

Children Participating in School Breakfast

DEFINITION

Children participating in school breakfast is the percentage of low-income children who participate in the School Breakfast Program. Children are counted as low-income if they are eligible for and enrolled in the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program.

SIGNIFICANCE

The School Breakfast Program helps ensure that the nation's most vulnerable children start their day off with a healthy meal. During the 2016-2017 school year, 12.2 million low-income children in the U.S. participating in the School Breakfast Program ate breakfast at school each day, continuing a pattern of steady year-over-year growth in student participation over the past decade.¹ The School Breakfast Program offers nutritious meals, which together with school lunches, make up a large proportion of the daily dietary intake of participating children.² The School Breakfast Program helps schools support academic success and improved attendance, behavior and health, including reduced obesity rates.³

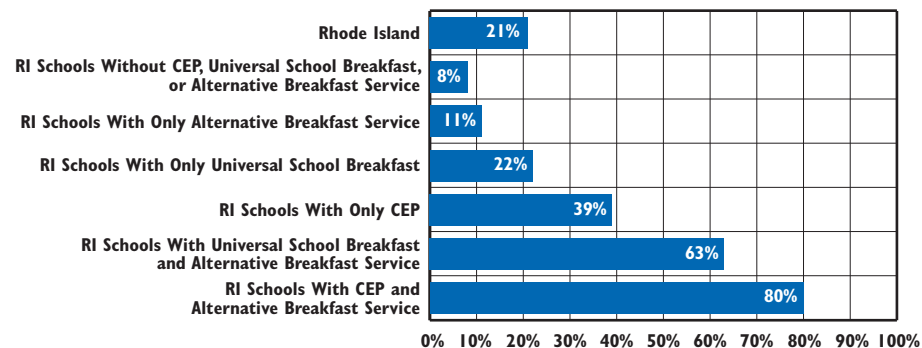
Food-insecure families often do not have sufficient food to provide nutritious breakfasts every morning, and children in these families are at risk of falling behind their peers physically, cognitively, academically, emotionally, and socially. Children who are

undernourished are more likely to have poorer cognitive functioning when they miss breakfast. They are more likely to have behavior, emotional, and academic problems, more likely to repeat a grade, and more likely to be suspended.^{4,5} Nationally, kindergarteners in households experiencing food insecurity are more likely to be chronically absent than their peers in food-secure households.⁶

Rhode Island law requires that all public schools make breakfasts and lunches available to all students, including students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on their income (less than 130% of the federal poverty level for free meals and between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty level for reduced-price meals).^{7,8}

During the 2016-2017 school year in Rhode Island, 53 low-income students participated in the School Breakfast Program for every 100 low-income students who participated in the School Lunch Program. Rhode Island ranks 31st in the U.S. for participation in the School Breakfast Program, up from 33rd last year. If Rhode Island increased low-income student participation in the School Breakfast Program to 70% of School Lunch Program participation, the state would receive \$2.6 million in additional federal funds to support the School Breakfast Program.⁹

Children Participating in the School Breakfast Program, Rhode Island, October 2017



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Office of Statewide Efficiencies, October 2017.

- ◆ **The federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows schools and districts with 40% or more students identified as low-income (e.g., enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or at-risk (i.e., homeless or in foster care) to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students and offers higher reimbursements.¹⁰ During the 2017-2018 school year, Central Falls School District, all elementary schools in Providence Public School District, Highlander Charter School, and the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center were using CEP.¹¹**
- ◆ **Universal School Breakfast Programs, which provide free breakfast to all children regardless of income, increase school breakfast participation by removing the stigma often associated with school breakfast and can reduce the administrative burden for schools.^{12,13} During the 2017-2018 school year, all schools in Cranston and Woonsocket, selected schools in five other districts, eleven charter schools, and the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program offered universal school breakfast.¹⁴**
- ◆ **Making breakfast part of the school day is another proven strategy for increasing breakfast participation, reducing stigma, and increasing convenience. In fact some states are adopting legislation requiring schools to offer “breakfast after the bell.”^{15,16} During the 2017-2018 school year, several Rhode Island school districts offered alternative breakfast service, including breakfast in the classroom, “grab and go” breakfasts, bagged breakfasts, or breakfast on a cart in all or some of their schools.¹⁷**

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Table 14.

Children Participating in School Breakfast, Rhode Island, October 2017

SCHOOL DISTRICT	OCTOBER 2017 ENROLLMENT	ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN BREAKFAST	% OF ALL CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN BREAKFAST	# OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS	ESTIMATED LOW-INCOME AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN BREAKFAST	% OF ALL LOW-INCOME CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL BREAKFAST
Barrington	3,378	57	2%	186	18	10%
Bristol Warren	3,356	335	10%	1,135	217	19%
Burrillville	2,392	115	5%	791	82	10%
Central Falls	2,728	1,428	52%	NA	NA	NA
Charlho	3,377	180	5%	703	118	17%
Coventry	4,967	407	8%	1,487	314	21%
Cranston	11,340	2,707	24%	4,554	1,643	36%
Cumberland	4,689	438	9%	1,116	301	27%
East Greenwich	2,541	45	2%	156	27	17%
East Providence	6,061	1,124	19%	3,124	821	26%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,660	90	5%	265	51	19%
Foster	264	43	16%	59	38	64%
Foster-Glocester	1,323	88	7%	258	50	20%
Glocester	551	48	9%	83	26	32%
Jamestown	499	19	4%	54	9	17%
Johnston	3,645	331	9%	1,587	272	17%
Lincoln	3,265	120	4%	888	123	14%
Little Compton	330	*	<1%	52	*	2%
Middletown	2,198	149	7%	679	114	17%
Narragansett	1,322	63	5%	306	37	12%
New Shoreham	124	17	14%	22	10	46%
Newport	2,513	539	21%	1,427	415	29%
North Kingstown	4,156	280	7%	898	209	23%
North Providence	3,929	692	18%	1,703	411	24%
North Smithfield	1,727	77	4%	361	43	12%
Pawtucket	9,766	2,197	22%	6,716	1,659	25%
Portsmouth	2,498	92	4%	423	58	14%
Providence	26,570	12,339	46%	NA	NA	NA
Scituate	1,290	22	2%	224	14	6%
Smithfield	2,674	113	4%	416	59	14%
South Kingstown	3,237	198	6%	637	162	25%
Tiverton	1,958	105	5%	548	79	14%
Warwick	9,464	722	8%	3,391	561	17%
West Warwick	3,991	560	14%	1,991	453	23%
Westerly	2,781	339	12%	1,061	270	25%
Woonsocket	6,496	2,196	34%	4,641	1,770	38%
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>8,164</i>	<i>3,038</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	<i>1,818</i>	<i>461</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>UCAP</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>56%</i>
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>45,560</i>	<i>18,160</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>97,500</i>	<i>10,117</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>30,585</i>	<i>7,007</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>153,247</i>	<i>31,878</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, October 2017.

NA indicates that data on low-income students and their participation in school breakfast was not available because some or all schools in this district were using the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and therefore not collecting data on the incomes of students' families.

*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and in the four core cities, remainder of the state, and state totals.

Charter schools include: Achievement First Rhode Island, Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep, The Compass School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, The Greene School, Highlander Charter School, Hope Academy, International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community, RI Nurses Institute Middle College Charter School, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy, Segue Institute for Learning, Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy, South Side Elementary Charter School, Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, and The Village Green Virtual Charter School. State-operated schools include William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School, the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, and Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center. UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

The October 2017 enrollment and number of low-income students are for the full month of October and are not comparable with the October 1, 2017 enrollment numbers reported elsewhere in the Factbook.

"Estimated Average Daily Participation in Breakfast" is the average number of students who ate breakfast in school per school day during October 2017. "Estimated Low-Income Average Daily Participation in Breakfast" is the average number of students eligible for and enrolled in free or reduced-price meals that ate breakfast in school per school day during October 2017.

(Sources and References are continued on page 177)