



MEDIA RELEASE

Governor Asa Hutchinson Proclaims March School Breakfast Month



Supports breakfast as part of the school day

LITTLE ROCK, AR (MARCH 5, 2019) - Governor Asa Hutchinson proclaimed March as School Breakfast Month in Arkansas at a press conference in the Governor's Conference Room at the State Capitol. School breakfast advocates from Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign, Arkansas Humanities Council, Arkansas Campaign for Grade-level Reading, AETN, Midwest Dairy, legislators and others gathered to recognize the importance of school breakfast in assuring all students start their days focused and ready to learn.



"Kids who have access to breakfast perform better academically," said Governor Hutchinson, "they behave better and they are better suited for the school environment. That's what this campaign is all about." Noting the fact that 1 in 4 Arkansas children are food insecure and 60% of Arkansas students qualify for free or reduced priced meals, the Governor said that he is very proud of school nutrition leaders who have helped Arkansas to be one of the top ten states for school breakfast participation.



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Patty Barker, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign director, reported the success the campaign and its stakeholders have had in increasing the number of students who start their days with school breakfast by adopting Breakfast After the Bell delivery models. "Since the 2009-2010* school year," said Barker, "Arkansas schools have increased by 12 percent the number of students qualifying for free and reduced price meals who are eating school breakfast. The goal is 70 percent, and we're pleased to report that we're almost there."



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In the recent Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) School Breakfast Scorecard report, almost 66 percent (65.7%) of Arkansas students who qualify for free or reduced price meals are eating breakfast. "We know that school breakfast is associated with an array of positive benefits for students like better classroom concentration, fewer trips to the school nurse, fewer behavior issues and better grades, so it's great to see that more students are getting that important start to their days. And, increased participation is better for child nutrition department budgets that are seeing federal reimbursements on the rise as a result of more students eating school breakfast," continued Barker.



Three Arkansas child nutrition directors were recognized for their schools' impressive increases in school breakfast participation: Tiffany Schneider, Blytheville School District;

Stephanie Walker Hynes, Little Rock School District; and Kellie Simpson, Rogers School District.





Schneider, of the Blytheville School District, told attendees that her schools decision to implement Second Chance Breakfast (where students can pick up a nutritious breakfast between first and second periods) and the Community Eligibility Provision (which makes it possible for high-need schools to feed all students at no charge) were instrumental in their improvement. "Since instituting both programs, we have seen a 35 percent increase in student participation," said Schneider. "We saw a need in our district for students to be able to get a breakfast so they could concentrate on their school work and not on the fact they were hungry, so we took on the challenge."

percent of the nutritional requirements for a USDA reimbursable meal. "Receiving the initial support and grant funds, for 3 high schools, from the Arkansas No Kid Hungry Campaign and Baptist Health for the Good2Go Breakfast Smoothie Program helped boost our breakfast participation by 37%. This school year, with the help of additional No Kid Hungry funding, we now serve fruit smoothies in all 13 of our secondary campuses and our average daily breakfast participation at those schools has increased by over 50%", said Hynes.

Kellie Simpson, Rogers School District assistant child nutrition director and president of the Arkansas School Nutrition Association, told attendees her school had been doing Breakfast in the Classroom since 2011. Simpson reiterated the benefits to the students and to the district of having a stable, long-term commitment to Breakfast after the Bell programs. "Breakfast in the Classroom and Second Chance Breakfast have proven to be sustainable. It requires careful planning and monitoring, but our teachers and administrators are asking that we never go back to traditional breakfast service", said Simpson.

Each year the Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign sponsors a Breakfast Month Challenge that encourages schools to go the extra mile in promoting school breakfast.

Books & Breakfast Challenge: Increase Breakfast After the Bell participation in March 2019 over March 2018.

Participants must:

- Have a breakfast After the Bell program
- Submit 1 photo of students eating breakfast while reading
- Tell in 50 words or less how they promoted reading and breakfast during School Breakfast Month
- Submit their total number of breakfast meals served and the number of days served in March 2018 and March 2019
- Submit entries by April 15th, 2019
 - 1st prize: \$1,500 + 3 boxes of books
 - 2nd prize: \$1,000 + 2 boxes of books
 - 3rd prize: \$500 + 1 box of books

Books donated by the Arkansas Humanities Council; Cash prizes provided by Midwest Dairy and the Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign.

#BooksAndBreakfastAR Social Media Competition

R.I.S.E. Arkansas and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading are sponsoring a Breakfast Month Twitter competition. The four most innovative photos posted by students, teachers, administrators or child nutrition directors that promote the theme Books & Breakfast = Success will receive prizes

Photos must be tagged with #BooksAndBreakfastAR

The Alliance encourages all Arkansas principals and superintendents to start Breakfast After the Bell programs in their schools. The benefits are many and cost is virtually nothing. Contact [Vivian Nicholson](#), Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign breakfast program director, for technical assistance in starting or expanding an alternative breakfast delivery method.

About [Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance](#)

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 520 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance mission is to reduce hunger and improve access to nutritious food by providing tools and resources, empowerment, advocacy, education and research. We invite you to visit www.ARhungeralliance.org for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

About [AETN](#)

The Arkansas Educational Television Network is Arkansas's only statewide public media network, which enhances lives by providing lifelong learning opportunities for people from all walks of life. AETN delivers local, award-winning productions and classic, trusted PBS programs aimed at sharing Arkansas and the world with viewers through the distinct channels AETN PBS, AETN Create, AETN PBS KIDS, AETN World and AETN AIRS on SAP. Audiences can also watch on several digital platforms, and members with AETN Passport have extended on-demand access to a rich library of public television programming. AETN depends on the generosity of Arkansans and the State of Arkansas to continue offering quality programming. Additional information is available at aetn.org. AETN is broadcast on KETS (Little Rock), KEMV (Mountain View), KETG (Arkadelphia), KAFT (Fayetteville), KTEJ (Jonesboro) and KETZ (El Dorado).

About [Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading](#)

The Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (AR-GLR) was launched in 2011 to move the needle on education outcomes in Arkansas by focusing on third-grade reading proficiency. AR-GLR and its partners have been recognized nationally as an effective model to enhance early literacy outcomes. AR-GLR is a collaborative effort that includes over 30 organizations that believe the only way to make measurable progress on grade-level reading is to work collectively with families, educators, policymakers, and business leaders around the state.

About [Arkansas Humanities Council](#)

The purpose of the Arkansas Humanities Council is to promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the humanities in Arkansas. To achieve its purpose, the council awards through a competitive process to nonprofit groups and organizations that allow them to plan and conduct projects in the humanities for Arkansas audiences. arkansashumanitiescouncil.org/

About [R.I.S.E. Arkansas](#)

R.I.S.E. (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) Arkansas encourages a culture of reading by coordinating a statewide reading campaign with community partners, parents, and teachers to establish the importance of reading in homes, schools, and communities. It offers a variety of resources to assist parents with reading at home and to increase the depth of knowledge for teachers. Goal 1: Sharpen the focus and strengthen instruction. Goal 2: Create community collaboration. Goal 3: Build a culture of reading!

About [Midwest Dairy](#)

Midwest Dairy Council represents 7,000 dairy farm families and works on their behalf to build dairy demand by inspiring consumer confidence in our products and production practices. We are committed to Bringing Dairy to Life! by Giving Consumers an Excellent Dairy Experience and are funded by farmers across a 10-state region, including Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. Midwest Dairy is dedicated to dairy nutrition research and education, and is committed to child health and wellness through our collaborative program, Fuel Up to Play 60.

About [Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign](#)

Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign connects kids in need with effective nutrition programs like school breakfast, summer and afterschool meals and teaches their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals on a budget. The campaign works across the nation and in Arkansas to surround children with healthy food where they live, learn and play. The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance is the lead partner for the No Kid Hungry campaign in Arkansas.

Visit <http://www.arhungeralliance.org/programs/no-kid-hungry/> for more information.