



DeSoto ISD: Adopting Breakfast in the Classroom

Snapshot of DeSoto ISD in 2015/2016

Total Students	9,740
Eligible for Free/Reduced Price	7,013 (72%)
Eating Breakfast (2015-2016)	4,578 (47%)
Total Campuses	13

Background. DeSoto ISD consists of 13 campuses and approximately 9,740 students. Overall, more than 70% of DeSoto ISD students qualify for a free or reduced meal. DeSoto ISD began a partnership with Chartwells K12 Dining Service in the fall of 2016 to oversee the Child Nutrition Department. Currently the district uses the standard cafeteria model for serving breakfast. In March, they approached CHILDREN AT RISK about adopting a Breakfast in the Classroom model. The following case study is a roadmap of the steps they took to introduce Breakfast in the Classroom to DeSoto ISD.

DeSoto ISD at a Glance...

- High free and reduced numbers
- Nutrition department spearheaded by Chartwells
- Started discussions about Breakfast in the Classroom in March

Gathering Information. During conversations with CHILDREN AT RISK, Chartwells staff members Divya Chhabra, Marketing Specialist, Jeffrey Caguioa, Resident Dietitian, and Joseph Elvin, District Chef, requested videos of Breakfast in the Classroom, case studies outlining best practices, and information regarding breakfast carts. Eager to champion breakfast, they passed on this information to relevant actors in the school district, such as principals and teachers. Their commitment to adopting an alternative model demonstrates Chartwells' desire to break down barriers to food access at DeSoto ISD.

In addition to videos and case studies, DeSoto ISD also visited two school districts, Mesquite ISD and Garland ISD, in order to see two alternative serving models in person. Mesquite ISD offers a cafeteria model with a twist. Teachers lead all of their students through a cafeteria line to pick up breakfast and then everyone returns to the classroom with their meal. This model has proven to be effective in increasing breakfast participation numbers as it reduces the social stigma associated with eating school breakfast. Garland ISD uses a Breakfast in the Classroom model, with food delivered in cold/hot bags to each classroom. Chartwells staff members were very grateful to see these breakfast programs in action and asked specific questions to help them develop a similar model. Thus, site visits are often a key component of the adoption process.

Getting Buy-in. In order to garner support from school administrators, Chartwells staff approached CHILDREN AT RISK about presenting to teachers at Ruby Young Elementary, which was identified as a good match for a Breakfast in the Classroom pilot program. The presentation was an opportunity to provide information regarding logistics and implementation. Staff also took time to answer any questions from teachers about Breakfast in the Classroom. Getting buy-in from principals and teachers is critical when implementing a new meal model. Chartwells was cognizant of this and made sure that there was a forum available for these discussions.



Implementation/Pilot Program. DeSoto ISD's first breakfast pilot program took place on April 28 and the second on May 5. Breakfast in the Classroom went live at Ruby Young Elementary on May 15 and participation has doubled since then. Although there was certainly a learning curve involved with Breakfast in the Classroom, DeSoto reported that students were excited about the format and the opportunity to eat breakfast with their friends and classmates.

Advice. When asked about what advice DeSoto ISD would give other nutrition departments, they stated that buy-in from school and cafeteria staff is key. Additionally, adequate teacher and staff training, especially for Breakfast in the Classroom, is very important in order to ensure smooth operations. Rosters should also list allergy information in order for teachers to run the program effectively during their class.

Looking forward. DeSoto ISD plans to expand Breakfast in the Classroom to all elementary schools by next year. Additionally, DeSoto ISD hopes to adopt the Grab N Go model (as a second chance breakfast) in its secondary schools. In the meantime, Breakfast in the Classroom at DeSoto ISD is just getting started, and they look forward to seeing it expand!

For More Information about DeSoto ISD's breakfast program, please contact:
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Visit DeSoto ISD's website at http://www.desotoisd.org/departments/child_nutrition to learn more about the nutrition department and its programs.

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 Free 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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