



KIPP Austin Public Schools: Serves Universal Free School Breakfast

Snapshot of KIPP Austin Public Schools 2015/2016

Students Enrolled in District ¹		Campuses in District ¹	
Total Students	4,913	Total Campuses	10
Eligible for Free/Reduced Price	4,230 (86%)	Over 80% Free/Reduced Price Eligible	10 (100%)
Eating Breakfast (2015-2016)	3,043 (62%)	Over 70% Free/Reduced Price Eligible	10 (100%)

The KIPP Austin Public Schools' Breakfast Program...

Background. KIPP Austin Public Schools consists of 10 campuses with a student enrollment of 4,913. The district is currently using the Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) model in all of its elementary schools, the Grab N' Go model in its high schools, and a hybrid model in its middle schools. The district has a high percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, indicating that providing Universal Free School Breakfast is a great decision for KIPP Austin Public Schools. In 2015/2016, the district-wide breakfast participation rate had grown to 62%, with the highest campus-level participation rate reaching 85%. KIPP Austin started implementing a new BIC model this year and has already seen breakfast participation increase even more!

Breakfast at a Glance

- **Breakfast in the Classroom** in elementary schools
- **Grab n' Go** in high schools
- **Hybrid model** in middle schools

Breakfast Champion. Lori Nelson, the Director of Food Services at KIPP Austin, has been a huge advocate for improving school meal programs, specifically in regards to breakfast. To back up her argument, Nelson presented school leadership with data and research that identified the problems with KIPP's breakfast program and effective ways to solve these problems. Additionally, with her background as a professional chef, Nelson often uses her creativity to design the school menu, crafting delicious meals out of ordinary ingredients so that they are more appealing to students.

The Different Models. At KIPP Austin, while every child is able to eat breakfast in the classroom, the delivery model varies depending on the school. In KIPP Austin's elementary schools, the BIC model is used as it is more regulated to ensure that every child eats breakfast. Conversely, the flexibility of the Grab N' Go model works well for high schools as students have different eating habits. In KIPP Austin's middle schools, students grab food via trays in the cafeteria and bring the food back to the classroom. The middle school breakfast model varies slightly depending on the preference of each school.

1. NSLP and SBP Meal Data for 9/2015 through 5/2016, Texas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition, 2016.

Getting Buy-in. When Nelson presented an improved breakfast program to school leadership, they were very supportive as the need was urgent. KIPP has 3 campus locations. On 1 campus, 4 schools share 1 cafeteria space. On the other 2 campus locations, 3 schools each share 1 cafeteria space. Logistically, this is very challenging as space is limited. Thus, the BIC and Grab N' Go models provide a great way to eliminate over-crowding and streamline efficiency. Nelson also mentions how supportive KIPP leaders, such as Executive Director Steven Epstein, are in taking a holistic approach to education. According to Nelson, KIPP staff recognize the importance of focusing on the whole child--and the role that nutrition plays in that endeavor.



Breakfast Implementation. While school support was not an issue at KIPP Austin, Nelson cites implementation as a challenge. When KIPP Austin first adopted the BIC model in elementary schools, teachers were in charge of counting and claiming, as breakfast was delivered in coolers to each classroom. With this approach, there was a lot of inconsistency in terms of inventory and number of students being fed. Teachers were also concerned about losing instruction time. After identifying these problems, Nelson decided to approach BIC in a different way. Now, students pick up their meals via carts stationed in the hallways and bring the meals to their classrooms. To make this system more efficient, each student is assigned a card number. This approach reduces food waste and allows food staff, rather than teachers, to track meals served. Nelson also mentions the quality of food as a challenge. As a chef, she aims to make school food more appealing to students. Unfortunately, packaged food is often the norm. Nevertheless, KIPP Austin serves fresh options such as smoothies and homemade breakfast tacos, which are both popular choices for students.

Program Cost. KIPP Austin's breakfast program is cost neutral in the long-run. Although breakfast carts are a sizable investment, Nelson recognizes that this equipment is necessary to create a sustainable and efficient program. KIPP Austin also takes advantage of federal reimbursements and private grants to expand and maintain its meal programs.

Advice. When asked what advice she would give other nutrition directors who are considering a universal school breakfast program, Nelson emphasizes the importance of data collection and research to back up their arguments. Further, a successful program also requires a certain amount of creativity and flexibility from the school. Thanks to the support from school administration and creativity from Lori Nelson, KIPP Austin Public Schools' breakfast program is thriving.

For More Information about KIPP Austin Public Schools' breakfast program, please contact Lori Nelson, Director of Food Services, at 512-914-0910. Visit KIPP Austin Public Schools' website at <http://www.kippaustin.org/> to learn more.

CHILDREN AT RISK is a research and advocacy organization promoting the wellbeing of children in Texas. We are reaching out to school districts across the state encouraging and supporting their transition to Universal School Breakfast (USB). As part of our outreach efforts, we are developing a series of case studies featuring the best practices of school districts already implementing USB. These case studies will serve as a reference and guide for districts expanding their breakfast programs.

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