explain, the three main observations that emerged were school breakfast contributes to: less irritability, less fatigue, and/or less distraction from hunger, resulting in more focus on immediate surroundings. With a change in one or more of these factors, students could behave better and be less likely to act out.

I've seen kids become agitated and non compliant. When they're focused on hunger, they can't think about behavior.

-Allen Field Teacher

- **Ninety-five percent of school staff reported that school breakfast has at least a moderate impact on their students' ability to learn at school.**

Furthermore, 70.3% of school staff expressed that school breakfast has a huge impact on a student's ability to learn. All principals agreed that school breakfast impacts students' ability to learn. School staff offered two common explanations of how student learning is affected by school breakfast. For one, students are more alert and energized. Secondly, students are less focused on hunger and more focused on class.

- **Ninety-three percent of school staff report school breakfast has at least a moderate impact on student health** as observed during school. Moreover, over half of school staff believe that school breakfast has a huge impact. All principals agreed that school breakfast impacts student health.

- Compared to the opinions on school breakfast's influence on student learning, school staff members were less likely to state school breakfast had a huge impact on student health. It is possible that an impact on overall student health may be more difficult to detect in the classroom compared to changes

Sometimes when kids come and haven't eaten at home, they come without energy. When they eat breakfast at school, they're more energetic and ready to learn.

- Allen Field teacher

¹⁸ Murphy JM, Pagano M, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman R. "The Relationship of School Breakfast to Psychosocial and Academic Functioning." *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 1998;152:899-907.

¹⁹ Murphy JM, Pagano M, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman R. 1998.

²⁰ Murphy JM et. al. "Maryland Meals for Achievement Year III Final Report." Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA, 2001.

in concentration, fatigue, or alertness which was noted to have an effect on student learning and behavior. However, several school staff anecdotally mentioned there seemed to be less stomachaches and headaches this school year. A few staff also believed that stomachaches and headaches observed this year were actually due to illness rather than hunger. Quantitative measures comparing nurse visits this year to last year have yet to be examined.

Parents were also asked if they felt school breakfast affects their children's behavior at school, ability to learn at school, and health.

- **Over 66% of parents surveyed (n=611) indicated that school breakfast has at least a moderate effect on children's behavior at school.**
- **Seventy-eight percent of parent respondents (n=617) believe that school breakfast has at least a moderate effect on children's ability to learn at school.**
- **Seventy-seven percent of parents surveyed (n=611) believe school breakfast has at least a moderate effect on children's health.**
- Parents' ratings of the impact of school breakfast on their children's behavior, learning, and health were not as strong as staff ratings. This may be due to the fact that parents are not usually in the classroom throughout the school day, whereas staff have more opportunity to observe changes in student behavior and learning during school.

"I don't have to worry about my children getting sick because they don't eat."

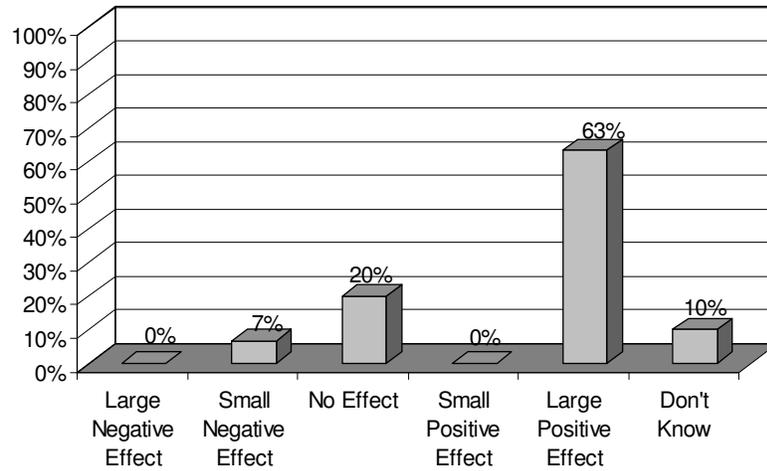
-Parent

IMPACT OF SCHOOL MEALS ON SOCIALIZATION

In addition to behavioral, academic, and health factors, school meals may influence socialization. Research suggests that school meals can create a space for positive student interactions. To examine whether this applies to our pilot schools, school staff members (n=60) were questioned as to how student interactions during meal time might impact student interactions in other settings (such as the classroom or playground environment). The results are displayed in Figure 11.

Figure 11

How does being together for school meals affect student interactions in other settings?



School staff (Teachers, principals, social workers, school nurses)

Over 63% of school staff members believe school meals have a large positive affect on student interactions outside of mealtime. This finding suggests that the act of students eating and interacting together at school breakfast or school lunch may transfer outside of the meal time to positively shape student interactions in the classroom, on the playground, or after school. However, 6.7% reported school meals have a small negative effect. These respondents explained that this can result if students experience conflict during mealtime, which can affect their interactions afterward during recess or in class. These staff members went on to say that school meals can have positive social benefits only on the condition that they are adequately monitored for appropriate student behavior.

Twenty percent of school staff members believe school meals have no effect on student interactions outside of mealtime. Some of these staff members qualified their answer by explaining that their school's silent lunchroom policy did not permit students to talk during meals and so they saw no effect on student interactions. Some schools implement this policy because students talking in the cafeteria during mealtime can distract students from eating, and a tight lunch schedule requires students to move in and out of the cafeteria in a timely fashion to allow other grades to come in and eat. This study does not investigate whether or not the simple act of being together even during a silent mealtime can still impact student behavior outside of the mealtime.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURES OF BEHAVIOR AND ATTENDANCE

The preceding findings summarized opinion surveys, which provided observations of school breakfast's impact on student factors such as behavior and health. In addition to these measures, quantitative data on student attendance and behavior was gathered to identify Provision 2 pilot effects on attendance and behavior. The period of September 1- December 17, 2004 was compared to September 1- December 21, 2005. The results are portrayed in Figure 12.

Attendance was analyzed using attendance percentages provided by MPS District Central Services. Results were mixed. One school had improved attendance, two schools had about the same attendance, and two schools had worse attendance this school year [September 1-December 21, 2005] compared to last school year [September 1-December 17, 2004].

Behavioral measures examined included suspensions and incident referrals. Incident referrals cite occurrences of behavior problems. Aggregate numbers of suspensions and incident referrals were by MPS District Central Services. To determine the rate of suspensions and incident referrals by enrollment, this study divides the number of occurrences by Third Friday enrollment. Third Friday enrollment is measured on the third Friday after the MPS school year begins and serves as the final deadline for enrollment numbers. These enrollment numbers then determine the school's allotted funding.

Examination of changes in behavior problems yielded mixed results. Two schools had a lower rate of suspensions and incident referrals this year whereas two schools had a higher rate of suspensions and incident referrals this year.

Figure 12

	2004 Suspensions	2005 Suspensions	2004 Incident Referrals	2005 Incident Referrals	2004 Attendance	2005 Attendance	Behavior Change	Attendance Change
Allen-Field	8.9%	6.2%	15.7%	15.2%	94.76	93.18	<i>Improved</i>	<i>Worse</i>
Bethune	9.7%	13.3%	16.6%	22.1%	92.99	94.14	<i>Worse</i>	<i>Improved</i>
Carver	n/a	67.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	91.63	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Longfellow	11.6%	16.3%	37.8%	45.7%	93.11	93.1	<i>Worse</i>	<i>Same</i>
38th Street	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	95.32	92.84	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Worse</i>
Wheatley	4.2%	1.1%	7.9%	1.1%	89.83	89.86	<i>Improved</i>	<i>Same</i>

Unfortunately, Carver Academy is a new school in its first year and so it was not possible to compare attendance or behavior measures to last year. Furthermore, suspension information was not available for 38th Street School from MPS District Central Services because the data was not input at the school level.

BREAKFAST SERVING METHODS AND PARTICIPATION

The third main finding of this report regards meal operations at the six schools. Specifically, the research was interested in learning whether breakfast participation increase under Provision 2 and whether breakfast serving methods played a role in affecting participation rates. Furthermore, opinion surveys would assist researchers in analyzing food service operations at the pilot schools.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF BREAKFAST

Another priority of this evaluation was to evaluate factors that limit school breakfast participation and prevent students from receiving nutritious morning meals. Interviewers asked students about their beliefs about the importance of school breakfast. **Ninety-three percent of students indicated that they do think breakfast is important.**

When asked why it is important, the majority of students gave logical reasons. Many responses indicated students only knew a basic reason why breakfast was important (“if you don’t eat, you’ll die” or “you’ll be hungry” or “your stomach will hurt”). Many other responses indicated students possessed an understanding of the importance of breakfast beyond the need to eat in order to live. These students would say that breakfast is important because it gives you energy, helps you to be strong, makes you smart, and is healthy for you.

Parents also felt their children understand the significance of breakfast. **Eighty-seven percent of parents believe their children know why breakfast is important.**

On the other hand, a large percentage of school staff believed students did not have a solid understanding of the importance of eating breakfast. **Forty-seven percent of staff responded that students have either ‘no understanding’ or only a ‘small understanding’ of the importance of breakfast.** Only 29% of school staff felt students ‘understood well’ or were ‘very well informed’ about the importance of breakfast.

Figure 13

Do your students understand the importance of eating breakfast?

	No Understanding	Small Understanding	Moderate Understanding	Understand Well	Very Well Informed	Don't Know	Total Responses
School staff *	(10), 12.7%	(27), 34.2%	(18), 22.8%	(11), 13.9%	(12), 15.2%	(1), 1.3%	79

**School staff (teachers, principals, social workers, nurses, and food service managers)*

The findings suggest that a sizable percentage of school staff judge student understanding of school breakfast to be low. A number of school staff members qualified their low rating of student understanding by explaining that students may possess some knowledge of the importance of breakfast, but it is not identifiable in their actions. In other words, the degree to which students understand why breakfast is good is not high enough to have had an impact on students' actually eating breakfast.

INVESTIGATION OF BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

As mentioned in the introduction, on a daily average, only 11% of MPS students participate in school breakfast. To achieve a greater understanding of why students do not participate in school breakfast more often, school staff and students were surveyed. In addition, students were asked where they ate breakfast if not at school.

When students were asked where they ate breakfast if not at school (see Figure 14), fourteen percent stated they always eat at school, so this question did not apply to their circumstances. **Fifty-eight percent responded that they eat at home, and 24% responded that they don't eat breakfast at all.** Few students (4%) indicated that they eat somewhere else for breakfast, either purchasing from a store or eating at restaurants (George Webbs and McDonalds were the only specific names given).

Figure 14

On days you do not eat breakfast at school, where do you eat?

	<i>n</i>	%
I always eat at school	76	14%
At home	320	58%
I don't eat	131	24%
I eat somewhere else	23	4%

These findings may overestimate how often children eat at home, at a restaurant or simply do not eat. Students may have reported that they eat at home, but given that children's' memories may be selective, how *often* they do eat at home is uncertain. Furthermore, how *often* they skip breakfast is also uncertain. The numbers also do not convey what kinds of foods students are eating when they have breakfast elsewhere or at home. However, there is reason to believe that nutritious food is not always provided by home or restaurant meals, based on some staff comments regarding what they have seen students bring to school for breakfast or have heard students say about what they eat for breakfast. Further research could allow students to accurately assess the frequency they eat at home, somewhere else, or not at all.

Why don't students eat school breakfast? In the course of this research, new information was gleaned that is very relevant to this question. The 2005-2006 is the first year that the six pilot schools changed from a 9:00 am to 7: 45 am school starting time. The new 7:45 a.m. start time may have been a barrier to breakfast participation, according to some staff and students. In fact, based on data from MPS District Central Services, we found that

tardiness rates increased at all six pilot schools this year. Being late was a common reason cited by staff and students as a barrier to school breakfast participation.

When students were asked why they do not eat breakfast at school, combined 33% of responses identify being late as a reason. To determine specifically why students are late, the survey offered 3 possible responses: students get up late, the bus gets them here late, or their parents get them to school late. Of the three options, the most frequent response from students was that they don't get up on time. A number of students were late to school breakfast for reasons not included in our possible responses (and were thus checked off in the 'Other' category). These reasons included siblings or cousins contributing to students' tardiness, long walks or far distances from school which increased tardiness, or other unspecified causes.

When you don't eat breakfast at school, why not?

	n	%
No response because 'I always eat at school'	76	14.4%
I ate breakfast at home	183	34.8%
I don't want to eat breakfast	36	6.8%
I don't like the school breakfast food	61	11.6%
I don't get up in time	66	12.5%
Bus gets me here too late	22	4.2%
My parents don't get me here on time	28	5.3%
Other reasons	127	24.1%
Late for some reason	58	11%
Not hungry	19	4%

Figure 15

Being late was not the only reason given by students for why they don't eat breakfast.

Thirty-five percent of students report that they don't eat breakfast at school because they eat at home. This is a smaller percentage than the 58% who report eating breakfast at home when they don't eat at school. It should be noted that the finding of 58% does not mean that 58% do not come to school breakfast because they ate at home. Only 11.6% of students said they don't come because they don't like the food. Of these students, some don't like the school breakfast overall while others forgo breakfast if they do not care for the menu of the day. Finally, other reasons were mentioned frequently but not with a great enough frequency to earn a percentage, and are categorized in Figure 15 as 'other.'

“With early start this year, hard for kids to get to breakfast. They're late as it is.”

–Longfellow Teacher

Principals and food service managers were specifically asked about barriers to student breakfast participation. Among the school staff, they were specifically asked this question since their position enables them to be most likely to be informed on the subject. Their most frequent responses, viewable in Figure 16, also suggest that late student arrivals pose a barrier in breakfast participation. **For example, 67% of food service managers and principals indicated that parents have difficulty getting their children to school for breakfast.** Other reasons for low breakfast participation offered by these staff include mentions of the 7:45 am start time or student arrivals that are too late for the extended breakfast cut-off period. Another majority response (66.6%) was that bus schedules create difficulties,²¹ but most of the pilot schools accommodate late buses and still serve students breakfast if the bus is late.

Figure 16

Have you observed any of the following barriers to students arriving in time for school breakfast?

	Percentage and number of principals and food service managers who have observed this problem	
	%	n
Students are not willing to come early for breakfast	25.0%	3 out of 12
Students ate at home and are not hungry	25.0%	3 out of 12
Reasons related to time		
Bus schedules create difficulties	66.7%	8 out of 12
Parents have difficulty getting students to school on time for breakfast	66.7%	8 out of 12
No problems with arrival times	33.3%	4 out of 12
Students are late	25.0%	3 out of 12
Breakfast is very early	16.7%	2 out of 12
Before school activities conflict with breakfast	0%	0 out of 12
Reasons related to socialization		
Kids play first	8.3%	1 out of 12
Breakfast is 'not cool'	8.3%	1 out of 12

Teachers were not specifically surveyed as to why children do not come to school breakfast, but some teachers commented on the subject during the in-person surveys. Like principals and food service managers, teachers identified late buses as a barrier. Teachers also indicated that the early start time poses extra problems for kids arriving in time for breakfast. Teachers expressed that students arriving on time for school, much less early for breakfast, is a challenge itself.

²¹ Interestingly enough, food service managers (5 out of 6) were more likely than principals (3 out of 6) to identify late buses as a barrier in breakfast participation.

IMPACT ON BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION

Given the breakfast participation barriers identified by staff and students, in particular students being late and the new 7:45 am start time contributing to more tardiness, what was the breakfast participation rate this year? The results are seen in Figure 17.

Figure 17

Breakfast Participation and Breakfast Serving Methods

	Breakfast Serving Method	Sep.-Dec. 04 Breakfast Participation	Sep.- Dec. 05 Breakfast Participation	Change in Breakfast Participation	Breakfast start	School start	Enrolled
Carver	Classroom	33.5%*	66.5%*	Increase	7:45	7:45	532
Wheatley	Classroom	24.9%	60.5%	Increase	7:45	7:45	263
Allen Field	Cafeteria	15.2%	16.9%	Increase	7:15	7:45	866
Bethune	Cafeteria	36.1%	31.9%	Decrease	7:30	7:45	362
Longfellow	Cafeteria	12.6%	18.6%	Increase	7:30	7:45	670
38th Street	Cafeteria	41.9%	38.1%	Decrease	7:35	7:45	231

Two schools actually experienced decreased breakfast participation (Bethune and 38th Street). Two schools had a marginal increase in breakfast participation (Allen Field and Longfellow). However, two schools' breakfast participation nearly doubled (Carver and Wheatley). While the other four schools serve breakfast in the cafeteria, Carver and Wheatley differ in their method of serving breakfast. These two schools have breakfast in the classroom. **In spite of the 7:45 am start time and the fact that tardiness did increase at these two schools in 2005-2006, remarkably, breakfast participation still doubled.**

METHODS OF SERVING BREAKFAST: BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

Allen-Field, Bethune, Longfellow, and 38th Street are four pilot schools that serve breakfast in the cafeteria, which is the traditional method of service. Students arrive to school before class starts. Some play outside before class while some eat breakfast. Students who want breakfast get in line to be served and eat in the cafeteria. Unlike school lunch in the cafeteria, students do not sit with their entire class at breakfast because classrooms do not all eat breakfast at school. Thus, students may sit with children from any given grade level. After breakfast is over, students head to class or play outside if there is still time.

Wheatley Elementary and Carver Academy are two pilot schools that decided to begin serving breakfast in the classroom this year. Wheatley began serving breakfast in the classroom at the beginning of their school year, while Carver began serving

breakfast in the classroom in November. Breakfast in the classroom is a nontraditional way of serving school breakfast. At Wheatley and Carver, students can eat breakfast in the classroom after school starts, instead of having to arrive before school to eat breakfast in the cafeteria. Both schools offer ‘bagged breakfast’ for classroom convenience. These bag breakfasts include breakfast foods such as cereal, juice, milk, yogurt, muffins, and/or low-sugar cookies.

Wheatley and Carver run their classroom breakfast program in slightly differently manners. At the start of the program at Wheatley, students would arrive at the school starting time, go to the cafeteria and pick up a bag breakfast. They would then go to their classroom and eat breakfast together. In some classrooms, some students would be assigned to different clean up tasks. Garbage from the breakfast was collected into small tray bins outside of the classroom. When breakfast was done, designated students from the older grades would go by classrooms and pick up these tray bins. After completing staff and student surveys at Wheatley, we learned that the school has since made adjustments in how they run breakfast in the classroom. Those who arrive late (after 8:15 am) eat breakfast in the cafeteria and then go to class. This accommodates students since they still receive breakfast despite this late time. It also accommodates teachers by preventing disruptions of class time.

At Carver, students report to their classrooms at the school starting time. The bag breakfasts are ready on a tray in the classroom. Teachers are supposed to deliver these trays to the classroom but from what one staff member told us, the food service personnel often end up doing this. Students eat together in class. When breakfast is done, trash is placed in a small garbage bag and placed in the hallway for the engineer to pick up.

Staff opinions at Wheatley and Carver were gathered to learn how well breakfast bags in the classroom operated. Teachers, principals, food service managers and food service workers rated how well breakfast bags were running on a scale of 1 to 5 with the results presented in Figure 18. The lowest score of a ‘1’ indicates that breakfast in the classroom is ‘a disaster,’ the middle score of a ‘3’ indicates that breakfast in the classroom is ‘about the same as the cafeteria,’ and ‘5’ indicates that breakfast in the classroom ‘runs very well.’

- **Forty-seven percent of combined school staff at Carver and Wheatley rated breakfast in the classroom as a 4 or a 5, conveying that breakfast in the classroom runs very well and better than the cafeteria.**
- Thirty-three percent of combined school staff at Carver and Wheatley rated breakfast in the classroom with a 3, indicating it works ‘about the same as the cafeteria.’
- Twenty percent of combined school staff rated it as a 2, slightly less favorably than serving breakfast in the cafeteria and 0% of school staff rated it with a 1.

Figure 18

How Well Does Serving Breakfast in the Classroom Work?

	<i>A Disaster</i>	<i>Somewhat Smoothly</i>	<i>About the Same as Cafeteria</i>	<i>Better than Cafeteria</i>	<i>Runs Very Well</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	Total Responses
Both Carver and Wheatley Staff	(0), 0%	(3), 20.0%	(5), 33.3 %	(1), 6.7%	(6), 40.0%	(0), 0%	15
Carver Staff	(0), 0%	(0), 0%	(3), 50.0%	(1), 16.7%	(2), 33.3%	(0), 0%	6
Wheatley Staff	(0), 0%	(3), 33.3%	(2), 22.2%	(0), 0%	(4), 44.4%	(0), 0%	9

STAFF COMMENTS AT CARVER

Staff comments regarding breakfast in the classroom were gathered during interviews. Teacher responses to the program at Carver were positive overall. **One of the major findings was that 71% of Carver teachers surveyed mentioned that the children enjoy the food.** A few further mentioned that students devour the food and little is wasted.

Carver teachers also mentioned that one benefit of breakfast in the classroom was that students are already in class which helped with discipline. Several teachers also mentioned that having students in the classroom allowed teachers to know exactly where students were. In the past, students would say they were at breakfast when they were not and conduct themselves poorly in the hallway. One teacher explains that with breakfast in the classroom, “Kids are more on track, easier to manage because they’re not in the hall” and another teachers states there are “less problems in hall in morning time.”

In regards to the effect of breakfast in the classroom on time, three Carver teachers indicated that they have more time for classroom learning due to breakfast in the classroom. Specifically, having breakfast in the classroom increased learning time because of the following mentioned reasons: students were already in class rather than being on their way to class, students were able to work and eat at the same time (due to the simplicity of foods such as cereal and cookies), or because teachers were able to limit breakfast time where necessary. One teacher stated, “It works better for time management—gives autonomy for teachers to cut breakfast off when needed.”

In terms of problems, only one teacher at Carver indicated that the clean up of spills was a problem. This particular individual felt that teachers were not equipped with proper materials for sanitary clean up. No major problems were mentioned at Carver.

STAFF COMMENTS AT WHEATLEY

At Wheatley, several teachers similarly mentioned that a benefit of breakfast in the classroom was that kids were already in class, which helped with convenience, time, and getting them started with academics. A few teachers also mentioned that breakfast in the classroom is a positive time for them to talk to students and for students to bond and socialize with each other.

In regards to problems, at Wheatley 2 out of 7 teachers mentioned that spills are a problematic issue, while 3 out of 7 acknowledged that some clean-up is required but that it is not a serious problem. Two other teachers mentioned timing issues, in terms of students still getting to school late for breakfast or students taking too long to finish their breakfast.

Another problem at Wheatley was related to discipline. At the beginning of the year, some children would throw the food from the bagged breakfasts in the hallway or in the bathrooms, even stuffing them down toilets. At the time Wheatley staff members were surveyed, they reported the situation had improved although it was a problem initially.

FOOD SERVICE PERSONNEL AND ENGINEER COMMENTS

Since food service personnel and engineers operate food services at the school level, it is important to also highlight their opinions on the breakfast in the classroom. Five personnel members were surveyed at Wheatley and Carver schools. Food service personnel and engineers differed at the two schools in their opinion of the program. At one school, the food service and engineer staff did not have a favorable view of the program. At the other school, the staff tended to support the program more. In regard to food service personnel in particular, bagging breakfasts can be quite time-intensive according to one District nutritionist's accounts. However, one food service staff member felt that breakfast in the classroom would eventually run better than the cafeteria by making it logistically possible to serve a large number of students breakfast. Serving that many students in the cafeteria would be very difficult in the short window of time that is available for breakfast before school.

STUDENT COMMENTS

In regard to children's preferences,²² children at all schools indicated that their favorite breakfast food is cereal. Breakfast in the classroom seems to accommodate that preference. In terms of student suggestions on what could improve breakfast, the number one request was for more varieties of cereals. The second most frequent suggestion was for breakfast items that are more traditional, home-style breakfast foods. Students commonly requested pancakes and sausages. Some staff at Carver and Wheatley also mentioned they wish there was more variety in the classroom breakfast or would like students to get hot breakfast on occasion. Student and staff suggestions seem to point toward a desired compromise between classroom breakfast bags and hot breakfast; for

²² See page 26 for more details on student preferences and suggestions regarding school meals

example, the option to have hot breakfast occasionally if breakfast is normally served in the classroom.

STAFF OPINIONS TOWARD STARTING BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

What about schools that serve breakfast traditionally in the cafeteria? What are their thoughts toward breakfast in the classroom? At the time they were surveyed, most staff members had not heard of the program or of schools that implement the program. However, they did offer their opinion on whether they would like to see breakfast served in the classroom at their school.

Overall, staff members were split almost equally on the question:

- 51.7% (n=31) said yes, they would like breakfast in the classroom.
- 48.3% (n=29) said no, they would not like breakfast in the classroom.

As shown in Figure 19, **principals and teachers surveyed were almost equally split on the question. However, food service managers tended to say that they *would* like breakfast in the classroom at their school whereas food service frontline employees tended to say they would *not* like breakfast served in the classroom.**

Figure 19

School Staff: Would you like to have breakfast served in the classroom?

	Yes	No
Total School Staff	31 (51.7%)	29 (48.3%)
Principals	2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Food Service Managers	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Food Service Employees	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Teachers	24 (52.2%)	22 (47.8%)

Further examination of teacher responses shown in Figure 20 demonstrates that at three particular schools (Bethune, Longfellow, and 38th Street), teachers were almost equally split over the question of whether they would like breakfast in the classroom at their school. At Allen Field, however, a majority of teachers said they would support breakfast in the classroom: 64.3% (n=9) of teachers said they would like to have such a program while 35.7% (n=5) stated they would not.

Figure 20

Breakdown by Teachers: Would you like to have breakfast served in the classroom?

	Yes	No
Total Teachers	24 (52.2%)	22 (47.8%)
Allen Field	9 (64.3%)	5 (35.7%)
Bethune	4 (40%)	5 (60%)

Longfellow	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
38 th Street	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)

School staff support is important for successful implementation of breakfast in the classroom. It is certainly true too that teachers who are initially opposed to breakfast in the classroom sometimes have positive reactions after trying it in their school. It may require time to become adjusted to or to fine tune-logistics. At Wheatley, it was mentioned that teachers were nervous about the program at first, but once it was demonstrated that measures could be put into place to have students help with the process (such as by assisting with clean up), there was a greater level of ease. The ‘grab breakfast’ program in Portland, Oregon offers another example of changed teacher attitudes towards breakfast in the classroom. In Portland, all high schools have grab-and-go breakfast in the classroom so students eat at the beginning of class. Teachers disliked the program initially but now most view the program favorably and see it as a good start to the day.

CHANGES IN MPS FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS

To learn about how MPS food service operations have changed this year, besides the recent implementation of breakfast in the classroom at two schools, food service personnel (managers, employees, and a district nutritionist) and building engineers were surveyed. They were asked if changes in food service have occurred this year, how this has affected their job, and what suggestions they have for future changes. Some changes mentioned were related to the pilot program and some were unrelated.

CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS THIS YEAR

Five out of six of Food Service Managers and six out of six food service employees indicated that food service operations have changed this year. Neither of these changes was a result of Provision 2. The first change noted was menu choice, which allows students to choose between two entrees and other portions of their meal. Managers and employees indicate students enjoy having choices. However, several mentioned that serving many options in the meal line is sometimes hectic for staff, particularly if they are short-staffed that day.

A second change in food service operations was the cited use of a new vendor. Food service personnel report that more food arrives pre-prepared, which can at times alleviate the workload on staff. According to these personnel, students like the food.

A third change noted by a district nutritionist was that staffing was slightly increased to accommodate an increase in breakfast counts.

EFFECT OF CHANGES IN FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS ON JOBS

Four out of six food service managers indicated that changes this year in food service operations have affected their jobs. These changes are related to the Provision 2 pilot.

- A majority of managers report having less paperwork this year.
- Several managers mentioned they have not had to send letters home or contact parents regarding money owed for school meals, nor have they had to deal with situations which arise when children do not bring money for their meal.
- Managers do not have to count money at the point of service for meals this year.

Two out of six food service employees report their job has been affected. Neither of these changes was directly linked to the Provision 2 Pilot.

- For one employee, a staffing cut has translated into more work.
- For another employee, a change in routine has resulted in a more hectic schedule.

“I think government is wasting money to accommodate everyone that pays. I’d spend 2 hours a day putting in kids’ money and following up with parents—the system is not working as well as it could with universal free lunch. We use a lot of time to collect. If 80% or more [of the kids in MPS] are free/reduced price, go district wide. Not doing so is not cost effective.”

—*Food service manager*, on changes affecting the job and on District-wide expansion of free meals

Four out of six building engineers indicated that changes did affect their job. None of these changes in their job were related to the Provision 2 pilot, except for changes related to breakfast in the classroom (see page 28).

- More garbage due to students littering plastic utensils on the floor.
- More garbage due to another grade added to the school.
- More garbage due to a new and larger lunchroom.

A district nutritionist surveyed also indicated that changes in food operations this year affected her job, and were related to the Provision 2 pilot.

- The nutritionist reports that paperwork has increased mostly in regards to the lunch application process and the lack of incentive to fill out forms.
- Furthermore, the state audit required for Provision 2 schools in their base year was time-intensive.

CHANGES STAFF WOULD LIKE THE DISTRICT TO MAKE

Of food service managers, half (3 out of 6) felt food service operations are going well. The other half had different suggestions.

- One manager mentioned that the choice menu offered too many options for each food item, suggesting instead that it be limited to choices between entrees but not choices for veggies and fruits.
- Another manager suggested the Universal Free Meal Program be expanded.
- Another asked for pay increases.

Of food service employees, half (3 out of 6) gave their opinion on how food service operations could be improved. The requests differed, including the following suggestions.

- Update equipment and increase the number of electric outlets.
- Give extras to students if they want seconds rather than throwing extras away.
- Better serve children who have various food limitations by finding out what they need.

Of building Engineers surveyed, half (3 out of 6) had no suggested changes. The other half (3 out of 6) had different requests.

- One suggested not having an outside vendor, saying the garbage bags were smaller and not well reinforced.
- The other two suggestions were related to breakfast in the classroom (see page 25).

No changes were recommended by district nutritionists.

OPINIONS ON FOOD SERVICES: STUDENTS

Besides gathering responses from food service personnel regarding meal operations, the researchers also obtained student perspectives on the food services at school. **Eighty-eight percent of students surveyed (n=467) report liking the school breakfast at school.** On the other hand, 11.6% of student responses (n=526) indicate students don't eat breakfast at school because they 'don't like the food.' We surveyed students at the pilot schools to learn what they *do* like at school breakfast and what suggestions they have for changing the breakfast.

For favorite breakfast food, the most frequent responses (the most popular responses being at the top of the list) were as follows.

- Cereal (Frosted Flakes, Fruit Loops, Cheerios)
 - Fruit
 - Milk
 - Juice
 - Scrambled eggs
 - Waffle sticks

For their least favorite breakfast food, common mentions were (the most frequent response being at the top of the list) as follows.

- Oatmeal
- Milk
- Cheerios
- Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches
- Grits
- Egg sandwiches

CHANGES THAT STUDENTS WOULD LIKE SCHOOL CAFETERIAS TO MAKE

Students were also asked what they would like to change about school breakfast. Most students could not think of anything they would want to change, but some offered suggestions on changing the food or the meal services.

For changes in the food served, student suggestions (in the order of most common response to next most common response) were as follows.

- Offer a larger variety of cereals and/or other cereals choices.
- Have pancakes at breakfast, which are not currently on the menu.
- Serve more fruit or offer other fruit choices.
- Other than pancakes, students also alluded to wanting breakfast items more common to a traditional home-style breakfast. Students stated they would like school breakfast to include sausage (or bacon), which is not currently on the menu, and would like to see waffles sticks more often.

For changes in meal services, student suggestions included the following.

- More time to eat breakfast.
- Poll students on what they would like for breakfast and implement some of these ideas. In the words of one such student, the school could have “a class or school survey—what people want the next day for breakfast. [We] choose five things-- and they can make one of those.”

MEAL APPLICATION PROCESS

For Provision 2 to succeed, it is important to collect as many school meal applications as possible during the first year of the program. The proportion of free, reduced-price, and full-price eligible students at the school is determined in this first year when applications are collected. The federal and state government will reimburse the district for the meals it serves, based on what percentage of students qualify for free meals, reduced-price meals, and full-price meals. Since Provision 2 operates on a four-year cycle, the reimbursement rate, determined the first year when applications are collected, will not only be used for the first year but also to the next three years in the cycle. Thus, if schools do not receive a high return of meal applications in the first year, the reimbursement rate will be affected not only for that year, but for the next three years.

ACTIVITIES COMPLETED FOR MEAL APPLICATION OUTREACH

To ensure that meal applications were returned during this important first year, Hunger Task Force worked with the schools on outreach efforts targeted towards parents.

Prior to and at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year, efforts were made to publicize the program. During the summer of 2005, Hunger Task Force personnel and volunteers distributed flyers in pilot school neighborhoods to publicize the free meals program to parents and guardians. The flyer encouraged parents to turn in their meal application as part of the new program. Furthermore, as required by the Provision 2 regulations, the school district and principals sent a letter to parents informing them early on of the new universal free meal program at their school. To publicize the program to school staff, Hunger Task Force created and delivered a notice to be placed in all staff mailboxes.

From September through December, with efforts particularly concentrated in the first two months, school staff and Hunger Task Force coordinated measures to ensure high meal application return. Hunger Task Force assisted with application outreach at five schools,²³ with the degree of its involvement varying by site. Various parent events, such as school open houses, parent-teacher conferences, and parent meetings were attended by Hunger Task Force to announce the program and supply meal applications for parents to complete. For those parents who had not yet turned in their application, school staff, parent volunteers, and Hunger Task Force staff (with clearance from school principals) worked together to make phone calls from the school to guardians, requesting that they submit an application. In some cases, follow-up notes were sent home, with or without an application attached, asking parents to complete the form and return it to school. At some schools, notes were sent out on repeated occasions, and at certain schools notes were sent home in a large envelope to increase its conspicuousness and draw attention to

²³ The only school at which Hunger Task Force was not involved was Wheatley, a year-round school that had an early start on the application collection compared to the traditional calendar schools. Staff there indicated that they did not require further assistance with the lunch application outreach.

its importance. Depending on the school, this action was coordinated by the parent coordinator, food service manager, other school personnel, or Hunger Task Force staff.

Furthermore, at several schools, school staff (social workers, parent coordinator, school psychologist, or some combination of staff) made home visits to parents who had not submitted an application. Home visits were often used as a last resort. Some school-specific outreach efforts include an ice cream party incentive for classrooms with the most applications turned in (Allen-Field), flyers (Allen-Field), and announcements in parent newsletters (Longfellow, Carver).

In an attempt to quantify the amount of time devoted to meal application return this pilot year, researchers estimated the time spent on various outreach activities. These are rough estimates based on Hunger Task Force activities and knowledge of school outreach activities. One limitation of this information is that we do not have a comparison point in regards to how many hours were spent last year on meal application return. Thus, analysis of these estimated figures must be done in aggregate and considered for this year alone.

Before school started, Hunger Task Force devoted an estimated 34 hours to passing out fliers to parents, preparing fliers for teachers and readying letters for principals to raise awareness of the pilot. During the school year, Hunger Task Force staff devoted an estimated 30 hours to attend parent events for meal application outreach, 17 hours to phone calls to parents, 12 hours on coordinating notes and applications to be sent home. School staff devoted an estimated 25 hours to phone calls to parents, 12 hours on coordinating notes and applications to be sent home, and 60 hours on home visits.

CHALLENGES OF MEAL APPLICATION OUTREACH

Outreach challenges were two-fold in nature. The first kind of challenges were logistical:

- The application forms are difficult to complete:
 - Complicated federal requirements
 - Limited literacy and education levels for some parents
 - Lack of a Hmong-translated application
 - Limited time for parents to read and comprehend wordy instructions
- Milwaukee is a transient community and address changes are not always recorded, so forms do not arrive at the correct addresses.
- Students lose the applications between the school and home.
- Once received by MPS, the applications may not have been completed correctly or may not be readable.
- MPS experimented with an application scanning project this year, but implementation problems meant that applications were frequently not able to be scanned successfully.

The second kind of challenges with meal application outreach related specifically to the implementation of Provision 2:

- Parents were reluctant to take the time to complete the applications, knowing that free meals will be offered whether applications are turned in or not.
- Attempts to contact parents were difficult; phone lines were disconnected, phone numbers were incorrect, and to a less frequent degree, some families have no phone number at all.
- Confusion arose when parents reported already having turned in an application but MPS (ISIS) and/or food service manager eligibility count reports indicated no application status, leading to parents filling out multiple applications.
- Lack of up-to-date, consistent format to identify those with ‘no application status.’ The MPS ISIS database at school level is two days late in meal application status, but is much easier to use in order to view all the students who have no applications turned in. The food service manager eligibility count report and Central Services report is up-to-date for meal application status but does not provide one list of students with ‘no application status.’ Much cross-checking between two databases occurs, one which provides the most current information on application status and one that provides the best summary information on what names are showing up with no application status.

OUTCOMES OF MEAL APPLICATION OUTREACH

In spite of these challenges, it appears that the outreach efforts were quite successful in getting meal applications returned, as visible in Figure 21. This finding demonstrates **that in spite of a lack of incentive for parents to fill out the meal application, schools were still able to achieve nearly 100% of application return.** The highest number of ‘no applications’ yet returned was at Bethune, with 8.2% of applications not returned, and the lowest number of ‘no applications’ status was at Allen Field, with only 2.0% of applications not returned. Furthermore, it is striking that this year the free and reduced-price eligibility is higher than last year, which also indicates that outreach efforts were successful in getting as many applications returned as possible.

Figure 21

Free and Reduced Price Eligibility					
	2002-2003 Free and Reduced	2003-2004 Free and Reduced	2004-2005 Free and Reduced	2005-2006 Free and Reduced	2005-2006 % Applications Returned
Allen Field	92%	93%	92%	93.1%	98.0%
Bethune	96%	92%	94%	89.7%	91.8%
Carver	N/A	N/A	N/A	92.5%	95.1%
Longfellow	94%	93%	94%	94.0%	97.6%
38 th Street	94%	87%	86%	91.3%	92.5%
Wheatley	90%	94%	86%	91.1%	95.7%

In the columns on the left, ‘Free and Reduced’ columns indicate the percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced-price meals. The remaining percentage represents paying students or students who did not turn in an application. In the column on the right, the “Applications Returned’ column indicates the percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced-price meals *and* students who did not qualify for free and reduced-price meals. Thus, subtracting these percentages from 100% shows the total percentage of individuals who did not turn in an application. Unfortunately, records of ‘no application’ percentages exist only for this current 2005-2006 school year (since in the past there was little reason to track the percent of students who had no applications turned in to the school).

It is very important to note that is that while meal application outreach is labor-intensive under Provision 2, outreach only needs to occur once every four years. Furthermore, if the socioeconomic base does not change, the requirement of re-collecting applications for the next four-year cycle can be waived. In other words, more than four years may go by before schools have to collect meal applications. While meal application is quite time-consuming, schools and districts can keep in mind that much effort only needs to be made in the base year, and the next three years no applications need to be collected at all.

Finally, a description of meal application efforts at each school is found in Figure 22. The reports of outreach efforts were provided by school officials themselves. Actual activities done to increase meal applications were often similar last year to this year. However, the amount of hours involved often increased this year for the schools, as more effort was put toward meal application return.

Figure 22

*Description of Meal Application Outreach Efforts:
Reports by School*

	Last Year	This Year
Allen Field	Letters home, secretary phone calls, social worker home visits, teachers contact parents, parent coordinator home contact	Same; in addition, Hunger Task Force parent contacts
Bethune	Repeatedly passed out applications	Same (pass out parent notes) + gave incentives to those who returned apps + Hunger Task Force parent contacts
Carver	Letters home, phone calls to parents (Garfield + Palmer)	Same + Hunger Task Force parent contacts
Longfellow	Social Worker, Social Worker Assistant, and Parent Coordinator call parents as reminder, Secretaries have parents complete application at enrollment	More intensive work by the same parties and Title I coordinator to follow up on non-returned applications +Hunger Task Force parent contacts
38 th Street	Not available due to lack of information	Parent meetings, newsletters, phone calls, parent letter +Hunger Task Force parent contacts
Wheatley	Letters home, parent coordinator call parents	Same + teachers call parents

CONCLUSIONS

Provision 2 is clearly needed at the six pilot schools. School staff and parent opinion surveys indicated that the availability of free meals for all students is very important for their student population. Given this need, there was a high level of support and appreciation for the program from the school staff and parents. Furthermore, the majority of parents and school staff felt that free meals should be provided for all students in the Milwaukee Public School District.

Provision 2 positively affected the homes of children attending the pilot schools. The majority of parents indicated that the program reduced time, stress, and financial burdens, and provided incentive for children to get up for school.

The availability of school breakfast impacted students attending the pilot schools. School staff indicated that school breakfast improves student behavior, learning, and health and contributed positively to their socialization. Staff also observed less hunger complaints from students this year and noted a decreased need to spend money and time providing snacks for hungry students. While a direct causal relationship between Provision 2 and these variables cannot be made, positive affects resulting from school breakfast can be linked to Provision 2.

In its first year, Provision 2 did not increase breakfast participation as much as expected. The first year of Provision 2 implementation coincided with the first year that the pilot schools started school at 7:45 a.m. rather than 9:00 a.m. The change in start time exacerbated the problem of late student arrivals, which school staff and students indicated was a main barrier to breakfast participation. This year saw a decrease in breakfast participation at two pilot schools and a marginal increase in two pilot schools. Comparing last year to this year proves to be an uneven playing field considering that such a change in start time would significantly affect children's ability to get up on time.

In spite of this, the two Provision 2 pilot schools that implemented breakfast in the classroom this year experienced doubled breakfast participation. The Provision 2 option facilitates the logistical possibility of serving breakfast in the classroom since everyone is free and no counts need to be made for reduced-price or full-price meals. These two schools' experiences of classroom breakfast at these two schools are promising. Other breakfast in the classroom programs at schools in the Midwest have also succeeded in increasing breakfast participation and garnering staff support of the program. The method of serving breakfast in the classroom should be considered.

Finally, meal application outreach conducted to ensure reimbursement of the free meals provided through Provision 2 proved to be labor intensive but highly successful. Hunger Task Force was directly involved in these efforts with dedicated school staff. While some of the outreach activities this year were the same as those conducted every year, there was an increase in the amount of hours and manpower directed towards the outreach. Numerous challenges arose which were associated with meal application

outreach. The free and reduced price eligibility rate was comparable to last year and more than 90% of applications were returned. Future decisions on how to streamline and improve outreach efforts will continue to be examined.

ISSUES YET TO BE ADDRESSED

1. The financial impact of Provision 2 has yet to be assessed. The financial costs of providing free meals to all students at the pilot schools under Provision 2 as well as how much will be received in federal reimbursements for these free meals will be examined.
2. The question of whether Provision 2 or Universal Free Meals would be more appropriate for MPS also needs to be considered. Like Provision 2, Universal Free Meals provides school meals free of charge to all students. However, unlike Provision 2, schools implementing Universal Free Meals do not need to have high levels of free and reduced-price lunches in order to succeed. Another difference between Provision 2 and Universal Free Meals is that under the latter program, meal applications are still collected every year.
3. The issue of SAGE funding is yet to be addressed as well. To our understanding, even under Provision 2, meal applications will still have to be submitted every year so that schools can receive SAGE funding. This conflicts with one of the potential benefits of Provision 2, which is reduction of administrative and paperwork costs due to less processing of meal applications.
4. Whether quantitative measures of student behavior, health, and attendance will improve as school breakfast participation hopefully increases (via implementation of Provision 2) is a question that will continue to be examined. In this evaluation, analysis comparing the pilot year to last year in regards to attendance, and suspensions and incident referrals proved inconclusive. There may not have been a strong positive change in these variables due to a lack of high increase in school breakfast than expected. However, attendance, suspensions, and incident referrals are also affected by many other factors besides hunger and school breakfast and these variables may have come into play this year. For example, one school added a grade level and the principal indicated that this likely contributed to higher numbers of incident referrals and suspensions. Quantitative measures of student behavior, health, and attendance will continue to be collected to examine improvements possibly correlated to eating school breakfast.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Increase the potential benefits of Provision 2 by complementing the program with school breakfast marketing.**
 - a. Incorporate suggestions offered by students we surveyed: Poll students once a month to collect ideas on what they would like for breakfast and implement a few of their ideas each month.
 - b. Plan breakfast competitions between classrooms: Classrooms compete to have the highest breakfast participation in one week.
 - c. Institute a school-wide essay contest about school breakfast: Have all students write or make a visual representation of why breakfast is important and create a mural of student responses.
 - d. Plan in-house events promote breakfast participation: Have an open house where students and parents sample foods from school breakfast.
 - e. Consider large-scale events to promote breakfast participation: One example is Hunger Task Force's partnership with Fresh Brand to organize 'Breakfast with the Bucks.'
- 2. Reduce potential costs of Provision 2 by improving meal application outreach**
 - a. Implement large-scale, district-wide structures to increase meal application return: Consider automated phone messages and district-wide incentives for schools with highest application return
 - b. Implement school-wide efforts to increase meal application return: Coordinate special parent socials or meetings to raise awareness of need for meal application returns; educate school staff during personnel meetings about the importance of meal application return; coordinate between-classroom competitions to motivate children and parents around meal application return.
 - c. Hunger Task Force will continue to be committed to outreach efforts by providing staff to assist with outreach and by continuing to annually request a Congressional Hunger Fellow to work on this outreach.
- 3. Consider breakfast in the classroom as a means to increase breakfast participation and Provision 2 as a route that facilitates breakfast in the classroom by making it possible for all children to receive free meals without money counts.**
 - a. District and school officials may want to visit schools which have implemented breakfast in the classroom to see how it works
 - b. Principals and school staff should be informed of the option of providing breakfast in the classroom
- 4. Expansion of universal free meals programming should be the goal of every MPS budget year.**

APPENDIX A—GUIDELINES OF “BREAKFAST IN A BAG”



MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Division of School Nutrition Services

GUIDELINES: “BREAKFAST IN A BAG”

- Components of the Bag Breakfast Program meet the School Breakfast Meal Pattern Requirements of the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture).
- The “Bag Breakfast” is a reimbursable breakfast meal.
- Bag breakfast includes:
 - 1 – 8 oz carton 2% white milk
 - 1 – Individual 4 oz. juice carton (100% juice); apple, orange and fruit blend.
 - 1 – Bowl Pack Individual Cereal
- In addition one of the following items should be added.
 - 1 – Serving of Bread/Bread Alternate
 - 1 – 1 oz cheese stick (meat/meat alternate)
 - 1 – 4 oz. carton yogurt (meat/meat alternate)
- Bread alternates will include pre-packaged items such as:
 - Chocolate Bears
 - Dinosaur Crackers
 - Graham Crackers – 3 pack
 - ABC Crackers
 - Jungle Crackers
- Bread alternates will also periodically include items such as:
 - Muffins
 - Whole Grain Rolls
 - Coffee Cake
- The following items provide 2 meal components and should **not** be served with the cereal bowl pack.
 - Cinnabun = 2 bread
 - Cinnamania = 2 bread
 - P B & J Uncrustables = 1 bread, 1 meat
- Peanut butter may be served with rolls. To count as a meat alternate, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter must be served.

APPENDIX B—FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS PROFILES FOR SIX P-2 SCHOOLS

Food Service Operations Profile- Allen Field

1) **Hours of Service (from start to end of day):** 5:30 AM- 2:00 PM

Breakfast time (includes eating and serving time): 7:15-7:35 (8:00)

Lunch time (includes eating and serving time): 10:15-10:45 (4th-5th), 10:45-11:15 (K4, 2nd, 3rd), 11:15-11:45 (K5-1st)

2) **Length of serving time:**

Breakfast: 7:15-7:35

Lunch: 15 minutes per grade.

10:15-10:30 (4th-5th), 10:45-11:00 (K4, 2nd, 3rd), 11:15-11:45 (K5-1st)

3) **Number of food service employees by their position:**

Total: 8

1- 5 ½ hr, 2 - 5 hr, 3- 4 hr, 2- 3 hr

4) **How the meals are prepared, by whom, and where:**

Prepared in kitchen by staff

5) **Number of Points of Service:** 2

6) **Method for obtaining Point of Service:**

Breakfast: Children say their name

Lunch: 4th-5th: Punch in pin #, 2nd-3rd Pin cards with bar code, K4-1st- Class list- child states name and employee pulls up class list

Food Service Operations Profile- Bethune

1) Hours of Service (from start to end of day): 5:30 AM- 2:00 PM

Breakfast time (includes eating and serving time): 7:30-8:10 AM

Lunch time (includes eating and serving time):

11:15-11:45 (K4-3rd)

11:45-12:15 (4th-7th)

2) Length of serving time:

Breakfast:

7:30-7:40 AM (Walkers)

Upon arrival (Shuttle Bus)

7:50 AM (K4)

Lunch: 20 minutes per grade.

11:15-11:35 (K4-3rd)

11:45-12:05 (4th- 7th)

3) Number of food service employees by their position:

Total: 3

1- 5 hr, 1- 4½ hr, 1- 3 hr

4) How the meals are prepared, by whom, and where:

Prepared in kitchen by staff

5) Number of Points of Service: 1

6) Method for obtaining Point of Service:

Breakfast: If they know it, punch in pin #. Otherwise, children say their name

Lunch:

K4-3rd: Children say their name, line up by class in alphabetical order

4th-7th: Punch in pin #

Food Service Operations Profile- Carver

1) Hours of Service (from start to end of day): 6:30 AM- 2:00 PM

Breakfast (includes eating and serving time): 7:45 AM (K4-5th), 8:30 AM (6th- 7th)

Lunch (includes eating and serving time):

10:45-11:30 AM (K4-5th), 11:30-12:15 (6th-7th)

2) Length of serving time:

Breakfast:

7:30-7:45 AM (K4-5th)

8:15-8:30 AM (6th and 7th)

Lunch:

10:45- 12/12:15

3) Number of food service employees by their position:

Total: 6

Full Time: 2 (7 hr, 6 ½ hr)

Part Time: 4 (4 hr, 3 hr)

Breakfast: 2 + manager, Lunch: 6 + manager

4) How the meals are prepared, by whom, and where:

Prepared in kitchen by staff

5) Number of Points of Service: 2

6) Method for obtaining Point of Service:

Breakfast: (Breakfast in the classroom)- check off roster- teacher checks off name

Lunch: All Punch in pin #

200 before, 415-420 now.

About the same. Not big # - not everyone in cafeteria at same time, not everyone in 15 minutes. Give the numbers, in a couple months, better.

Food Service Operations Profile- Longfellow

1) Hours of Service (from start to end of day): 6:00 AM- 2:30 PM

Breakfast time (includes eating and serving time): 7:30-8:00 AM

Lunch time (includes eating and serving time):

10:15 (Head Start)

10:20-10:40 (K-5-1st)

10:55-11:15 (2nd-3rd)

11:20-11:40 (4th-5th)

12:00-12:20 (6th-7th)

But extends time.

2) Length of serving time:

Breakfast:

7:30-7:45 (walkers)

Will serve kids late

Lunch: Full 20 minutes per grade

10:15 (Head Start)

10:20-10:40 (K-5-1st)

10:55-11:15 (2nd-3rd)

11:20-11:40 (4th-5th)

12:00-12:20 (6th-7th)

3) Number of food service employees by their position:

Total: 6

1- 6 ½ hr, 1- 4½ hr, 2- 4 hr, 2- 3 hr

Breakfast: 1 + manager

4) How the meals are prepared, by whom, and where:

Prepared in kitchen by staff

5) Number of Points of Service: 2

6) Method for obtaining Point of Service:

Breakfast: Punch in pin #. Children who have trouble say their name

Lunch: Punch in pin #

Food Service Operations Profile: Wheatley

- 1) **Hours of Service (from start to end of day):** 7:00-1:45
Breakfast time (includes eating and serving time): 7:20-8:30
Lunch time (includes eating and serving time):
10:45- 11:30 (K4-K5)
11:30- 11:45 (1st-3rd)
11:45- 12:30 (4th-5th)
- 2) **Length of serving time:**
Breakfast: entire time

Lunch: 10:45, 11:45
- 3) **Number of food service employees by their position:**
1— 4.5 hour and 1 manager –5 hrs
- 4) **How the meals are prepared, by whom, and where:**
Receiving kitchen
- 5) **Number of Points of Service:**
2
- 6) **Method for obtaining Point of Service:**
Breakfast: Students punch in pin # or they look it up
Lunch: For younger students, teachers put their name in

Food Service Operations Profile: 38th Street

- 1) **Hours of Service (from start to end of day):** 6:00 AM- 2:30 PM
Breakfast time (includes eating and serving time): 7:35-8:00 AM
Lunch time (includes eating and serving time):
10:45-11:15 (K4-2nd)
11:20-11:45 (3rd-5th)
- 2) **Length of serving time:**
Breakfast:
7:30-8:00
Lunch:
10:45-11:30 total, 10:45- 11:00 (K4-2nd), 11:20-11:30 (3rd-5th)
- 3) **Number of food service employees by their position:**
Total: 4
Full Time: 1- 5 hr, 1- 4 hr
Part Time: 2- 3 hr
- 4) **How the meals are prepared, by whom, and where:**
Prepared in kitchen by staff
- 5) **Number of Points of Service:** 2
- 6) **Method for obtaining Point of Service:**
Breakfast: K4 and K5 tell their name
Lunch: Punch in pin #, K4 and K5 5-minutes early to put in pin numbers and have pin # card if they forget