

**April 7, 2015****Testimony before the Senate Committee on Education***Prepared Statement of the Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities***Introduction**

In February 2015, the Guinn Center (in collaboration with Nevada Succeeds) published a report titled, *Examining Nevada's Education Priorities: Which Initiatives are Worth the Investment?*, in which we examined the Breakfast After the Bell program. Based on our findings, we offer the following for consideration.

**School breakfast can have a positive impact on student achievement and health**

- Research suggests that eating breakfast at school helps improve children's academic performance [Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)].
- Access to school breakfast is positivity associated with lower body mass index BMI (Gleason & Dodd 2009).

**Breakfast after the Bell could help improve school breakfast participation in Nevada**

- Nevada ranks 35<sup>th</sup> in the ratio of school breakfast participation to school lunch participation (FRAC 2015).
- In October 2014, only 35 percent of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) participated in the School Breakfast Program (Nevada Governor's Council on Food Security 2015).
- Currently, 58 schools in Carson City, Clark County, and Washoe County offer breakfast after the instructional day has begun through Breakfast After the Bell programs (which includes Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab and Go) (Nevada Governor's Council on Food Security 2015).
- Tables 1 and 2 reveal that schools participating in Breakfast After the Bell programs have higher breakfast participation rates than schools offering school breakfast in the cafeteria.
- In FY 2016, SB 503 requires schools with 69 percent or more FRL students to offer universal free breakfast after the instructional day has begun (this would impact approximately 165 schools). In FY 2017, this requirement expands to schools with an FRL rate of 50 percent or more (impacting 123 additional schools).
- According to the Nevada Department of Agriculture, increasing FRL participation in Breakfast After the Bell program could increase Federal funds to Nevada.
- Conclusion: Expanding the Breakfast After the Bell program to schools with high FRL rates would likely increase breakfast participation rates and could positively impact student achievement and health.

**Fiscal impact on school districts should be considered**

- Based on FY 2015 FRL rates, SB 503 funding of \$1 million per year will be sufficient to fund start-up costs at approximately 131 schools in FY 2016 and 122 schools in FY 2017.
- Schools would be required to offer free breakfast to all students. Based on Federal guidelines, most schools would not be reimbursed at the \$1.93 free breakfast rate for all students. Reimbursement rates are \$1.63 for reduced-price meals and \$0.28 for paid meals (U.S. Department of Agriculture).
- The difference between the cost to provide the meals and the reimbursement rate could be a loss for some school districts and charter schools.

**Recommendations**

1. Leverage private grant monies and create a State subsidy for school districts and charter schools to address the difference in reimbursement rates for free meals vs. reduced price meals and paid meals.
2. Explore ways to reduce the fiscal impact of the Breakfast After the Bell program in rural areas by pooling resources to increase purchasing power and sharing costs.

**Table 1: Breakfast Participation at Schools with FRL Rate of 69 percent and Over**

District	Schools with Breakfast After the Bell			Schools without Breakfast After the Bell		
	Number of Schools	Average Free breakfast Participation Rate	Average Reduced Price Breakfast Participation Rate	Number of Schools	Average Free breakfast Participation Rate	Average Reduced Price Breakfast Participation Rate
Carson	1	81.1	82.0	1	24.1	19.5
Clark	34	61.7	56.8	130	36.6	32.4
Elko				7	20.6	17.4
Humboldt				3	31.7	57.6
Lyon				1	85.1	84.9
Mineral				2	21.2	24.3
Nye				9	57.3	37.3
Pershing				1	45.8	28.0
Washoe	22	77.2	74.8	11	25.5	22.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>31.9</b>

Source: Analysis of Nevada Department of Agriculture Data

**Table 2: Breakfast Participation at Schools with FRL Rate of 50 percent and Over**

District	Schools with Breakfast After the Bell			Schools without Breakfast After the Bell		
	Number of Schools	Average Free breakfast Participation Rate	Average Reduced Price Breakfast Participation Rate	Number of Schools	Average Free breakfast Participation Rate	Average Reduced Price Breakfast Participation Rate
Carson	1	81.1	82.0	5	26.1	15.2
Churchill				4	70.7	67.7
Clark	35	61.5	56.1	203	32.0	27.8
Douglas				3	27.8	14.4
Elko				11	19.5	15.4
Esmeralda				3	91.2	70.1
Humboldt				4	31.0	48.9
Lincoln				2	30.4	30.5
Lyon				7	39.4	28.5
Mineral				3	19.1	19.6
Nye				15	49.8	31.6
Pershing				3	39.1	37.6
Washoe	22	77.2	74.8	25	23.3	21.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>67.8</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>28.0</b>

Source: Analysis of Nevada Department of Agriculture Data

**See full report:** Examining Nevada’s Education Priorities: Which Initiatives are Worth the Investment?  
<http://guinncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Guinn-Center-Nevada-Succeeds-Education-Priorities-FINAL.pdf>

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