



North Haledon: School Breakfast a Routine Part of the School Day

When Miguel Hernandez took over the helm of the North Haledon School District in 2016, one of the first changes he implemented was to make breakfast part of the school day.

In one short year, participation climbed from 16 percent to 40 percent of students eligible for free and low-cost school meals. The additional reimbursements have more than covered the cost of the program.

“The program pays for itself,” Hernandez says.

Students Ready to Learn

Classroom breakfast also enhances instructional time.

“We have students complete lessons as they’re eating breakfast, so we’re not wasting instructional time,” he explains. “And once they finish breakfast, they are more focused and that makes instructional time even more productive.”

After working out the logistics of serving breakfast in the classroom, breakfast runs smoothly and teachers -- at first skeptical -- have become staunch supporters.

“Once everyone gets into a routine, it just becomes a normal part of the day,” Hernandez explains, adding that the district also continues to offer a hot breakfast before school in the cafeteria for students who can arrive early. “I think if we pulled it away now the teachers and kids would be very upset.”

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This report was prepared by Hunger Free New Jersey. For more information, visit hungerfreenj.org or njfoodforthought.org.