



# FAST BREAK TO LEARNING SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM:

*A Report of the Fourth Year Results, 2002–03*

Office of Educational Accountability  
*College of Education and Human Development*

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA





*Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program:  
A Report of the Third Year Results, 2002–2003*

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables	iii
List of Figures	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Program Administration	7
Chapter 3: Participation	21
Chapter 4: Achievement	25
Chapter 5: Attendance	43
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations	45
References	55
Appendix A: Best Practice Survey	61
Appendix B: Teacher Telephone Interview Questions	65
Appendix C: Focus Group Questions	67
Appendix D: Demographic Tables	69







## List of Tables

Table 1	Typical School Breakfast Taken by Students: 2002–03	18
Table 2	Third Grade Math Achievement for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03	27
Table 3	Third Grade Reading Achievement for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03	28
Table 4	Fifth Grade Math Achievement for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03	29
Table 5	Fifth Grade Reading Achievement for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03	30
Table 6	Fifth Grade Writing Achievement for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03	31
Table 7	Third Grade Math Achievement at Schools with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003	32
Table 8	Third Grade Reading Achievement at Schools with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003	33
Table 9	Fifth Grade Math Achievement at Schools with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003	34
Table 10	Fifth Grade Reading Achievement at Schools with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003	35
Table 11	Fifth Grade Writing Achievement at Schools with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003	36
Table 12	Third Grade Math Achievement for Title I Schools: 2002–03	37
Table 13	Third Grade Reading Achievement for Title I Schools: 2002–03	38
Table 14	Fifth Grade Math Achievement for Title I Schools: 2002–03	39
Table 15	Fifth Grade Reading Achievement for Title I Schools: 2002–03	40





Table 16	Fifth Grade Writing Achievement for Title I Schools: 2002–03	41
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Table 17	Attendance Rates for Grades 1– 6: 2002–03	43
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## **Appendices**

Table D.1	Demographics for Third Grade: 2002–03	69
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Table D.2	Demographics for Fifth Grade: 2002–03	70
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## List of Figures

Figure 1	When Breakfast is Served: 1999–00 through 2002–03	8
Figure 2	Location of School Breakfast, by Time Served: 2002–03	9
Figure 3	Percentage of Schools that met Nutritional Standards for School Breakfast: 2002–03	19
Figure 4	Participation Rates for Fastbreak and Control Schools that have been in the Program from 1998–99 to 2002–03	21
Figure 5	Participation Rates by Student Eligibility for All Schools in the Study: 1998–99 to 2002–03	22
Figure 6	Participation Rates by When Breakfast is Served: 2000–01 to 2002–03	23







# Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

The National School Breakfast Program, administered by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), began in 1966 with the Child Nutrition Act. Initially, the purpose of the program was to provide breakfast primarily for low income children. In 1975, the School Breakfast Program became permanently authorized and made available to children nationwide.

All public and non-profit schools are eligible for the program, and any child who meets eligibility requirements may participate free of charge or at a reduced rate. Parents must apply to the school in order for their children to receive a free or reduced-price breakfast. To receive a reduced-price breakfast, a child's family income must fall below 185% of the federal poverty level. To receive a free breakfast, one's household income must fall below 130% of the federal poverty level. Schools participating in the School Breakfast Program receive financial support through federal funding and must apply to their state education agency in order to institute a program (Food Research and Action Center, 2003). Since its inception, the program has expanded to provide breakfast for millions of children nationwide.

The School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) (SMI Regulatory Requirements, Reference 7 CFR Section 210.10; School Breakfast Program: Section 220.8) states that school breakfasts should provide approximately one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for important nutrients including protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium, and dietary fiber. Breakfast should also provide for one-fourth of the daily energy allowance (calories) to ensure that adequate, consistent calorie levels are available to meet children's energy and growth needs. Additionally, breakfast should adhere to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (1995) recommendations: eat a variety of foods; limit total intake of fat to 30% or less of total calories; limit saturated fat to 10% or less of total calories; choose a diet low in cholesterol and moderate in salt, sodium and sugars; and choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program regulations specify that each reimbursable school breakfast must include a serving of fluid milk, a serving of fruit or vegetable or a full-strength fruit or vegetable juice, and two servings of either bread or meat, or their alternatives. Legislation also requires that participating schools provide free and reduced-price breakfasts to eligible students. Participating schools receive cash assistance from the USDA for each meal served that





meets program requirements.

Aside from the basic requirements set by the USDA, states have the freedom to implement the program as they see fit in their schools. Even within the state, all breakfast programs in Minnesota schools do not necessarily look alike.

The Fast Break to Learning Initiative, a universally free breakfast program, was implemented in Minnesota in 1999 by the Ventura administration. Although Minnesota schools have been serving school breakfast for more than a decade, this was the beginning of the state's experiment with the "universally free" concept. The intent of the program was to offer breakfast at no charge to *all* students, not just low income students. The primary reasoning behind offering breakfast to all students free of charge stems from research (Abell Foundation, 1998; Cook, et al., 1996; McGlinchy, 1992) suggesting that a stigma exists for low income students receiving free breakfast. Proponents believed that offering breakfast to all students free of charge would remove the stigma, because students were not being singled out as needing assistance.

Prior to 2001–02, the breakfast program in Minnesota was designed as a grant program, and participating schools received two grant payments during the course of the academic year to cover their costs of participating in the program. These payments were in addition to any federal or state assistance they were already receiving. The state assistance was intended to reimburse schools for breakfasts served to students receiving reduced-price and full-price breakfast, since they were already being reimbursed for those students eligible for free breakfast through federal funds. Starting in 2001–02, the program was changed from a grant program to a reimbursement program; schools were funded only for breakfasts that were served and reported.

## Methodology

For the first three years of this study schools were categorized as either *Fastbreak* schools or *Control* schools, based on whether or not the school was participating in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program. *Fastbreak* schools were public elementary schools participating in the program by offering breakfast to all students at no charge. *Control* schools were public elementary schools that were eligible to participate in the program but for various reasons were not participating. These schools still offered breakfast to students through a fee-based system.

As the program expanded, the number of schools not participating but still serving breakfast to students diminished significantly. This left very few schools in the *Control* group and significantly increased the number





of schools classified as *Fastbreak*. Although there were schools in the state not participating in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program, the demographics of these schools were very different from those of the *Fastbreak* schools, making it difficult to compare the two groups. For example, *Fastbreak* schools were primarily city schools or located in outstate Minnesota, while *Control* schools were likely to be located in the suburbs. There were higher percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and larger minority populations at *Fastbreak* schools than in *Control* schools.

Therefore, beginning with the third year of the study, comparisons shifted to focus primarily on Title I schools. If their district is eligible on the basis of census data, Minnesota schools receive Title I funding if the percentage of students on free and reduced-price meals at their school is equal to or greater than the district average. Within this group there were schools participating in the program by serving breakfast to all students at no charge (*Fastbreak* schools) and schools that were providing breakfast, but not with Fast Break program funding (*Control* schools). This comparison guaranteed a *Control* group more similar to the *Fastbreak* group, since all schools met the requirements for receiving federal Title I funds. This is the comparison that is analyzed in this year's report as well. However, it is important to note that this year, the number of Title I *Control* schools with data available was limited to seventeen schools, making some analyses difficult. The *Control* schools that provided data did so for the first time as *Control* schools—meaning that last year they either were not in the program or were classified as *Fastbreak* schools.

There were five data sources used for this study: (1) personal interviews with food service personnel; (2) phone interviews with teachers; (3) focus groups with parents; (4) large scale data files; and (5) nutritional monitoring data.

## Personal Interviews

Personal interviews were conducted with food service personnel at 47 schools in the spring of 2003 by food and nutrition specialists from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Participants were selected based upon high participation rates in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program at their school in previous years. Also, schools' enrollment and geographic locale were considered in the selection process to ensure a representative sample. The primary purpose of these interviews was to uncover common administrative and operational characteristics among these schools in an attempt to help explain their high levels of student participation. Quantifying these program traits would be instrumental in creating a blueprint of "best practices" that other schools with lower participation rates might follow. To this end, survey questions were developed to ascertain important information





in three main areas: program logistics, programmatic adjustments, and communication between food service personnel and school staff and parents.

## Telephone Interviews

Phone interviews were conducted in the spring of 2003 with 24 teachers from eight schools (three teachers from each of the eight schools). Schools were chosen based upon their high participation rate in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program and the demographic composition of their student body. Furthermore, four schools were chosen within the metro area (two urban schools and two suburban schools); and four schools were chosen from greater Minnesota. These interviews were conducted by the Office of Educational Accountability and served a dual purpose. First, the interviews helped identify ways in which teachers affect delivery of and participation in the breakfast program, and second, the interviews allowed teachers to articulate the perceived positive and negative effects of the program on student outcomes in their classrooms.

## Focus Groups

Parent focus groups were conducted in the spring of 2003 at eight elementary schools, three in the metro area and five in greater Minnesota. Principals at the schools were provided with information about the focus groups and asked to forward the details to parents via phone calls, school newsletters, or letters. It was left to the discretion of the principal as to how parents were informed. Interested parents then contacted the principal, and any parent whose child was participating in the School Breakfast Program was invited to participate. The Office of Educational Accountability contacted the principal several weeks later and obtained the list of participants. University staff conducted the focus groups and a total of 47 parents participated.

## Data Files

The final data source consisted of three large-scale data files. The first of these was the file containing *Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment* achievement data for Minnesota schools in 1998–99, 1999–00, 2000–01, 2001–02, and 2002–03. Third grade mathematics and reading scores and 5<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics, reading and writing scores were used for the analyses. These data were provided by the Minnesota Department of Education and were analyzed by the Office of Educational Accountability at the University of Minnesota.

The second data file used was a student enrollment file providing enrollment and attendance data on Minnesota schools from 1998–2003.





This file was also provided by the Department of Education (MDE) and analyzed by the Office of Educational Accountability.

Finally, there was a data file that consisted of participation data. These data indicated how often students participated in the School Breakfast Program. The data were merged with achievement and attendance data to see if higher participation in the breakfast program was related to higher attendance and academic achievement. These data were collected by MDE and were cleaned, merged and analyzed by the Office of Educational Accountability.

## Nutritional Content Data

State agencies monitor compliance with School Meals Initiative (SMI) nutrition standards and conduct nutrition evaluations at least once every five years for each school food authority. The State of Minnesota partners with the University of Minnesota Nutrition Coordinating Center (NCC) to conduct menu nutrient analysis for school lunch. In addition to lunch menu analysis, NCC conducted breakfast menu nutrient analyses for 67 *Fastbreak* schools for academic year 2002–03. The schools provided NCC with menu information, copies of nutrient data on purchased prepared products, and local recipes. Menu and recipe information were entered into the Nutrition Data System for Research (NDS-R) software<sup>3</sup> and nutrients were generated to conduct an analysis of the breakfast menus. The USDA SMI nutrient analysis is based on student selection of menu items or foods versus menu items or foods that are offered as part of the reimbursable school meal. Results for key nutrients were compared to SMI standards, reports were generated and results sent to each of the *Fastbreak* schools along with general guidelines for planning breakfast menus.

## Purpose

The primary purpose of the School Breakfast Program is to provide a nutritious breakfast for low income students who might otherwise not receive breakfast. With budgets tightening and educational accountability becoming increasingly important, school breakfast programs are also being measured in terms of educational outcomes such as attendance and student achievement. Legislators are looking to get more out of the programs being funded, and the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program is no exception.

There is a danger in measuring the success of a program based on only one or a few outcomes. Measuring the success of a program based on only one outcome variable (such as math achievement or attendance) does not follow sound measurement or evaluation practice. Direct causation is difficult to demonstrate in education because of the many

<sup>3</sup> The Nutrition and Technical Services Division of the USDA approved use of the NDS program for SMI analysis when employed by the University of Minnesota Nutrition Coordinating Center.





factors that influence a student's educational experience. Many student outcomes, including those that are not academically based, ought to be considered to ensure an accurate portrayal of the program's success.

This report includes results on program administration and implementation (including nutritional analysis), student participation in the School Breakfast Program, student achievement, and attendance. We also provide a concluding section including recommendations based on four years of findings.





## Chapter 2: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program has been available statewide since 1999. Although the program has been implemented in many schools and districts, the administration varies from one district or school to another. Aside from nutritional guidelines, there are very few restrictions placed on schools concerning administration methods. After four years of the universally free program, it is clear that the program is not only different from one school to another; it is also more successful in some schools than in others. What differentiates one program from another, and more specifically, what makes one program more successful than another, was what we hoped to discover by talking with teachers, food service personnel, and parents.

For this year's report, we focused primarily on schools with high student participation in the School Breakfast Program (this was defined as at least 40% daily participation on average). Program administration was determined by the results of surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The participants in this study were teachers, food service personnel, and parents from schools that were eligible and participating in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program. These schools also had a history of high student participation in the program. Our intention was to gather information about what is working at these schools and disseminate the information to other schools in hopes of improving school breakfast programs statewide.

Based on previously expressed concerns regarding the nutritional makeup of school breakfasts, this year's report also includes a report collected for the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI). These data are generally collected for school lunches, but were collected for school breakfasts at 67 *Fastbreak* schools to address the issue of the nutritional value of school breakfasts.

### Surveys of Food Service Personnel

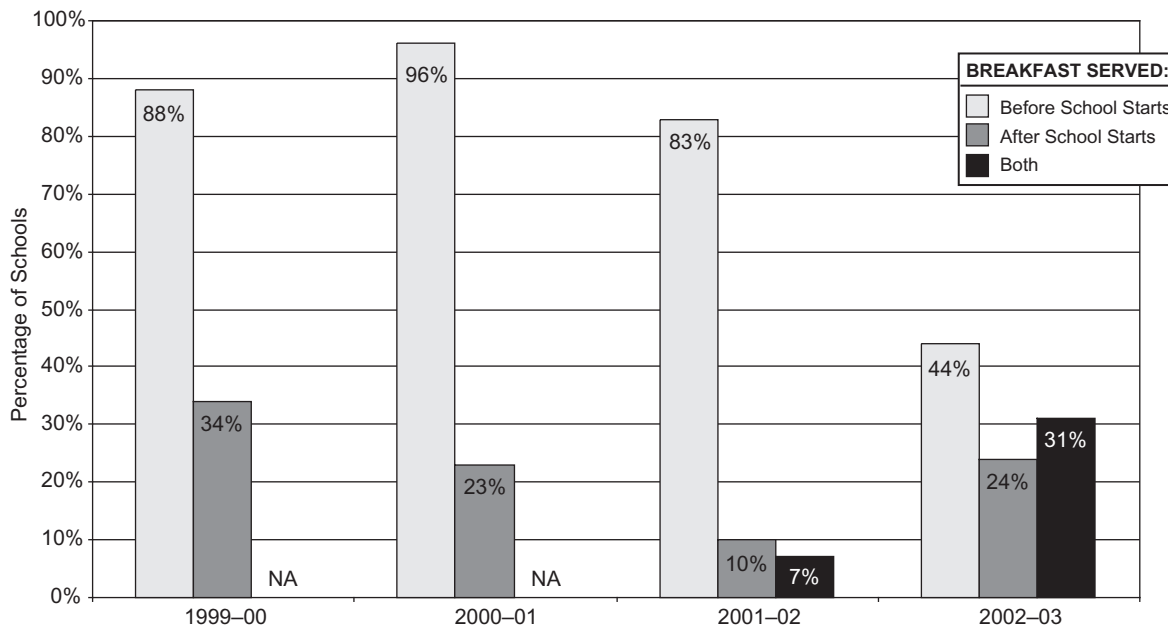
Food service personnel were surveyed at 47 schools in the spring of 2003 by food and nutrition specialists from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The primary intention was to determine common administrative and operational characteristics that might explain their high levels of participation. The identification and measurement of these factors would aid in generating guidelines that other schools with lower participation rates might use as a model for implementing their program.

The first questions addressed the timing and location of school breakfast.



According to respondents, 44% of schools served breakfast before the start of the school day, 24% served it after the start of school, and 31% indicated that they served breakfast both before and after school began. Although the greatest percentage of schools still reported that breakfast was served before the start of the school day, the percentage has decreased substantially (see Figure 1). For the first three years of the study, over 80% of schools served breakfast before school. However, there has been an increase in the number of schools reporting that breakfast is served *both* before and after school starts. Therefore it is possible that some schools that were serving breakfast before school in the past were still serving breakfast before school, but in addition were also serving it after the start of the day.

**FIGURE 1:**  
**When Breakfast is Served: 1999–00 through 2002–03**



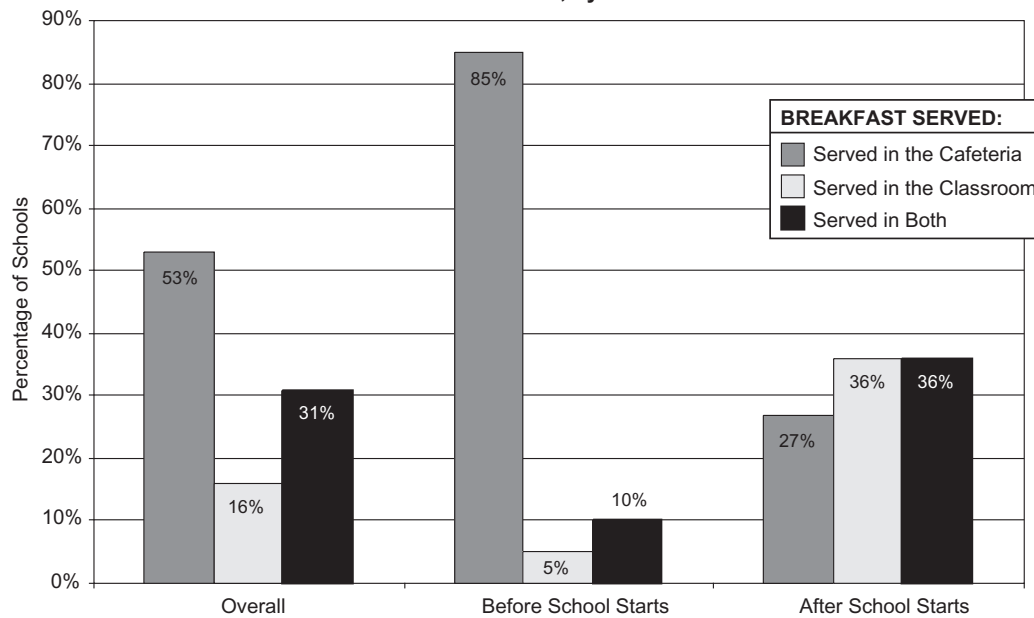
*\* In 1999–00 and 2000–01 respondents were not provided with the option "Both". This explains the overlap in these years between percentages of schools reporting breakfast served "Before School Starts" and "After School Starts."*

When asked if they thought the timing of breakfast was important to the success of the Fast Break to Learning Breakfast Program, food service personnel commented only that the timing of breakfast service established the routine for the school day. At schools where breakfast was incorporated into the school day (whether it was served before or after the start of the official school day) students and staff considered it an important part of the daily routine and therefore student participation was higher.

Food service personnel were also asked where breakfast was served at their school. Overall, 53% stated that breakfast was being served in the cafeteria, while 16% of respondents reported that students ate in their classrooms (see Figure 2, p. 9). Thirty-one percent of food service personnel commented that students ate breakfast in both locations. The

results were different for schools where breakfast was served before the start of the school day compared to schools where breakfast was served after the school day started. A far greater percentage of schools served breakfast in the cafeteria when the breakfast service was offered before school than was the case when breakfast service occurred after school started. Also, at schools serving breakfast after school started, the location of breakfast was fairly evenly divided between classroom, cafeteria and a combination of the two.

**FIGURE 2:**  
**Location of School Breakfast, by Time Served: 2002-03**



The primary reason given for serving breakfast in both the cafeteria and classrooms was a lack of cafeteria space. At these schools, kindergarten and first grade students generally ate breakfast in the cafeteria, while older students ate breakfast in their classrooms. Although the majority of schools continue to serve breakfast in the cafeteria, the numbers are shifting. In Year 3, 87% of respondents reported that breakfast was served in the cafeteria and only 8% reported it was served in the classroom.

These results are not surprising since students need supervision during breakfast. If schools offered breakfast to students in their classrooms after the start of the school day it would require staff supervision in every room rather than just a couple of staff in the cafeteria.

When asked about the supervisory aspect of the program, food service personnel reported that auxiliary staff was primarily responsible for supervising students in the cafeteria. However, in some schools, a combination of administrators, teachers, and food service personnel were utilized in this capacity. In schools where students ate in their classrooms, students were responsible for getting their food and bringing it to the



classroom, and teachers were responsible for supervising their classroom. Both teachers and students were in charge of cleaning up after breakfast ended if meals were served in the classroom.

Several survey questions attempted to identify any programmatic adjustments made by food service personnel since the implementation of the program at their school. Just over 60% of respondents commented that they have made substantive changes in the food service program. Some of these changes included increasing the number of entrées offered, switching the dining venue, changing menu items to effectively accommodate classroom eating, adjusting eating schedules to coexist with curricular activities, and implementing computerized student check-in systems.

More than half of the respondents indicated that they also had to modify their schedule or that of their staff to accommodate providing breakfast to students. These changes have included increasing the number of hours worked as well as increasing food service staff. Often, it has been particular menu items which have dictated when these additional resources are necessary. For example, staff commented that when a hot entrée was served there was more preparation needed and, often, greater student participation. Therefore, additional staff might be needed for cooking, serving, or even supervision on those days.

Open communication between food service personnel, food service directors, teachers, students, and school administrators would intuitively result in a more effective and efficient program. Numerous survey questions were asked to uncover the levels, quality, and patterns of this communication. Food service personnel were asked if, and how frequently, they met with food service directors. Twenty-eight respondents indicated that they communicate with their immediate supervisor; however, the majority also indicated that this communication occurred less than once a month. When asked if they had an opportunity to provide input on menu choices, 80% of respondents said that they did. Forty-seven percent of food service personnel reported they provide input on a "regular basis," while 10% said they provide input only to discuss which food items are and are not popular with students. Eight percent of respondents said that they sit on a menu planning committee that meets regularly throughout the school year.

When asked whether they communicated with the school principal, 67% of respondents said yes. Ninety-three percent of food service personnel thought that the school principal supported the Fast Break Program. Many respondents indicated that principals were visible during breakfast; communicated regularly with parents, teachers, and students about the benefits of the program; and some even helped serve food on the serving line. Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated that they believed teachers were also very supportive of the program. They ascertained





this information through informal conversations with teachers during meal times. Research results from previous years have suggested that administrative support, and more importantly teacher support, is one of the most influential factors in whether or not a program is successful. Therefore it is not surprising that the level of support is high at these best practice schools.

Next, respondents were asked to identify ways in which students were encouraged to participate in the School Breakfast Program. Ninety-five percent of food service personnel stated that menus were sent home with students; 56% indicated that posters were hung up around the school; and 37% said that information about the program was sent home with students in a school newsletter. Other less frequently-mentioned ways in which students were encouraged to participate included contests and incorporating the benefits of eating breakfast into the health and nutrition curriculum within the classroom. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they personally encouraged students to participate in the breakfast program. However, by far the most common way in which most food service personnel encouraged students to eat was by simply talking with them as they went through the food line. Others responded that they made a conscious effort to vary menu choices so that items did not become too redundant. A smaller percentage of respondents offered promotional material, talked with parents during orientation, or used bulletin boards. One respondent even utilized the local radio station to promote the program to students in the area.

After answering the specific interview questions, respondents offered additional commentary on the program. Overall, food service personnel were very satisfied with the Fast Break to Learning Breakfast Program in its current form. They adamantly believed that dissolving the program would be detrimental to students' well-being.

Although there was overall satisfaction with the program, respondents provided some suggestions for improvements. For example, at schools where breakfast was served in the classrooms, food service personnel commented that they would like to enlist total engagement and support of the teachers. Their argument was that if teachers were supervising students during breakfast, they needed to know what constituted a healthy and reimbursable meal.

Another comment made by respondents was that increased participation was a by-product of the menu choices more than anything else. They argued that more thought and time ought to go into planning menus that meet nutritional guidelines and that students liked. Some food service personnel went so far as to suggest that sampling new menu items should be integrated into the weekly routine. Finally, respondents who had been involved long enough to work under both the universally free breakfast program and the program prior to it becoming free for every





child commented that the program was easier to administer when it was universally free and recommended keeping it as such.

## Interviews with Teachers

Phone interviews were conducted in the spring of 2003 with 24 teachers from eight schools (three teachers from each of the eight schools). Schools were chosen based upon their high participation rate in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program and the demographic composition of their student body. Furthermore, four schools were chosen within the metro area—two urban schools and two suburban schools—and four schools were chosen from outstate Minnesota. These interviews served a dual purpose. First, the interviews helped identify ways in which teachers affect the delivery of the breakfast program, and second, the interviews allowed teachers to articulate what they viewed as the positive and negative effects of the program on students in their classrooms.

When asked if they ate breakfast with their students, the majority of teachers responded that they accompanied their students to the cafeteria or supervised them in their classrooms while they ate, with a smaller percentage actually eating breakfast with students. However, teachers who ate breakfast with their students agreed that through the informal exchange that occurred while eating together, they were able to gather information about students' lives outside of school. This provided them with greater insight into circumstances that might affect their classroom behavior or academic performance. Previous research showed that participation rates are higher when teachers accompany their classes to breakfast (Peterson, Davison, Wahlstrom, Himes, Seo, Irish, and Harring, 2003).

Interviewees were asked about the ways in which teachers at their school were involved in the implementation and administration of the program. The majority indicated that teachers provided annual input regarding program implementation, especially relating to supervision and the timing of who ate when and in which location. Teachers said they felt empowered when the suggestions they made were implemented. For instance, one teacher commented on how breakfast used to be served in the classroom as well as the cafeteria, but after some discussion at a faculty meeting it was determined that eating in the classroom was too messy and distracting to students. Consequently, after the holiday break, the school went to a rotating eating schedule that allowed all children to eat in the cafeteria.

On the other hand, teachers also expressed frustration when their suggestions were not implemented. One area of program administration that received unfavorable comments from teachers was menu planning. Teachers indicated that they felt powerless to initiate substantive changes regarding what was served to students even though many had voiced





strong opinions on the matter.

Teachers were asked what, if anything, they did to encourage students to participate in the breakfast program. The vast majority of teachers responded by saying that they talked regularly with individual students prior to breakfast time about the importance of eating a good breakfast. These conversations permitted teachers to advise their students to at least eat *something* for breakfast on a particular day. Some teachers indicated that they discussed the program with parents at parent/teacher conferences in the fall. Two teachers of upper primary grades said that the health unit in their classes provided a natural platform for incorporating discussions of the importance of eating a nutritious breakfast. They promoted the school breakfast program in that manner.

Teachers mentioned several factors that they believe determined whether or not students participated in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program. First, they stated that the most important factor was simply whether or not students were hungry. Second, teachers identified that the menu choices on a particular day influenced students' decisions on whether or not to eat. However, menu choice seemed to be less influential for those students who came to school hungry. These students were likely to eat breakfast no matter what is being served. According to teachers, the third influencing factor was age. They argued that students participated less frequently as they grew older. In other words, students were apt to participate more frequently as 1<sup>st</sup> graders than they were as 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

A few teachers stated that students in their classroom expect to eat breakfast every day; eating breakfast has become part of the ethos of the school. There was certainly an explicit program protocol to follow, but also an implicit sense that breakfast would be served every day and students should expect to come to school ready to eat. Only a few teachers said that students in their classrooms did not participate because they had already eaten at home.

When asked what they liked most about the program, teachers' responses focused on ways in which it affected the learning environment in their classroom. Eighty-three percent of respondents believed that students who participated in school breakfast were more attentive during class discussions and focused on learning curricular materials. For students who really needed breakfast because they were hungry and did not get breakfast at home, participating in the program was the primary catalyst for daily academic success. Other teachers noted that trips to see the school nurse due to hunger-related maladies such as headaches and stomach aches had decreased dramatically since their school provided universal free breakfasts to students.

Finally, teachers were asked what one thing about the program they





would change. The desire to provide students with healthier food choices was echoed by the majority of teachers. They commented on the lack of nutritional value of some of the food items (like sugar cereals and chocolate milk) as well as voicing concern that some of the food served, such as crackers or popsicles, wasn't breakfast food at all. Although foods with higher sugar content may adhere to federally mandated nutrition guidelines, teachers in schools where such foods were served argue that eating these foods for breakfast created nervous energy in some of their students. Many teachers believe that this type of energy could be detrimental to creating a productive learning environment.

A couple of teachers expressed concern over the loss of instructional time. They reported that they are stressed by the burden of greater demands from principals and parents to provide students with the knowledge needed to pass yearly standardized tests, and serving breakfast at school just adds one more thing to their plate.

Overall, their feelings about the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program were quite positive. Teachers acknowledged a few idiosyncratic programmatic shortcomings at their schools such as limited cafeteria space and timing; however the majority of teachers interviewed were grateful for the program because they understood the nutritional importance and observed the classroom benefits of eating breakfast.

## Focus Groups with Parents

Parent focus groups were conducted in the spring of 2003 at eight different elementary schools, three in the metro area and five in outstate Minnesota. A total of 47 parents participated in these focus groups.

First, parents were asked how they found out about the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program. Most parents heard about the program through a school newsletter. Others indicated that they first heard of the program through information sent home with their child, information distributed at registration or orientation, conversation with their children; or an announcement or article in the local newspaper.

Parents were also asked about the morning routine at their house and how well the Breakfast Program worked with it. The most common themes stemming from this question were that children often do not eat breakfast at home, either because they don't have time to eat or because they are not hungry when they first wake up in the morning. By the time school breakfast is served, however, students are ready to eat. Another reason that parents believe their children eat at school when they might not eat at home is because of the social aspect. Parents in seven of the eight focus groups reported that their children enjoyed the social aspect of school breakfast and were more likely to eat a complete meal when they





were surrounded by peers as opposed to eating alone at home.

Other issues that surfaced included the notion of peace of mind. Five parents representing four different focus groups shared that the breakfast program allowed them to worry less about whether or not their children would have enough to eat in the morning. As previously mentioned, many children don't have a chance to eat before school due to time constraints. However, knowing that breakfast was available at school diminished stress for parents. Another emotional benefit suggested by parents was that the program actually decreased morning fights with children. Parents didn't have to force their children to eat when they were not hungry, and the fact that the breakfast was universally free eliminated a possible disagreement about cost. According to parents, mornings are very chaotic and rushed, and the availability of school breakfast eases the stress on families and makes mornings much easier.

Throughout our research there has been some concern expressed by food service personnel and teachers that the meals served at school are not as nutritious as they should be. In order to compare these meals to what students are eating for breakfast at home, parents were asked about their child's eating habits. According to parents, children eat a wide variety of foods at home, including cold foods such as: bagels, cereal, fruit, granola bars, yogurt, juice and muffins. Some parents also reported that they cooked eggs, pancakes, meat, noodle soup, and oatmeal for a hot meal in the morning. However, by far the most commonly reported breakfast foods that children ate at home were toaster foods such as strudel, pop tarts, scrambles and waffles because they were quick and convenient.

Regarding what type of food children eat at school, as well as favorite and non-favorite foods, parents came up with several responses. First, parents reported that the foods served for school breakfast included: bagels, breakfast burrito, breakfast pizza, cereal, cheese, cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, French toast sticks, fruit, graham cracker sticks, milk, muffins, juice, pancakes, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, breakfast bars, and yogurt. Several parents indicated that their child appreciated the choices provided because if they did not like one option, they could take an alternate food or drink. Finally, some parents stated that their children had not mentioned specific preferences and would likely eat anything served. Overall, the food items that were served at school were similar to what parents served at home, although parents seemed to depend on convenience foods more often than did school breakfast programs.

Over half of the parents who participated in a focus group indicated that their child or children eat breakfast at school every day or most days. Three parents said that they did not know how often their children eat at school. Although most parents said that their children usually did eat breakfast at school, some were able to provide reasons why a child might choose not to eat on a given day. One reason provided was if





their child disliked the food choices on a particular morning, he or she might be more apt to eat at home before school. A few parents stated that sometimes their child ate at home or at daycare just before going to school and might skip breakfast at school on those days. Finally, one parent reported that at times their children preferred to play in the classroom or on the playground rather than eat breakfast.

When parents were asked what they have heard about the program, most indicated they have not heard much about the program from other parents or from their children. In fact, the most frequent response to the question of what parents have heard was that they have not heard anything bad. The benefit of the number of food choices was mentioned, and parents reported that they have heard that serving breakfast in the classroom was appreciated. Five parents reported that they have heard that a high percentage of students in their school take part in the program.

As a final question, parents were asked what, if anything, they would change about the program. The majority said that there was nothing they would change. However, a few of the parents who answered the question provided suggestions for improvement. Several parents offered ideas for better food choices, including the frequent request for schools to provide more fresh fruit. It should be noted that this suggestion was mentioned in only two of the eight focus groups, while in other groups the inclusion of fresh fruit was listed as a strength of the program. Six parents representing three focus groups expressed the desire for hot cereal or other hot foods at breakfast. Other suggestions mentioned regarding breakfast menus included: decreasing sugar content; increasing protein; increasing the variety of food choices; including cold cereal every day; having 2% milk available; including more whole grains; and serving organic foods. However, these were mentioned by very few parents as the majority of parents were not at all concerned with the nutritional value of the meals served.

Parents also provided ideas for logistical changes that could improve the facilitation of the breakfast program. Four parents suggested that the time frame for breakfast be adjusted in order to accommodate students who ride the bus. Parents reported that in some cases, when a student's bus was late to school, he or she missed the opportunity to eat breakfast. Next, parents hoped for more time for the students to eat breakfast, and one suggested that if breakfast started a bit earlier there would be less of a rush. It should also be noted, however, that five parents praised the time span of breakfast when compared to the short lunch period. Finally, several parents agreed that menus translated into families' native languages would be appreciated.

Overall, parents thought that the Fast Break to Learning Breakfast Program was great and that they would hate to lose it at their child's





school. Many believed that some children throughout the state would not eat breakfast if not for this program. Comments were made that if a fee were associated with breakfast, their children would not eat breakfast at school as often. Some of the benefits of the program mentioned were improved academic performance, opportunity for students who need to take medication in the morning to take it with food, and a nice way for students to start their day by having a time of welcome and camaraderie among themselves.

## Nutritional Content

The nutritional content of school breakfast has been a controversial topic for food service staff and teachers throughout this research. In order to address these concerns we have included a report collected for the School Meals Initiative (SMI) on the nutritional value of school breakfasts. The 67 schools evaluated were all participating in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program.

Most *Fastbreak* schools provided relatively simple breakfasts, offering a small number of foods in order to satisfy the daily meal pattern requirement. On average, the breakfast items *offered* included:

### Milk:

- fluid milk (5 times per week)

### Fruits and vegetables:

- fruit juice (3.9 times per week)
- canned and/or frozen fruit (0.93 times per week)
- fresh fruit (0.8 times per week)

### Grains and bread items:

- ready-to-eat cereal (2.6 times per week – 70% presweetened)
- toasted bread, pancakes, waffles, or French toast (2.4 times per week)
- pastries, including cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, and muffins (1.6 times per week)
- granola bars, pop tarts, and graham crackers (1 time per week)

### Meat or meat alternatives:

- cheese or yogurt (1.1 times per week)
- meat and/or eggs (0.8 times per week)
- peanut butter (0.64 times per week)
- breakfast entrees including pizza, burritos and similar items (0.6 times per week)

What schools offered for breakfast was not always what students chose to eat. However, on average, students selected school breakfast items that provided them with one-fourth or more of the daily RDA for most



nutrients with the exception of total calories and fiber. It should be noted that while USDA standards for school lunch are adjusted for students' age and grade level, the current required nutrient standards for school breakfast apply to grades K–12 without any distinction between age/grade groups. This may help to explain why items selected by students provided averages below the standards for total calories and fiber, since younger students have greater nutritional needs. The mean value for total calories was 462, 83% of the 554 total calorie standard. The mean value for total dietary fiber was 2 grams, only 33% of the 6 grams total fiber standard. Table 1 shows what an average breakfast included.

**TABLE 1:  
Typical School Breakfast Taken by Students: 2002–03**

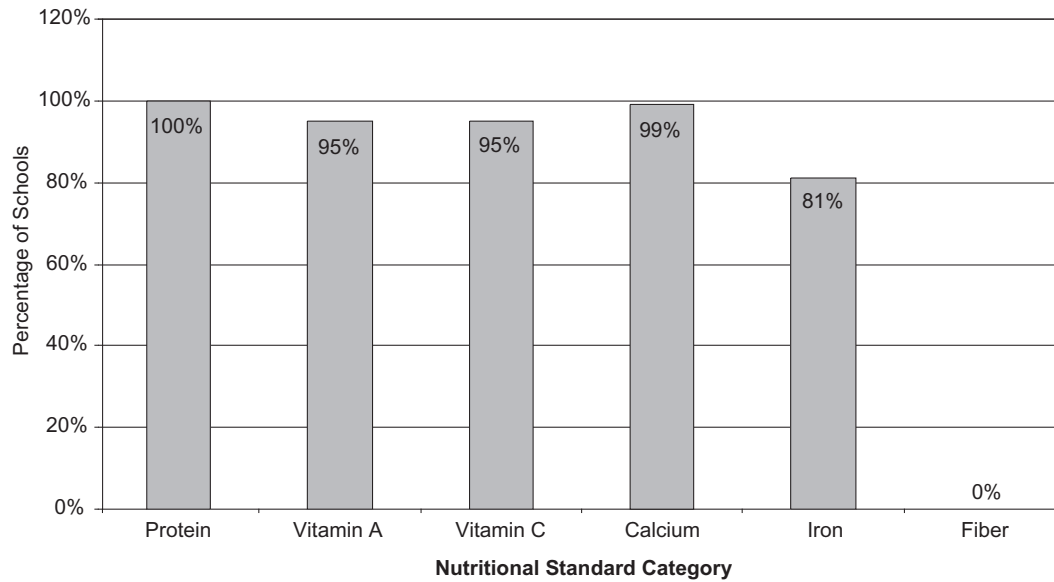
.70 fruit and vegetable servings	.5 serving of fruit juice .2 serving from fruit or vegetable
1.06 dairy servings	.94 servings from milk (.20 from chocolate milk) .12 servings from cheese or yogurt
.11 meat servings	Sausage, eggs and peanut butter
1.91 grain servings	.36 serving ready-to-eat cereal 1.22 servings of refined grains (toast, bagels, French toast, pancakes, waffles, biscuits, pizza crust) .33 serving from pastries or snack bars .277 serving whole grain

When looking at schools individually, several met most of the standards (Figure 3, p. 19). All 67 *Fastbreak* schools surveyed met the standard for protein. Standards for vitamin A and vitamin C were met by 95% of schools. All but one school (66 of 67) met the standard for calcium, and 81% of schools met the standard for iron. When schools served fortified ready-to-eat cereal two or more times per week, the standards for vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron were met. None of the schools met the standard for dietary fiber.

On average, school breakfasts were within the Dietary Guideline requirements for total fat and for saturated fat. The mean total fat value was 13 grams and 26% of calories from fat, compared with a goal of 18 grams or less and 30% of total calories or less from total fat. The mean saturated fat value was 5 grams and 10% of calories from saturated fat with a goal of 6 grams or less and 10% of calories from saturated fat. On an individual basis, 89% of schools met the standard for total fat; 84% met the standard for saturated fat.

These results are particularly interesting because of the repeated concern about the nutritional value of school breakfasts. According to these data, breakfasts served in schools in Minnesota did an exceptional job of meeting the federal nutritional standards (Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3:**  
**Percentage of Schools that met Nutritional Standards**  
**for School Breakfast: 2002–03**



Although the Fast Break to Learning Breakfast Program looked different in some schools than in others there seemed to be consensus that the program is a good one and is working in the schools for parents, teachers, and most importantly, for students. The most frequently expressed concern with the program involved the nutritional content of the meals. However, based on the report collected for the School Meals Initiative, schools seem to be offering breakfasts that meet federal nutritional requirements.





# Chapter 3: PARTICIPATION

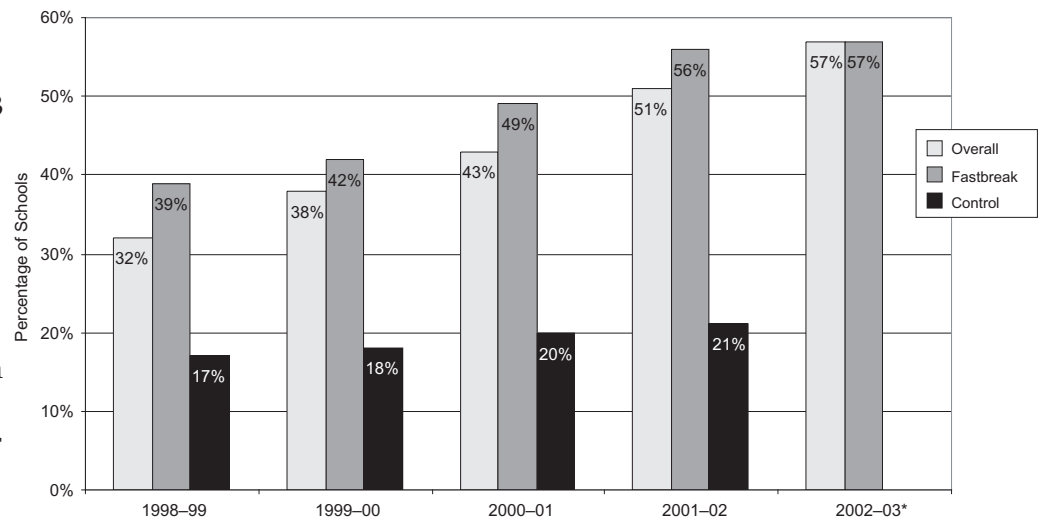
A program can only be successful if it is utilized. Numerous factors can shape participation in the School Breakfast Program, thus affecting its success. Participation rates can vary between schools in one district or between groups of students within a single school. Program administration and implementation often affect whether students participate in school breakfast. Getting students to participate in the School Breakfast Program has been a challenge since the program began. However, participation has steadily increased over the last five years.

In previous years, in order to compare participation rates for students at *Fastbreak* schools versus *Control* schools, data from schools that had maintained the same classification for the first four years that the program had been in place were analyzed over time. However, this year there were no participation data provided by *Control* schools that had maintained the same classification as the previous year. The schools that were classified as *Control* schools in 2002–03 were either previously *Fastbreak* schools or not in the program in 2001–02. Therefore, comparisons between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools were analyzed only based on their classification for 2002–03.

Overall participation rates for the breakfast program have increased 25% since 1998–99 and 6% between 2001–02 and 2002–03. Overall participation rates for 2002–03 were 57%. *Fastbreak* schools reported participation rates of 57%, on average, while *Control* schools reported an average rate of 59%. It is important to note that 14 of the 17 *Control* schools in 2002–03 were formerly *Fastbreak* schools. In 2001–02, these schools had an average participation rate of 57%, which was significantly higher than typical *Control* school averages in the past. Therefore, their high participation rate for 2002–03 is not surprising.

Schools that have been

**FIGURE 4:**  
Participation Rates for Fastbreak and Control Schools  
that have been in the Program from 1998–99 to 2002–03



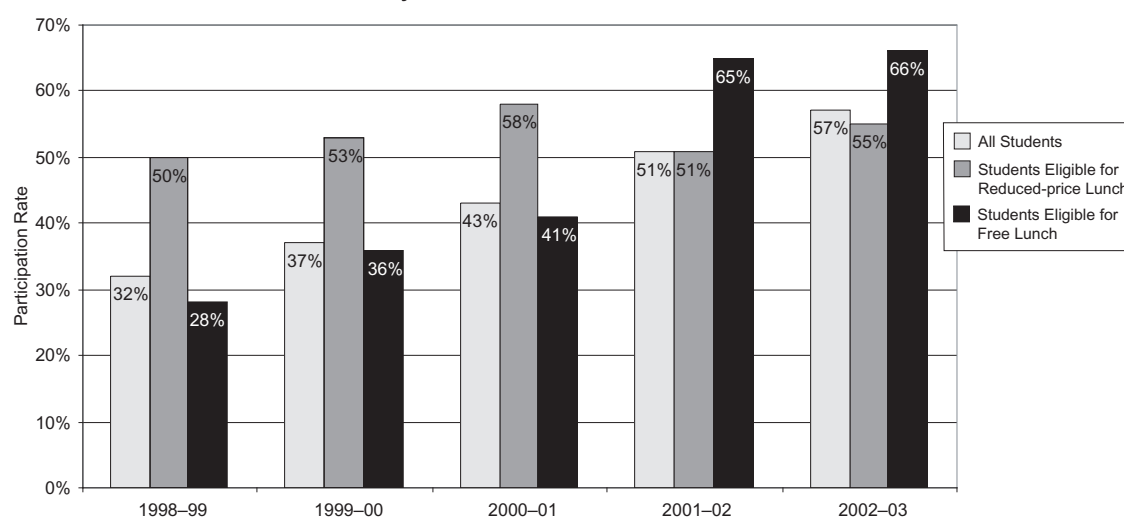
\*This year there were no Control schools that had been Control schools since the beginning of the program; therefore there were no data available for that category.



classified as *Fastbreak* since the program's outset have reported greater gains in participation rates than *Control* schools. Participation increased by 18% at *Fastbreak* schools, compared to only 4% at *Control* schools between 1998–99 and 2002–03 (Figure 4).

Part of the underlying rationale for providing universally free breakfast was that it might alleviate the stigma associated with free breakfast, thus allowing more students in need of breakfast (particularly those eligible for free lunch), to participate unencumbered. In 2002–03, participation rates for students eligible for free lunch increased to 66% from 65% the previous year and have increased 38% since the program began in 1998–99. For the past two years, participation rates for students eligible for free lunch have been greater than participation rates for students eligible for reduced-price lunch (66% compared to 51% in 2001–02, and 66% compared to 55% in 2002–03 (Figure 5).

**FIGURE 5:**  
Participation Rates by Student Eligibility for All Schools  
in the Study: 1998–99 to 2002–03

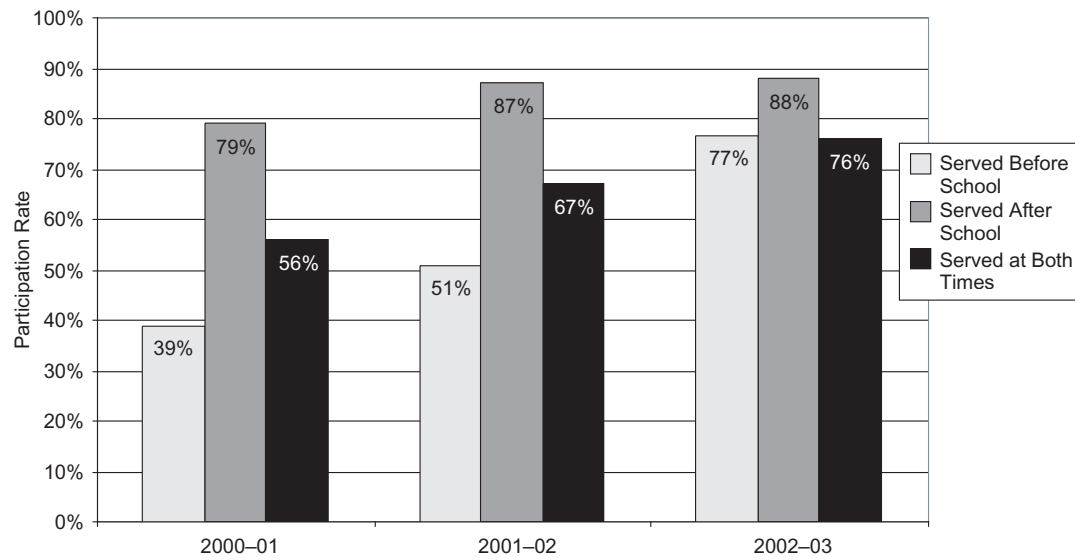


The timing of breakfast service at school can be a factor in whether a student participates. Overall, schools that served breakfast after the start of the school day had higher participation rates than those that served breakfast before the start of the school day (88% as opposed to 77%). At schools where breakfast was served both before and after the start of the school day, the average participation rate was slightly lower (74%). Regardless of when schools served breakfast, there was a 1–16% increase in participation rates from 2001–02 to 2002–03 (see Figure 6, p. 23).

The means used to inform teachers, parents and students about the School Breakfast Program is another critical factor influencing student participation rates. The vast majority (96%) of food service personnel



**FIGURE 6:**  
**Participation Rates by When Breakfast is Served: 2000-01 to 2002-03**



*\*Data included for schools in the study that provided information on when breakfast was served.*

interviewed reported that students were informed about the program through menus that were sent home. Fifty-seven percent said that there were posters displayed around the school promoting the program and just over one-third reported that the information was disseminated through a school newsletter.

At some schools, students and parents were simply informed about the program and then invited to participate. Other schools incorporated school breakfast into the day by deciding that classes would participate in the program together. Students were not forced to participate, but entire classes went to the cafeteria or lunchroom together regardless of whether students intended to eat. Students who chose not to eat spent the time socializing with fellow students or teachers.

We argue that these very different approaches in administration have a great impact on the level of participation in the program. Based on interviews in previous years, best practice schools generally had accepted the Breakfast Program as part of their school culture (Peterson, et al., 2003). They reported that their students were more likely to participate because of the way the program was administered and the overall positive attitude about the program with teachers and staff.

Participation rates have continued to increase since the start of the program. There are a number of possible explanations for the increase. One possibility is that the longer the program was in place, the more likely students and parents were to find out about it and begin participating. Another possible explanation for the increased participation could be the shift in when breakfast was served. Prior to 2002-03, the vast





majority of schools reported that they served breakfast before the start of the school day. However, in Year 4 there was a shift, and significantly more schools reported that they served breakfast after the start of the school day. This allowed for greater participation because students were already at school when breakfast was served rather than needing to arrive early to eat breakfast.





## Chapter 4: ACHIEVEMENT

Although it is important to consider a number of student outcomes when determining the success of the School Breakfast Program, the degree to which the program improves student achievement is the primary question that is asked year after year by educators and policymakers. This question is becoming increasingly important with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act and higher achievement standards. In this study, student achievement was measured using 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade test scores on the *Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA)* in reading, mathematics, and writing (5<sup>th</sup> grade only). This is the fourth year of the report; therefore, the differences between the 1998–99 school year (baseline) and the 2002–03 school year were the focus of the analyses.

Several different analyses were conducted. First, in order to compare *Fastbreak* schools with *Control* schools, analyses were conducted for the group of schools classified as *Fastbreak* and *Control* for 2002–03, no matter what their previous classification. These analyses were compared to achievement results statewide. Second, analyses were run for schools that have had the same *Fastbreak* or *Control* classification since the program began in 1998–99. However, in 2002–03 there were no schools classified as *Control* schools that had been classified as such since the beginning of the program. Therefore, the schools that were classified as *Fastbreak* since 1998–99 were analyzed, but there were no comparisons made to *Control* schools in these analyses. Finally, in order to compare more like groups of students and schools, achievement data for Title I schools were analyzed. A file containing results for Title I schools was provided by the Minnesota Department of Education. Since the majority of schools in our study were Title I schools, it was of interest to compare achievement results of Title I schools that serve breakfast to students with those of Title I schools in the state overall.

For each set of analyses, average scores, gain scores, and percentages of students scoring at or above certain proficiency levels were reported. Previously, the percentage of students scoring at or above Levels II and III were the only percentages reported; however, in accordance with No Child Left Behind proficiency requirements, Level IIb is now considered the state proficiency level and was therefore reported with the other achievement levels in this year's report.

The descriptive data in the tables in this chapter represent raw means and percentages, which have not been adjusted to reflect differences in student demographics (such as the percentage of low income students) in *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools. However, the statistical significance





tests did control for these differences in student demographics in the percentage of LEP students, students in special education, and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. In other words, all of our reported significance tests take differences in student demographics into account. In some cases there are (unreported) significant differences among schools, when demographic factors are ignored, but in such cases, the differences between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools can be readily attributed to demographic differences between the schools.

Significance tests were conducted only for the first group of data that compared *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools to state scores. The second group of data did not include *Control* school data, and the Title I data was extremely similar to the first group of data.

It is important to mention that this year's *Control* group was significantly smaller than in previous years (N=17). The majority of the *Control* schools were *Fastbreak* schools in 2001–02 (14 of 17 or 82%). However, their achievement scores in 2001–02 were above average for *Fastbreak* schools and they had fewer students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. This could have had an impact on the results for this group; therefore, comparisons between *Fastbreak* schools and *Control* schools should be made cautiously. For a more detailed description of group demographics, see tables in Appendix D .

### **Third Grade Achievement for Schools Classified as *Fastbreak* and *Control* in 2002–03**

Tables 2 and 3 (pp. 27–28) show 3<sup>rd</sup> grade achievement scores in mathematics and reading for the state overall and for schools classified as *Fastbreak* and *Control* in 2002–03. Both *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools in our study served breakfast. *Fastbreak* schools offered breakfast to all students free of charge, while *Control* schools offered breakfast to students on a fee-based system. The vast majority of schools included in the study were classified as *Fastbreak* schools.



**Table 2:  
Third Grade Math Achievement  
for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03**

	State	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1547	1492	1583
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1487	1449	1475
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1463	1419	1481
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1442	1422	1472
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1420	1376	1442
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03**</b>	127	116	141
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03**</b>	95%	91%	98%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	91%	87%	90%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	87%	82%	90%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	86%	84%	90%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	83%	76%	87%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	12%	15%	11%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03**</b>	76%	65%	83%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03**</b>	57%	47%	67%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	48%	41%	46%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	47%	39%	50%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	40%	38%	43%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	35%	29%	39%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03**</b>	22%	18%	28%

*\*\*Significant differences exist between Fastbreak and Control ( $p \leq .05$ ). Statistical significance tests controlled for differences in percentages of LEP, special education, and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch.*

As illustrated in Table 2, the average math score for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders from *Fastbreak* schools improved from 2001–02 to 2002–03 (from 1449 to 1492). Overall, the percentage of students scoring at or above Levels II and III in *Fastbreak* schools also increased from the previous year. However, *Control* schools reported both higher average scores and significantly greater gains in average 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math scores (1583, a gain of 108 points) than *Fastbreak* schools between 2001–02 and 2002–03. *Fastbreak* schools experienced greater gains than *Control* schools in the percentages of students scoring at or above Level II mathematics since the start of the program. The results showed a significant difference between *Control* schools, which reported that 83% of their students scored at or above Level IIb, compared to *Fastbreak* schools, which reported that 65% of their students reached Level IIb.

Table 3 shows results for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading for the state overall and for schools in our study. Average 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores for students at *Fastbreak* schools were lower than those at both *Control* schools and at schools statewide. *Fastbreak* schools also experienced significantly lower

**Table 3:  
Third Grade Reading Achievement  
for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03**

	State	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1523	1472	1540
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1487	1446	1474
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1453	1408	1473
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1423	1407	1447
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1391	1351	1406
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03**</b>	132	121	134
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03**</b>	90%	84%	94%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	84%	78%	83%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	79%	71%	83%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	76%	74%	80%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	73%	64%	76%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	17%	20%	18%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03**</b>	78%	66%	81%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03**</b>	61%	49%	65%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	49%	41%	47%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	42%	34%	46%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	37%	34%	41%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	33%	27%	35%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03**</b>	28%	22%	30%

*\*\*Significant differences exist between Fastbreak and Control ( $p \leq .05$ ). Statistical significance tests controlled for differences in percentages of LEP, special education, and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch.*

gains in average reading score, both since the program began and between 2001–02 and 2002–03, as well as the lowest proficiency levels. The percentage of students scoring at or above Level IIb in the *Fastbreak* category was 66%, significantly lower than the 81% for *Control* schools and 78% for schools statewide. *Control* schools had the highest average score for 2002–03 (1540) as well as the highest percentages at each proficiency level. The one area where students at *Fastbreak* schools outperformed other students was in the gain in the percentage of students scoring at or above Level II since the beginning of the program (20% and 18%, respectively).

## Fifth Grade Achievement for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control in 2002–03

As shown in Table 4, the average 5<sup>th</sup> grade math score was 1478 for students in *Fastbreak* schools, compared to 1531 for students in *Control* schools. While *Control* schools reported higher average scores, the gain in average score since the beginning of the program was greater at *Fastbreak* schools than at *Control* schools (147 compared to 134).

**Table 4:**  
Fifth Grade Math Achievement  
for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03

	State	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1538	1478	1531
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1503	1456	1465
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1454	1410	1465
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1431	1415	1434
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1380	1331	1397
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	158	147	134
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03**</b>	94%	90%	96%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	90%	85%	86%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	84%	78%	87%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	81%	79%	83%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	75%	65%	80%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	19%	25%	16%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	78%	65%	77%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03**</b>	58%	44%	55%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	53%	43%	45%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	43%	34%	45%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	38%	35%	38%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	30%	23%	32%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	28%	21%	23%

\*\*Significant differences exist between Fastbreak and Control ( $p \leq .05$ ). Statistical significance tests controlled for differences in percentages of LEP, special education, and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch.

*Fastbreak* schools also reported greater gains in the percentage of students scoring at or above Level II. From 1998 to 2002 this percentage increased 25% to reach 90% in *Fastbreak* schools compared to a gain of 16% in *Control* schools. About two-thirds of students at *Fastbreak* schools scored at or above Level IIb compared to 77% at *Control* schools and 78% statewide.



Table 5 shows 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading achievement for *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools. As with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade math scores, 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores were, on average, higher at *Control* schools (1553) than at the *Fastbreak* schools (1510). Concerning proficiency levels, *Control* schools reported a higher percentage of students scoring at or above Levels II, III, and IIb than *Fastbreak* schools. However, *Fastbreak* schools experienced greater gains than *Control* schools in average math score, and in the percentage of students scoring at Levels II and III since the start of the program in 1998.

**Table 5:  
Fifth Grade Reading Achievement  
for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03**

	State	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1573	1510	1553
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1553	1498	1526
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1501	1447	1521
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1450	1431	1460
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1412	1361	1433
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	161	149	120
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	94%	89%	94%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	90%	84%	87%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	84%	77%	88%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	80%	76%	82%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	76%	66%	80%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	18%	23%	14%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	82%	71%	81%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	68%	55%	65%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	64%	54%	59%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	54%	44%	58%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	44%	41%	45%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	37%	29%	41%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	31%	26%	24%

Fifth grade writing scores fluctuated more than scores in the other subjects. Similar to reading and math, however, students at *Control* schools had higher average writing scores (1535) than *Fastbreak* students (1484). However, students at *Fastbreak* schools reported a greater gain in average writing score since the program began. Table 6 (p. 31) shows that, overall, writing scores dropped between 2001–02 and 2002–03, as did the percentages scoring at both Levels II and III.





**Table 6:  
Fifth Grade Writing Achievement  
for Schools Classified as Fastbreak and Control: 2002–03**

	Overall	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1588	1484	1535
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1613	1553	1580
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1482	1450	1487
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1417	1401	1410
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1435	1390	1450
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	153	94	85
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	90%	85%	89%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	97%	95%	96%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	95%	93%	95%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	90%	89%	91%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	92%	89%	93%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	-2%	-4%	-4%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	68%	58%	66%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	59%	48%	55%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	66%	58%	62%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	48%	43%	49%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	36%	34%	38%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	39%	32%	41%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03**</b>	20%	16%	14%

*\*\*Significant differences exist between Fastbreak and Control ( $p \leq .05$ ). Statistical significance tests controlled for differences in percentages of LEP, special education, and eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch.*

The percentage of students scoring at or above Level II were, overall, lower for 2002–03 than at the program’s outset in 1998–99; however, the percentages of students scoring at or above Level III increased for each school category, with *Fastbreak* schools experiencing significantly greater gains (16%) than *Control* schools (14%). About two-thirds of students at *Control* schools scored at or above Level IIb compared to 58% of students at *Fastbreak* schools.

### **Third Grade Achievement for Schools with the Same Classification from the Outset of the Program**

This set of analyses focused strictly on the schools in the program that maintained the same classification from 1999 through 2003, broken down into schools that were *Fastbreak* throughout, and schools overall (all



schools in the study). It should be noted that although there were many schools that were *Fastbreak* schools for four years, there were no *Control* schools that maintained the same classification from 1999 through 2003. Therefore, we cannot report scores or gains for *Control* schools in this section.

**Table 7:  
Third Grade Math Achievement at Schools  
with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003**

	Overall	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1497	1476	n/a
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1431	1419	1475
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1435	1420	1490
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1442	1400	1461
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1396	1377	1445
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	101	99	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	92%	89%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	84%	83%	90%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	84%	82%	91%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	85%	80%	89%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	80%	77%	88%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	12%	12%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	66%	62%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	48%	43%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	38%	36%	46%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	42%	39%	51%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	40%	33%	43%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	32%	29%	39%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	16%	14%	n/a

As shown in Table 7, the average math score for students at schools that have been *Fastbreak* schools for four years was 1476, lower than the overall average for all schools in the study (1497). However, *Fastbreak* schools experienced similar gains to the overall results in average score since the program’s beginning, as well as since the previous year. They also had similar gains in percentage of students scoring at or above Levels II and III and in the percentage of students at or above Levels II, III, and IIb for this year. Four-year *Fastbreak* schools had 89% of their students scoring at or above Level II, 43% at or gains in percentage of students scoring at or above Levels II and III and in the percentage of students at or above



Levels II, III, and IIb for this year. Four-year *Fastbreak* schools had 89% of their students scoring at or above Level II, 43% at or above Level III, and 62% at or above Level IIb (the standard for proficiency). Schools overall reported 92% of their students scoring at or above Level II, 48% at or above Level III, and 66% at or above Level IIb. However, despite similarities, the scores at *Fastbreak* schools were slightly lower than overall averages for schools in the study over the four years.

Average 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores were higher for schools overall (1476) than for schools that had been *Fastbreak* for four years (1454). Four-year *Fastbreak* schools reported 82% of their students scoring at or above Level II, which was an improvement of 18% since the program's beginning (Table 8). They also had 45% of students scoring at or above Level III, a 17% gain since 1998–99. Sixty-two percent of students reached Level IIb. Overall, schools in the study reported 85% of their students scoring at or above Level II, a gain of 17% since the program's beginning. They

**Table 8:  
Third Grade Reading Achievement at Schools with the Same  
Program Classification from 1999–2003**

	Overall	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1476	1454	n/a
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1430	1414	1483
<b>Average Score: 2000 –01</b>	1427	1411	1486
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1422	1378	1442
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1367	1353	1406
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	109	101	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	85%	82%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	75%	72%	85%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	74%	72%	84%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	76%	67%	80%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	68%	64%	77%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	17%	18%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	67%	62%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	49%	45%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	37%	35%	48%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	37%	34%	48%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	37%	30%	40%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	30%	28%	34%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	19%	17%	n/a

also had 49% at or above Level III, a gain of 19% since the beginning





of the study. Their percentage of students scoring at Level IIb was 67%. In general, schools overall had slightly higher results than did four-year *Fastbreak* schools.

### Fifth Grade Achievement for Schools with the Same Classification from the Outset of the Program

Table 9 shows the results for 5<sup>th</sup> grade math achievement for schools that maintained the same classification for four years. The average math score for 5<sup>th</sup> graders from schools that were *Fastbreak* for four years was 1461, lower than the 1482 average for schools overall. Four-year *Fastbreak* schools gained 100 points since the program's outset, while schools overall gained 114.

**Table 9:**  
Fifth Grade Math Achievement at Schools  
with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003

	Overall	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1482	1461	n/a
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1452	1450	1457
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1443	1439	1459
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1431	1385	1443
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1368	1361	1398
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	114	100	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	90%	88%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	84%	84%	85%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	83%	82%	86%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	81%	73%	85%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	71%	66%	81%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	19%	22%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	66%	61%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	45%	40%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	42%	41%	44%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	41%	40%	44%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	38%	30%	39%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	26%	24%	33%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	19%	16%	n/a

Overall, the percentage of 5<sup>th</sup> graders scoring at or above Level III in



math was lower at *Fastbreak* schools (40% compared with 45%), and at or above Level IIb (61% versus 66%). Schools overall had greater gains in percentages at or above Levels II and III, with the exception of the gain in percent at or above Level II; here, four-year *Fastbreak* schools had a higher gain (22%) than did schools overall in the study (19%).

**Table 10:**  
**Fifth Grade Reading Achievement at Schools**  
**with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003**

	Overall	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1513	1487	n/a
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1496	1490	1521
<b>Average Score: 2000 –01</b>	1490	1482	1520
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1451	1403	1465
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1404	1394	1438
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	109	93	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	89%	86%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	84%	83%	87%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	83%	82%	88%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	80%	72%	83%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	71%	67%	82%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	18%	19%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	72%	66%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	56%	50%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	53%	52%	59%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	52%	51%	58%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	44%	36%	46%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	34%	30%	42%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	22%	20%	n/a

Table 10 shows that, like 5<sup>th</sup> grade math achievement, 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores were, on average, higher for schools in the study overall than for four-year *Fastbreak* schools (1513 and 1487 respectively). Overall, schools in the study reported higher percentages of students scoring at or above Level II (89% versus 86%), at or above Level III (56% versus 50%) and at or above Level IIb (72% compared with 66%) than schools classified as *Fastbreak* for four years. In general, the numbers for the schools overall were slightly higher, except for the gain in percentage at or above Level II; here the four-year *Fastbreak* schools had a slightly higher gain (19% and 18% respectively).



**Table 11:  
Fifth Grade Writing Achievement at Schools  
with the Same Program Classification from 1999–2003**

	Overall	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1488	1455	n/a
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1554	1548	1576
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1469	1466	1480
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1417	1383	1419
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1427	1421	1449
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	61	34	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	85%	83%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	95%	94%	95%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	94%	94%	95%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	90%	87%	90%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	91%	90%	94%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	-6%	-7%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	59%	54%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	49%	44%	n/a
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	58%	58%	61%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	46%	46%	47%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	36%	31%	37%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	36%	34%	42%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	13%	10%	n/a

As for reading and math, average 5<sup>th</sup> grade writing scores were higher for schools overall than for four-year *Fastbreak* schools (1488 versus 1455). At schools overall, 85% of students scored at or above Level II, compared to 83% at four-year *Fastbreak* schools (Table 11). Both percentages reflect a drop in scores at or above Level II since 1998–99. Schools overall had a slightly higher percentage at or above Level III (49%) than did four-year *Fastbreak* schools (44%). They also reported a higher percentage of students scoring at or above Level IIb (59% compared to 54%). The lower scores could be due in part to scoring variations from year to year.



## Third Grade Achievement for Title I Schools

Tables 12 through 16 (pp. 37–41) show achievement results for all Title I schools in the state compared to the Title I schools in our study. As shown in Table 12, Title I *Control* schools reported higher average 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math scores than Title I *Fastbreak* schools or Title I schools overall. *Control* schools also experienced the greatest gains in average score since the beginning of the program (153 points, compared with 107 points for Title I schools overall and 59 for *Fastbreak*). *Control* schools had 83% of students scoring at or above Level IIb, while overall, Title I schools reported 73% and *Fastbreak* schools had 65%. Overall, *Control* schools reported the highest achievement in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade mathematics.

**Table 12:**  
Third Grade Math Achievement  
for Title I Schools: 2002–03

	All Title I Schools	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1529	1488	1581
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1487	1458	1456
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1463	1460	1472
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1442	1442	1442
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1422	1429	1428
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	107	59	153
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	94%	91%	98%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	91%	88%	88%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	87%	88%	88%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	86%	86%	87%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	83%	85%	85%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	11%	6%	13%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	73%	65%	83%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	54%	46%	68%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	48%	42%	42%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	47%	46%	49%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	40%	40%	39%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	36%	36%	37%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	18%	10%	31%

**Table 13:  
Annual Third Grade Reading Achievement  
for Title I Schools: 2002-03**

	All Title I Schools	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002-03</b>	1508	1469	1538
<b>Average Score: 2001-02</b>	1487	1454	1457
<b>Average Score: 2000-01</b>	1453	1451	1464
<b>Average Score: 1999-00</b>	1422	1421	1425
<b>Average Score: 1998-99</b>	1393	1396	1393
<b>Gain from 1998-99 to 2002-03</b>	115	73	145
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002-03</b>	89%	84%	93%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001-02</b>	84%	80%	81%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000-01</b>	79%	80%	81%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999-00</b>	76%	77%	77%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998-99</b>	73%	74%	74%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998-99 to 2002-03</b>	16%	10%	19%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002-03</b>	75%	66%	80%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002-03</b>	57%	48%	64%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001-02</b>	49%	42%	42%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000-01</b>	42%	41%	44%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999-00</b>	37%	36%	37%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998-99</b>	33%	34%	33%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998-99 to 2002-03</b>	24%	14%	31%

Average 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores were highest for *Control* schools (1538) and lowest for *Fastbreak* schools (1469) (Table 13). Title I schools were in between, with an average reading score of 1508. *Control* schools also reported the highest gain in average score since the beginning of the program, the highest percentages at each proficiency level, and the greatest gains in proficiency since the program's beginning. *Control* schools were in fact the highest scoring group all across the board, while *Fastbreak* schools were the lowest. This may have been partially due to the difference in the demographic composition of the *Control* and *Fastbreak* schools.

**Table 14:  
Fifth Grade Math Achievement  
for Title I Schools: 2002-03**

	All Title I Schools	Fastbreak	Control
<b>Average Score: 2002-03</b>	1521	1473	1531
<b>Average Score: 2001-02</b>	1503	1464	1466
<b>Average Score: 2000-01</b>	1454	1455	1465
<b>Average Score: 1999-00</b>	1431	1430	1439
<b>Average Score: 1998-99</b>	1379	1375	1397
<b>Gain from 1998-99 to 2002-03</b>	142	98	134
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002-03</b>	93%	89%	96%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001-02</b>	90%	87%	87%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000-01</b>	84%	85%	86%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999-00</b>	81%	82%	84%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998-99</b>	75%	75%	80%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998-99 to 2002-03</b>	18%	14%	16%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002-03</b>	75%	64%	77%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002-03</b>	54%	43%	55%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001-02</b>	53%	45%	45%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000-01</b>	43%	43%	45%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999-00</b>	38%	37%	39%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998-99</b>	30%	29%	31%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998-99 to 2002-03</b>	24%	14%	24%

As illustrated in Table 14, 5<sup>th</sup> graders from *Control* schools scored higher on average than both Title I schools overall and *Fastbreak* schools in mathematics (1531 for *Control* schools, compared with 1521 for Title I schools, and 1473 for *Fastbreak*). *Control* schools also had the highest percentages of students at each proficiency level, although in some instances, the Title I schools had similar percentages. Overall, the *Control* schools had greater gains than the *Fastbreak* schools and often greater gains than the Title I schools overall. As previously stated, this may be the result of differences in demographic composition between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools (N=17).



**Table 15:  
Fifth Grade Reading Achievement  
for Title I Schools: 2002-03**

	All Title I Schools	Fastbreak	Control
Average Score: 2002-03	1557	1506	1553
Average Score: 2001-02	1553	1510	1518
Average Score: 2000-01	1501	1501	1520
Average Score: 1999-00	1451	1453	1465
Average Score: 1998-99	1413	1410	1432
Gain from 1998-99 to 2002-03	144	96	121
% at or above Level II: 2002-03	93%	88%	94%
% at or above Level II: 2001-02	90%	86%	87%
% at or above Level II: 2000-01	84%	85%	88%
% at or above Level II: 1999-00	80%	81%	83%
% at or above Level II: 1998-99	76%	76%	80%
Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998-99 to 2002-03	17%	12%	14%
% at or above Level IIb: 2002-03	80%	70%	81%
% at or above Level III: 2002-03	65%	54%	65%
% at or above Level III: 2001-02	64%	56%	58%
% at or above Level III: 2000-01	54%	54%	58%
% at or above Level III: 1999-00	44%	44%	46%
% at or above Level III: 1998-99	37%	36%	41%
Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998-99 to 2002-03	28%	18%	24%

Title I schools overall reported higher average 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores than either *Control* schools or *Fastbreak* schools in our study (Table 15). Title I schools also experienced the greatest gain in average score since the program's outset. *Control* schools had a greater percentage of students scoring at or above each proficiency level than *Fastbreak* schools. *Fastbreak* schools lagged behind Title I schools overall and *Control* schools in every comparison.

As illustrated in Table 16 (p. 41), 5<sup>th</sup> grade writing average scores were highest for Title I schools overall (1552), followed by *Control* schools (1530) and *Fastbreak* schools (1475). *Control* schools reported 89% of students scored at or above Level II while *Fastbreak* schools reported a slightly lower percentage (84%). Title I schools overall and *Control* schools also had similar percentages of scores at or above Level III (55% and 54%, respectively), while *Fastbreak* schools reported 47%. *Control* schools had 65% at or above Level IIb; *Fastbreak* schools had 58% at or above Level IIb.



**Table 16**  
**Fifth Grade Writing Achievement**  
**for Title I Schools: 2002–03**

	<b>All Title I Schools</b>	<b>Fastbreak</b>	<b>Control</b>
<b>Average Score: 2002–03</b>	1552	1475	1530
<b>Average Score: 2001–02</b>	1613	1559	1569
<b>Average Score: 2000–01</b>	1483	1475	1480
<b>Average Score: 1999–00</b>	1417	1411	1421
<b>Average Score: 1998–99</b>	1436	1431	1444
<b>Gain from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	116	44	86
<b>% at or above Level II: 2002–03</b>	89%	84%	89%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2001–02</b>	97%	95%	96%
<b>% at or above Level II: 2000–01</b>	95%	95%	95%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1999–00</b>	90%	89%	89%
<b>% at or above Level II: 1998–99</b>	92%	92%	93%
<b>Gain % at or above Level II: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	-3%	-8%	-4%
<b>% at or above Level IIb: 2002–03</b>	65%	58%	65%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2002–03</b>	55%	47%	54%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2001–02</b>	66%	59%	60%
<b>% at or above Level III: 2000–01</b>	49%	47%	47%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1999–00</b>	36%	35%	36%
<b>% at or above Level III: 1998–99</b>	39%	38%	39%
<b>Gain % at or above Level III: from 1998–99 to 2002–03</b>	16%	9%	15%

In general, *Fastbreak* schools experienced the lowest gains and the greatest losses. All groups experienced decreases in writing scores between 2001–02 and 2002–03, as well as decreases in percentages at or above Level II since the program’s beginning.

Results show that academic achievement has been steadily increasing in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade (with the exception of 5<sup>th</sup> grade writing) since the start of the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program in 1998. While this research does not claim a direct correlation between participation in the school breakfast program and increased achievement, overall achievement gains in the percentage of students scoring at or above Level II have been greater for schools involved in the Fast Break Program than for schools serving breakfast on a fee-based system (*Control* schools). However, *Control* schools report higher percentages overall of students at or above Level II and greater gains in the percentage of students scoring



at or above Level III. It is important to recognize that for the purposes of this study, achievement was measured only by the results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade *Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments* administered to students once a year. That is, if test achievement were measured against additional student outcomes and/or classroom assessments, the finding might prove different.



# Chapter 5: ATTENDANCE

Past research has demonstrated that attendance is crucial in laying the foundation for a student's academic success. In general, students who fail to attend classes on a regular basis are less likely to achieve such success (Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, and Christenson, 2003). Attendance has become even more of an issue since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which requires states to report on student attendance as part of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) process. The AYP attendance standard is 90% district-wide for elementary and middle school students.

As shown in Table 17, Minnesota's elementary schools generally have high attendance rates, thus leaving little room for substantial increases in most schools. Overall, the average attendance rate in Minnesota schools for grades 1–6 in 2002–03 was 96%.

The table shows the average attendance rates from 1999–2003 for schools overall, as well as the rates for schools designated as having either *Fastbreak* or *Control* status. As can be seen from the table, there was no change in the overall average attendance rate between 2001–02 and 2002–03. The rate for *Fastbreak* Schools was 95%, a 1% decrease from 2001–02, while the rate for *Control* schools remained at 96%.

The average attendance rate for students eligible for reduced-price lunch was 96%, showing no change between this year and last.

**Table 17:  
Attendance Rates for Grades 1–6: 2002–03**

	State	Fastbreak	Control
Total Attendance Rate: 2002–03	.96	.95	.96
Total Attendance Rate: 2001–02	.96	.96	.96
Total Attendance Rate: 2000–01	.96	.96	.96
Total Attendance Rate: 1999–00	.96	.95	.96
Total Attendance Rate: 1998–99	.95	.95	.94
Gain in attendance rate from 1999–2003	.01	.00	.02
“Reduced” attendance rate: 2002–03	.96	.96	.96
“Reduced” attendance rate: 2001–02	.96	.96	.96
“Reduced” attendance rate: 2000–01	.96	.96	.96
“Reduced” attendance rate: 1999–00	.96	.96	.96
“Reduced” attendance rate: 1998–99	.95	.96	.95
Gain in “reduced” attendance rate from 1999–03	.01	.00	.01
“Free” attendance rate: 2002–03	.94	.95	.94
“Free” attendance rate: 2001–02	.95	.95	.95
“Free” attendance rate: 2000–01	.95	.95	.95
“Free” attendance rate: 1999–00	.94	.94	.95
“Free” attendance rate: 1998–99	.94	.94	.93
Gain in “free” attendance rate from 1999–03	.00	.01	.01



The average attendance rate for students eligible for free lunch was 94%, a 1% decrease from the previous year. As shown in the table, there is only a minimal difference in average attendance rates between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools. Therefore, any differences that appear in student achievement between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools in our study cannot be readily be attributed to differences in attendance rates, as virtually none exist.





## Chapter 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fast Break to Learning Initiative, a universally free breakfast program, was implemented in Minnesota in 1999 by the Ventura administration and was the beginning of the state's experiment with the "universal free" concept. From 1999 to 2002, the program in Minnesota was administered as a grant program, and participating schools received two grant payments during the year to cover their estimated costs of participating in the program. These payments were in addition to any federal or state assistance they were already receiving. The state assistance was intended to reimburse schools for breakfasts served to students receiving reduced-price and full-price breakfast, since schools were already being reimbursed for those students eligible for free breakfast through federal funds. Starting in 2001–02, the program was changed from a grant program to a reimbursement program; schools were funded only for breakfasts that were served and reported.

Initially schools were categorized as either *Fastbreak* schools or *Control* schools, based on whether or not the school was participating in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program. *Fastbreak* schools were public elementary schools participating in the program by offering breakfast to all students at no charge. *Control* schools were public elementary schools that were eligible to participate in the program but for a variety of reasons were not participating. These schools still offered breakfast to students, but on a fee-based system. Throughout our research, our focus has been on schools that serve breakfast to students—either on a fee-based system or universally free.

As the program expanded, the number of schools not participating, but still serving breakfast to students, decreased significantly. This resulted in very few schools in the *Control* group and significantly increased the number of *Fastbreak* schools. Although there were schools in the state not participating in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program, the demographics of these schools were very different from those of the *Fastbreak* schools making it difficult to compare the two groups. For example, *Fastbreak* schools were primarily city schools or located in outstate Minnesota, while *Control* schools were likely to be located in the suburbs. Another difference was that there was a much higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals and higher minority populations at *Fastbreak* schools than in *Control* schools.





Therefore, beginning with the third year of the study, comparisons shifted to focus primarily on Title I schools. If their district is eligible,<sup>1</sup> Minnesota schools receive Title I funds if the percentage of students on free and reduced-price meals is equal to or above the district average. Within this group there were schools participating in the program by serving breakfast to all students at no charge (*Fastbreak* schools) and schools that were providing breakfast, but not with Fast Break funding (*Control* schools). This comparison guaranteed a *Control* group more similar to the *Fastbreak* group since all schools met the basic requirements for receiving federal Title I funds. This is the comparison that was analyzed in this year's report as well.

However, it is important to note that this year the number of *Control* schools with data available was even more limited making some analyses difficult. There were only 17 schools classified as *Control* schools for this year's research and the *Control* schools that provided data did so for the first time as *Control* schools—in the previous year, three were not in the program and 14 were classified as *Fastbreak* schools. In addition, the demographic composition of these schools differed somewhat from the *Fastbreak* schools (see Appendix D). Therefore, any comparison between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools should be analyzed cautiously.

There were five data sources used for this study: personal interviews with food service personnel, phone interviews with teachers, focus groups with parents, large scale data files, and nutritional monitoring data.

## Key Findings

### ***Program Administration***

For this year's report, we focused primarily on schools with high student participation in the School Breakfast Program. Program administration was determined by the results of surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The participants in this study were teachers, food service personnel, and parents from schools that were eligible and participating in the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program.

The first questions asked of food service personnel addressed the timing and location of school breakfast. Although the greatest percentage of schools still report that they serve breakfast before school rather than after the start of the day, the percentage has decreased significantly (44% in 2002–03 compared to 83% in 2001–02). Serving breakfast after the start of the school day has been promoted for a number of years by researcher Michael Murphy and associates as an effective way of increasing student participation (Murphy, Pagano, Nachmani, Sperling, Kane and Kleinman, 1998). In our data, schools where breakfast was served after the start of the school day consistently reported higher student participation even though the number of schools doing so was quite small prior to Year 4.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> School districts' eligibility is determined on the basis of census data.





When asked about the location of breakfast service, over half (53%) of respondents stated that breakfasts were being served in the cafeteria, while 16% of respondents reported that students ate in their classrooms. Thirty-one percent of food service personnel commented that students ate breakfasts in *both* locations. A far greater percentage of schools serving breakfast in the cafeteria provided their breakfast service before school, as opposed to schools where breakfast was served after the start of the school day. At schools where breakfast was served after the start of the school day, the location of breakfast was fairly evenly divided between classrooms, the cafeteria, and/or some combination of the two.

Food service personnel were asked about the changes they have made to accommodate the School Breakfast Program. Just over 60% of respondents commented that they have made substantive changes. These changes included: increasing the number of entrées offered, switching the dining venue, changing menu items to accommodate classroom eating, adjusting eating schedules to coexist with curricular activities, and implementing computerized student check-in systems. Over half of the respondents indicated that they had to modify their schedule or that of their staff in order to accommodate provision of breakfast to students. These changes have included increasing the number of hours worked as well as increasing the number of food service staff.

Research results from previous years have suggested that administrative support, especially teacher support, is one of the factors having the most influence on whether a program is successful. Food service personnel were asked about their level of communication about the program and the support of the program at their school. The vast majority of respondents said that they communicated with the school principal about the breakfast program. Over 85% reported that the school principal and teachers were very supportive of the Fast Break to Learning Breakfast Program. It makes sense that this level of support was reported at schools with a history of high participation since many students develop their perception of the program from the attitude of school personnel.

When teachers were interviewed regarding their involvement with school breakfast, the majority reported that they accompanied their students to the cafeteria or supervised them in their classrooms while they ate, but a small percentage actually ate breakfast with their students. However, teachers who ate breakfast with their students agreed that through the informal exchange that occurred while eating together, they were able to gather information about students' lives outside of school. This provided them with greater insight into circumstances that might affect their classroom behavior or academic performance.

When asked what they most liked about the program, teachers' responses focused on ways in which it affected the learning environment in their classroom. Eighty-three percent of respondents believed that students





who had participated in school breakfast were more attentive during class discussions and focused on learning curricular materials. For students who really needed breakfast because they were hungry and did not get breakfast at home, participating in the program was the primary catalyst for daily academic success. Other teachers noted that trips to see the school nurse due to hunger-related maladies such as headaches and stomach aches had decreased dramatically since their school provided universal free breakfasts to students.

During focus groups, parents were asked about the morning routine at their house and how well the Breakfast Program worked with it. The most common themes stemming from this question were that children often do not eat breakfast at home, either because they don't have time to eat, or because they are not hungry when they first wake up in the morning. However, according to parents, by the time school breakfast is served students are ready to eat. The availability of breakfast at school diminished their stress because they knew that their child would at least have the opportunity to eat at school.

### **Nutritional Content**

According to School Meals Initiative (SMI) reports, students generally selected school breakfast items that provided them with one-fourth or more of the daily RDA for most nutrients with the exception of total calories and fiber. It should be noted that while USDA standards for school lunch are adjusted for the age/grade level of the students, the current required nutrient standards for school breakfast apply to grades K–12, without any distinction between age/grade groups. This may help to explain why items selected by students provided averages below the standards in some categories: the standards may simply be a bit high for elementary school students. The two areas in which school breakfasts came in below standard were total calories and fiber. The mean value for total calories was 462, 83% of the total calorie standard (554 calories) and the mean value for total dietary fiber was 2 grams, only 33% of the total fiber standard (6 grams).

When looking at schools individually, several met most of the standards. All 67 *Fastbreak* schools surveyed met the standard for protein. Standards for vitamin A and vitamin C were met by 95% of schools. The vast majority of schools met the standard for calcium and iron. When schools served fortified ready-to-eat cereal two or more times per week, the standards for vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron were met. None of the schools included in the inventory met the standard for dietary fiber.

On average, school breakfasts were within the Dietary Guideline requirements for total fat and for saturated fat. On an individual basis, 89% of schools met the standard for total fat; 84% met the standard for saturated fat. These results are particularly interesting considering the repeated concern regarding the nutritional value of school breakfasts—





particularly fat content. According to these data, breakfasts served in schools in Minnesota did an acceptable job of meeting the federal nutritional standards.

In order to compare these meals to what students were eating for breakfast at home, parents were asked about their child's eating habits. According to parents, children eat a wide variety of foods at home, including cold foods such as bagels, cereal, fruit, granola bars, yogurt, juice, and muffins. Some parents also reported cooking eggs, pancakes, meat, noodle soup, and oatmeal for a hot meal in the morning. However, by far the most commonly reported breakfast foods that children eat at home were toaster foods such as strudel, pop tarts, scrambles and waffles.

Several parents indicated that their child appreciated the choices provided at school because of the alternatives available: if students do not like one, they are able to choose another. The offerings at school were very similar to what they would be offered at home, although the frequency of convenience toaster foods such as strudel, pop tarts, scrambles and waffles being served was greater at home than at school. Parents' comments suggest that the nutritional value of school breakfast was at least equivalent to what most children would eat at home and was, in many instances, healthier.

### **Participation**

Overall breakfast participation rates increased 25% since the program began in 1998–99 and 6% between 2001–02 and 2002–03. Participation rates for *Fastbreak* schools has been increasing at a greater pace than *Control* school participation rates prior to Year 4. For schools that maintained the same classification for four years, participation increased by 18% at *Fastbreak* schools, compared to less than 5% at *Control* schools between 1998–99 and 2002–03. In Year 4 there was a substantial increase in participation for *Control* schools in our study (34%). However, it is important to remember that 14 of the 17 *Control* schools were *Fastbreak* schools the previous year, with a history of high participation.

Part of the underlying rationale for providing universally free breakfast was that it might alleviate the stigma associated with free breakfast, thus allowing more students in need of breakfast (particularly those eligible for free lunch), to participate unencumbered. In 2002–03, participation rates for students eligible for free lunch increased only 1% from the previous year, but overall have increased 34% since the program began in 1998–99. For the past two years, participation rates for students eligible for free lunch have been greater than participation rates for students eligible for reduced-price lunch (65% compared to 51% in 2001–02, and 66% compared to 55% in 2002–03).

The timing of breakfast service at school can be a factor in whether or not a student participates. As results have shown all along, schools that





served breakfast after the start of the school day had higher participation rates than those that served breakfast before the start of the school day (88% as opposed to 77%). There was a significant increase in the percentage of schools that served breakfast after the start of the school day in 2002–03. This may have affected overall participation rates.

### **Achievement**

In this study, student achievement was measured using 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade test scores on the *Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA)* in reading, mathematics, and writing (for students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade only). This is the fourth year of the report; therefore, the differences between the 1998–99 school year (baseline) and the 2002–03 school year were the focus of the analyses.

Several analyses were conducted. First, in order to compare *Fastbreak* schools with *Control* schools, analyses were conducted for the group of schools classified as *Fastbreak* and *Control* for 2002–03 no matter what their previous classification. These analyses were compared to results statewide. Second, analyses were run for schools that have had the *Fastbreak* or *Control* classification since the program began in 1998–99. However, in 2002–03 there were no schools classified as *Control* schools that had been classified as such since the beginning of the program. Therefore, the schools that were classified as *Fastbreak* since 1998–99 were analyzed, but there were no comparisons made to *Control* schools in these analyses. Finally, in order to compare more like groups of students and schools, achievement data for Title I schools were analyzed.

Previously, the percentage of students scoring at or above Levels II and III were the only percentages reported; however, in accordance with No Child Left Behind proficiency requirements, Level IIb is now considered the state proficiency level and is therefore reported with the other achievement levels in this year's report. Furthermore, 14 of the 17 *Control* schools were in the Fast Break Program in Year 3 and it is important to mention that this could have affected the results for this group. Therefore, comparisons between *Fastbreak* schools and *Control* schools should be made cautiously.

Overall, achievement results continued to be higher at *Control* schools than at *Fastbreak* schools. However, there were some areas where students at *Fastbreak* schools made greater gains than students at *Control* schools. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade mathematics, there was a greater gain in the percentage of students scoring at Levels II and III in *Fastbreak* schools. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading, there was a greater percentage gain for *Fastbreak* students in the percentage of students scoring at or above Level II. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics, reading and writing *Fastbreak* schools reported a greater gain in average scores since the program began. After controlling for student demographics, these differences were not statistically significant.





This suggests that *Fastbreak* schools made greater gains in these areas than *Control* schools generally, but these greater gains may result from demographic differences between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools rather than the *Fastbreak* program itself.

### **Attendance**

Minnesota's elementary schools generally have high attendance rates, thus leaving little room for substantial increases in most schools. Overall, the average attendance rate in Minnesota schools for grades 1–6 in 2002–03 was 96%. There was virtually no change in the overall average attendance rate between 2001–02 and 2002–03. The rate for *Fastbreak* Schools was 95%, a 1% decrease from 2001–02, while the rate for *Control* schools remained at 96%.

The average attendance rate for students eligible for reduced-price lunch was 96%, showing no change between this year and last. The average attendance rate for students eligible for free lunch was 94%, a 1% decrease from the previous year. Based on these results, any differences in student achievement between *Fastbreak* and *Control* schools cannot be attributed to differences in attendance rates as none exist. However, it is worth noting that Minnesota recently adopted an attendance rate standard of 90% for elementary and middle schools and, on average, schools are meeting that goal.

### **Recommendations**

Although there was overall satisfaction with the program, respondents provided some suggestions for program improvements. For example, at schools where breakfast was served in the classrooms, food service personnel commented that they would like to enlist total engagement and better knowledge of the program from the teachers. Their argument was that if teachers were supervising students during breakfast, they needed to know what constituted a healthy and reimbursable meal if the program was to be successful.

Teachers, on the other hand, once again expressed the need to provide students with healthier food choices. They commented on the lack of nutritional value of some of the food items (like sugar cereals and chocolate milk) as well as voicing concern that some of the foods served, such as crackers or popsicles, weren't breakfast foods. Although foods with higher sugar content may adhere to federally mandated nutrition guidelines, teachers in schools where such foods were served argued that eating these foods for breakfast created nervous energy in some of their students. Many teachers believe that this type of energy was detrimental to creating a productive learning environment.

A very small number of teachers also expressed concern over the loss of instructional time. They commented that they were stressed by demands





from principals and parents to provide students with the knowledge needed to pass annual tests, and serving breakfast at school just added one more thing to their plate.

A few parents provided some suggestions for improving the School Breakfast Program. Several parents offered ideas for better food choices, including the frequent request for schools to provide more fresh fruit, hot cereal or other hot foods. Other suggestions mentioned regarding breakfast menus included decreasing sugar content; increasing protein; increasing the variety of food choices; including cold cereal every day; having 2% milk available; including more whole grains; and serving organic foods. However, these suggestions were mentioned by very few parents, as the majority of parents were not at all concerned with the nutritional value of the meals served.

### **Conclusions**

The primary concern of policymakers seems to be whether or not school breakfast programs increase student achievement. There seem to be a number of steps to the process of linking school breakfast programs to increased achievement, which makes measuring the direct impact of school breakfast on academic achievement difficult. After a program is in place, the first thing that must happen is an increase in student participation. In order to see a programmatic effect, there must be participation in the program. The Ventura administration believed that participation could be improved by making the program universally free and therefore accessible to all. Our research shows that there has in fact been a steady increase in participation rates across the board since the Fast Break to Learning Initiative began in 1998–99 as a universal free program.

Increased participation and improved achievement may be correlated with improved nutritional status, increased attendance, decreased health and disciplinary concerns, and improved classroom behavior. The nutritional value of school breakfast was examined in comparison with the SMI report. The results showed that Minnesota schools have done a commendable job offering breakfasts that meet federal nutritional standards. Attendance rates overall have remained virtually unchanged since the program began. However, the rates were at 95% when the program began which did not allow for much growth.

In the previous year's report, health and disciplinary issues were evaluated based on reports from the school nurse and the principal's office. The number of incidents were recorded before and after the implementation of the program. Overall, neither a decline in disciplinary or health incidents were statistically shown to result from the school breakfast program. During interviews, however, teachers reported that their students who ate breakfast made fewer trips to the nurse's office,





and principals believed that fewer disciplinary visits were made to their office.

Teacher and principal testimonies have also shown that they believe that school breakfast has had a positive affect on students' classroom behavior. Teachers reported that students were more attentive and ready to learn after eating breakfast. Teachers and principals alike believed that classroom achievement had improved since the start of the school breakfast program. However, based on analyses of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade *Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)* data, we were unable to substantiate those claims. While academic achievement has continued to improve, we cannot confirm that the increases were any greater in schools serving breakfast free of charge than at schools serving breakfast on a fee-based system once student demographic differences are taken into account.

We suggest expanding the research to grades higher than the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, because in these higher grades there is more room for the improvement of attendance and outcomes associated with attendance. Attendance rates are lower in intermediate and high school grades, so there is a greater possibility that providing breakfast will improve attendance or additional related outcomes (such as graduation rate and achievement scores).







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# APPENDICES







# Appendix A: BEST PRACTICE SURVEY

Sponsor Name and ID: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee's job title: \_\_\_\_\_

## School Breakfast Program Best Practices Survey

### 1. When does your school serve breakfast to students?

- 1  before school starts
- 2  after the start of the school day (as part of the school day)
- 3  both (*please describe*) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>35</sup>

### 2. Do you think when breakfast is served is important to the success of the Breakfast Program at your school? Why?

### 3. Where do students eat breakfast at your school?

- 1  in the lunchroom/cafeteria
- 2  in the classroom
- 3  both (*please describe*) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>36</sup>
- 4  other (*please describe*) \_\_\_\_\_

#### If in the lunchroom/cafeteria: (or both)

### 4. If served in the lunchroom, do students go to breakfast individually or as a class?

### 5. If served in the lunchroom, who usually supervises students during the breakfast period at your school? (*please check all that apply*)

- 1  teacher(s)
- 2  aide
- 3  administrator
- 4  food service personnel
- 5  other (*please specify*) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>37</sup>





6. If served in the lunchroom, do teachers eat breakfast with their students?

**If in the classroom: (or both)**

7. If students eat breakfast in the classroom, how do they get their breakfast?

- 1  breakfast delivered to the classroom
- 2  students go to the cafeteria and bring it back to the room

8. If students eat breakfast in the classroom, who cleans up?

- 1  food service staff
- 2  teachers
- 3  students
- 4  additional staff

**ALL INTERVIEWEES**

9. Do you think where students eat breakfast is important to the success of the Breakfast Program at your school? Why?

10. Have adjustments been made in the program since your school started serving breakfasts? What changes? How is it working?

11. Does your kitchen work adequately for serving students breakfast in the morning?  
(facility and equipment)





12. Did you have to adjust your schedule or the schedules of your staff to accommodate breakfast?

13. Do you meet with the district food service director to discuss and plan the Breakfast Program? If so, how often?

14. Do you have a chance to provide input on menu choices?

15. Do you ever meet with the principal to discuss the Breakfast Program? Do you think that s/he supports the program? How do you know?

16. What is done to encourage students to participate in the Breakfast Program?

*(please check all that apply)*

- 1  include information in the classroom newsletter
- 2  include discussions about the breakfast program in health/nutrition lessons
- 3  posters are hung up around school
- 4  menus are sent home with students
- 5  contests and games during breakfast
- 6  teachers eat breakfast with students
- 7  other *(please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_
- 8  nothing is done to encourage students 81





**17. In addition, do you do anything personally to promote the Breakfast Program?  
If so, what?**

**18. What do you think the attitude of the teachers in your school is about the Breakfast Program?**

**19. Would you be interested in attending a sharing/training workshop about the Breakfast Program in the Fall?**

1  yes

2  no

**20. Would you be interested in presenting/sharing information on your school's Breakfast Program?**

1  yes

2  no

**21. What additional information/training do you think you and your staff need to better implement the Breakfast Program in your school?**

**22. Any additional comments or concerns regarding the School Breakfast Program:**

**Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions!  
Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!**

58

64





# Appendix B: TEACHER TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Approximately what percentage of your students participate in the program?
2. Do you participate with your students (go to the lunchroom or cafeteria with them)?
3. In what way were teachers involved in the implementation and administration of the program?
4. What, if anything, do you do to encourage students to participate in the program?
5. What would you consider to be the leading factor in determining whether or not a student participates in the School Breakfast Program?
6. What are your feelings about the School Breakfast Program?
7. What do you like most about the program?
8. If you could change one thing about the breakfast program what would you change?







# Appendix C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

## I. Introduction:

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with us about the School Breakfast Program. If you have more than one child, please think of the child in elementary school closest to 5<sup>th</sup> grade and answer the questions with that child in mind.

1. How did you find out about the universal free school breakfast program at your child's school?
2. What do you think about the Fast Break to Learning School Breakfast Program?
3. What is the morning routine at your house? (waking up, eating, getting to school)
4. How often does your child eat breakfast at home before going to school? What does s/he eat?
5. How often does your child eat breakfast at school? What does s/he eat?
6. If your child doesn't eat breakfast at school—why not? (Probes: Is access to the program an issue? Is the nutritional value of the meal offered an issue?)
7. What have you heard about the program? (positive and negative)
8. If you could change one thing about the program what would it be?
9. Is there anything else about the Fast Break to Learning Program that you would like to comment on?





# Appendix D: DEMOGRAPHICS TABLES

Table D.1  
Demographics for Third Grade: 2002–03

		Fastbreak		Control	
		Percentage of Schools	Percentage of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders	Percentage of Schools	Percentage of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders
<b>TOTAL</b>		N=256	N=16509	N=17	N=5940
<b>Strata</b>	<b>Mpls/St. Paul</b>	38%	36%	0%	2%
	<b>TC Suburbs</b>	10%	14%	24%	29%
	<b>Outstate &gt; 2000</b>	18%	20%	29%	28%
	<b>Outstate &lt; 2000</b>	32%	31%	47%	41%
<b>LEP</b>	<b>0%</b>	33%	24%	53%	38%
	<b>1-9%</b>	18%	25%	20%	26%
	<b>10-100%</b>	49%	51%	27%	36%
<b>Special Ed</b>	<b>0-9%</b>	28%	26%	13%	23%
	<b>10-19%</b>	55%	72%	80%	74%
	<b>20-100%</b>	17%	2%	7%	3%
<b>F/R Lunch</b>	<b>0-19%</b>	0%	1%	0%	0%
	<b>20-29%</b>	5%	4%	7%	17%
	<b>30-49%</b>	41%	51%	60%	70%
	<b>50-100%</b>	54%	45%	33%	13%



**Table D.2**  
**Demographics for Fifth Grade: 2002–03**

		Fastbreak		Control	
		Percentage of Schools	Percentage of 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders	Percentage of Schools	Percentage of 5 <sup>th</sup> Graders
<b>TOTAL</b>		N=257	N=16230	N=17	N=6739
<b>Strata</b>	<b>Mpls/St. Paul</b>	38%	39%	0%	2%
	<b>TC Suburbs</b>	11%	14%	24%	23%
	<b>Outstate &gt; 2000</b>	18%	19%	29%	32%
	<b>Outstate &lt; 2000</b>	32%	29%	47%	43%
<b>LEP</b>	<b>0%</b>	33%	25%	53%	33%
	<b>1-9%</b>	19%	22%	20%	34%
	<b>10-100%</b>	48%	53%	27%	33%
<b>Special Ed</b>	<b>0-9%</b>	20%	25%	20%	16%
	<b>10-19%</b>	57%	74%	47%	76%
	<b>20-100%</b>	23%	2%	33%	8%
<b>F/R Lunch</b>	<b>0-19%</b>	0%	1%	0%	0%
	<b>20-29%</b>	5%	4%	0%	18%
	<b>30-49%</b>	37%	51%	73%	68%
	<b>50-100%</b>	58%	45%	27%	13%

