

School Breakfast Program

Hunger threatens not only people's lives but also their dignity. A serious and protracted lack of food breaks down the organism, generating apathy, a loss of a social sense, and indifference or even cruelty towards those who are weaker — particularly children and the elderly. (*Pontifical Council "Cor Unum", World Hunger A Challenge for All: Development in Solidarity*)

Church teaching

- ★ Improving child health and nutrition is a priority. The international community should work for optimal growth and development in childhood, with measures to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and famine, and thus to spare millions of children from unnecessary sufferings in a world that has the means to feed and care for all its citizens. (*Intervention by the Holy See at the Third Committee of the 58th General Assembly of the United Nations On the Promotion and Protection of the Right of Children*)
- ★ And how can we fail to consider the violence against life done to millions of human beings, especially children who are forced into poverty, malnutrition and hunger because of an unjust distribution of resources between peoples and between social classes. (*Pope John Paul II, The Gospel of Life*)
- ★ Because no one should face hunger in a land of plenty, Food Stamps, the Special Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and other nutrition programs need to be strong and effective. (*USCCB, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*)
- ★ Unfortunately, there are many children who suffer: the physical sufferings of hunger, want, disease or illness; moral sufferings resulting from mistreatment by their parents, from their discord, from the exploitation to which the cynical selfishness of adults sometimes subjects them. How can our hearts not be moved by certain situations of unspeakable pain involving defenseless creatures guilty of nothing other than being alive? How can we not protest on their behalf, lending our voices to those who cannot make their own interests known? (*Pope John Paul II, Children Are A Special Gift to the Church*)

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Resources

- ★ **Square Meals: Nourishing Children's Bodies and Minds** Texas Department of Agriculture (www.SquareMeals.org)
- ★ **PovertyUSA** (USCCB) (www.PovertyUSA.org)
- ★ **Catholic Campaign for Human Development** (USCCB) (www.PovertyUSA.org)
- ★ **Catholic Charities USA** (www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org)
- ★ **School Breakfast Program** US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services (www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/)

School Breakfast Program

The Texas Catholic Conference supports increasing the number of students who receive breakfast through a school breakfast program by including state subsidies for the USDA universal free school breakfast programs, in keeping with every student's innate human dignity and to maximize their ability to learn in school and maintain good health.

Overview

Studies have proven that students who eat breakfast benefit nutritionally and educationally. Eating school breakfast results in increased math and reading scores. There were fewer visits to the nurse. Teachers reported improved classroom behavior, improved attentiveness. Parents reported improved performance. The majority of students who start their day with breakfast say they feel good, are happy, and more alert throughout their school day. The majority of students who do not eat breakfast say they feel bad, are angry, sick and bored throughout the school day.ⁱ

The School Breakfast Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in more than 78,000 schools and institutions across the nation. It began as a pilot project in 1966 and was made permanent in 1975. The School Breakfast Program operates in the same manner as the National School Lunch Program.

Nutritional Requirements School breakfasts must provide one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories. School breakfasts must meet federal nutrition requirements, but decisions about the specific foods to serve and their preparation are made locally.ⁱⁱ

Additional USDA Support Schools participating in the School Breakfast Program may qualify for higher severe need reimbursements if a specified percentage of their lunches are served free or at a reduced price. About 65 percent of the breakfasts served in the School Breakfast Program receive severe need payments.ⁱⁱ

Texas School Breakfast Requirementⁱⁱ

Texas state law requires districts to participate in the School Breakfast Program if at least ten percent of their students are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture provides funds to the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to administer the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs in public schools. During 2007 State Fiscal Year (September 2006 - August 2007), Texas schools:

- Served more than 478 million lunches and 213 million breakfasts.
- Received over \$1.1 billion in federal funding for these meals.
- Almost 1,200 Texas school districts with 7,324 schools were eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- More than 7,300 Texas schools were eligible to participate in the School Breakfast Program.
- Approximately 4.5 million Texas schoolchildren have access to nutritious, balanced meals under these programs.

ⁱ "School Breakfast Program." Food and Nutrition Service. <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/default.htm>>.

ⁱⁱ "School Breakfast Program." Texas Department of Agriculture. <<http://www.squaremeals.org>>.