

Children's Health



Sobered By Childhood Hunger, Pioneering Educators' Approach To Serving School Breakfast Pays Off

(NAPSA)—An overwhelming three in four teachers and principals report regularly seeing hungry kids in their schools, says a new report released by Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign. As Americans gear up for back to school, the report highlights the on-the-ground view of hunger as told by public school teachers and principals and points to an unlikely program—in-the-classroom breakfast—that's increasing academic achievement and reducing childhood hunger at the same time.

The new report, "Hunger In Our Schools: Teachers Report 2013," generously supported by C&S Wholesale Grocers Inc., asks front-line educators to explain the hunger they see in school, steps they take to address it, and what's working to help their students access food and succeed academically.

Half of teachers surveyed say hungry children in their classroom is a serious issue—the highest level measured in the four years of conducting this research. These teachers and principals are spending more out of their own pocket to help hungry kids. According to the new report, on average, teachers who buy food for hungry students spend \$37 a month—up from \$26 a month in 2012. Principals report spending about \$60 a month to buy food for their students.

Educators surveyed saw bright spots, too. Nine in 10 see break-



Since moving school breakfast after the opening bell, more than half of all teachers report seeing improvements in students' behavior and health.

fast as key to academic achievement. Many identified creative approaches to serving school breakfast as a critical part of any effort to help students succeed.

Benefits of Breakfast After The Bell

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, both of which offer free and reduced-price meals to low-income students. However, of the number of low-income students who eat a free or reduced-price school lunch (21 million), only about half currently also eat a school breakfast (less than 11 million). Stigma of being sent to eat in the cafeteria while other kids socialize and transportation issues are often barriers to students receiving school breakfast.

Proven ways to close this gap include rethinking how breakfast

is served—often moving it from the cafeteria to the classroom or changing when it is served. Traditionally, schools serve breakfast in the cafeteria before class begins; breakfast after the bell makes eating the first meal of the day an integrated part of the school day, which makes it easier for kids in need to access this meal.

Making A Difference

Early experience with breakfast after the bell shows it's working in surprising ways. Teachers and principals who have breakfast in the classroom say they've seen improvement in alertness (76 percent), better attendance (57 percent), fewer disciplinary problems (54 percent), fewer visits to the school nurse (55 percent) and fewer tardy students (49 percent). More than half of teachers report seeing behavior and health improvements in students since implementing the program. Importantly, these are benefits that improve the entire classroom dynamic.

Help Make Sure No Kid Hungry Starts With Breakfast

The No Kid Hungry campaign is working to connect more kids to the federal School Breakfast Program. With the public's help, the campaign is building a map that paints an unprecedented snapshot of school breakfast programs across the country. Help identify how schools are serving school breakfast at www.NoKidHungry.org/BackToSchool and map your school.