

2011 State Legislative Agenda

## Putting Breakfast First (AB 839: Brownley)

Contact: Tia Shimada at [tia@cfpa.net](mailto:tia@cfpa.net) or 510-433-1122 x109

### ►► ISSUE

School breakfast consumption is associated with better nutrition, better health, and improved academic achievement. Children who eat breakfast have healthier diets, perform better in school, and are less likely to be overweight or obese. Today, millions of low-income kids in California attend schools that do not offer the federally-funded School Breakfast Program (SBP) or that operate the program but do not serve many students in need. Schools can improve student health, bolster academic achievement, and capitalize on available federal funds by putting breakfast first.

### ►► NEED

All schools are allowed to operate SBP, but none are required to do so. Currently, nearly 750 public schools in California, which enroll over 54,000 low-income students, do not offer SBP. While 91 percent of California's public schools do operate SBP, over 2.3 million (70 percent) of California's low-income students in public schools do not participate in the program. There are several strategies, such as serving breakfast after the first bell or from multiple locations on campus, which are known to increase SBP participation and support school district budgets.

We know that students are missing out on the benefits of school breakfast. We also know that there are proven strategies to improve school breakfast participation. We need to find out why schools are not operating SBP and whether school districts have considered the array of strategies that can increase SBP participation. This information is necessary to shape future policies that will better support California's students through improved school breakfast programs.

### ►► REQUEST

CFPA requests that the legislature put students and breakfast first by requiring any school district electing to apply for state and federal categorical funds through the Consolidated Application to, in the process of approving that application:

SBP Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publicly assess and discuss the need and opportunities associated with operating SBP at schools where the program is not offered; and</li> <li>▪ Resolve to implement SBP or resolve not to implement the program.</li> </ul>
SBP Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publicly assess and discuss the need and opportunities associated with program changes aimed at increasing SBP participation at schools with very low participation; and</li> <li>▪ Resolve to implement new SBP strategies or resolve not to implement program changes.</li> </ul>

### ►► HISTORY

Several bills have been introduced in past years to mandate the operation of SBP at all, or specific subsets of, California's public schools. None of these mandates have been signed into law.

In 2006, AB 569 required the California Department of Education to identify the number of severe need schools not offering breakfast. The school breakfast bill most similar to this current proposal was AB 2395 (Goldberg), which would have required schools boards to hold a public hearing to discuss the nutrition, academic, and fiscal implications of SBP operation or lack thereof. AB 2395 was passed by the State Legislature but ultimately vetoed by the Governor in 2002.

### ►► OUTCOMES

By drawing attention to school breakfast and generating discussions about SBP within school districts, this proposal will help increase SBP access and participation. Increasing participation in school breakfast means that more of California's students will be well-nourished and ready to learn each school day; fewer children will struggle with obesity and overweight; and school districts will draw down as much as \$350 million in additional federal funds.