

By law, school districts must provide a set amount of “instructional time” for students. Instructional time is defined as classroom learning time plus explicitly permitted “non-instructional instructional time” activities, such as taking roll, noting which students are participating in school meals, certain other administrative activities and passing periods. Teachers in schools with successful classroom breakfast programs generally perform these administrative activities or start the day’s lesson as students are eating their breakfast—usually a period of no more than 10 to 15 minutes total.

### Issues to Consider

- Do students start and stay in the same classroom every morning?  
Classroom breakfast is an especially good match for elementary schools because students consistently go and stay in the same classroom each day. This format allows classroom breakfast to coincide with each morning’s administrative activities as well as the first lessons. In addition, more and more high schools have developed strategies for implementing classroom breakfast. Contact CFPA to learn more.
- Do you have teacher, parent and administrator support?  
As the saying goes, where there’s a will, there’s a way. With support from key partners, classroom breakfast is working in schools throughout the state and nation. Teachers contribute by developing creative approaches to the first 10 minutes of the day; parents offer support to schools for combining eating with classroom activities and encourage their children to participate and school administrators ensure that nutrition and academic goals are being met, while state requirements are fulfilled.

### Myths & Facts

Myth: Classroom breakfast will not be counted as “instructional time” by the auditor.

Fact: While administrative activities “count” as instructional time and can therefore be paired with classroom breakfast, some districts that use classroom breakfast make sure that their teachers are providing instruction during the 10 minutes that students are eating classroom breakfast. The instruction can focus on the regular curriculum or a themed nutrition education lesson. For example, Food Service Directors and Nutrition Network representatives can help teachers develop lessons about the day’s menu—the importance of eating fruits and vegetables, how to count calories or a geography lesson showing where each component of the meal was grown.

Myth: Teachers have to work “off contract” in order to make classroom breakfast work.

Fact: Teachers are paid on the basis of instructional days and minutes. If instruction is provided during classroom breakfast, this time can count as allowable teaching time. In some districts, teacher contracts include rotating supervisory responsibilities at breakfast or lunch in the cafeteria. It may be possible to connect this practice to classroom breakfast.

Myth: Classroom breakfast takes up too much time in this API-focused era.

Fact: Classroom breakfast takes up little time. In the 10 to 15 minutes children need to eat, teachers can take roll, make announcements, collect homework, check in with students, read aloud or begin the morning lesson. In fact, teachers using classroom breakfast frequently assert that their students’ productivity increases dramatically throughout the day, since time isn’t lost to behavior problems caused by hunger or tummy aches. Hungry children cannot learn; well-fed children have the energy to make the most of each day.