

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

August 21, 2017

Dr. Bill Harrison  
Alamance-Burlington Schools  
1712 Vaughn Road  
Burlington, NC 27217-2916

Dear Superintendent Harrison:

No child should come to school hungry in our state, yet many do. As Governor and First Lady, we want students across North Carolina to begin their day with the fuel they need to learn and grow. That is why we are writing to urge you to consider how your district delivers school breakfast and if there are ways to include more students.

Nourishing children's minds and bodies is critical to helping children succeed in school. Research shows that eating a healthy school breakfast and lunch improves student attendance, discipline, and academic performance.

A North Carolina team of state and local government and nonprofit representatives recently participated in a National Governors Association Learning Lab on Strategies to Reduce Childhood Hunger to learn what other states are doing to increase participation in the free-or-reduced-price breakfast program. Currently in North Carolina, only 58% of students who receive free-or-reduced-price lunch are also eating school breakfast. The North Carolina team is developing an action plan with strategies to improve not only the breakfast participation rate, but also overall participation in federally-funded programs to address childhood hunger.

Most North Carolina school systems already have breakfast programs, and some are free to all students. Unfortunately, even in school systems with breakfast programs in place, barriers may keep students from eating school breakfast. Timing, location, transportation challenges, and the stigma that can be associated with free school meals, especially in middle and higher grades, can keep children from eating school breakfast.

There are many ways to encourage more students to participate in school breakfast programs. Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab-and-Go Breakfast, and other methods of delivery can increase participation. We encourage you to plan now to serve breakfast to more of your students in the coming school year using these approaches or others.

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Here are some resources that may help you reach more students with your school breakfast program:

- The **Department of Public Instruction** provides extensive information about school breakfast programs at [childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/programs/sbp](http://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/programs/sbp).
- The **NC School Breakfast Challenge** is an annual competition organized by No Kid Hungry NC that recognizes the three elementary, middle, and high schools from around the state that have the largest annual increase in school breakfast participation among students who qualify for free-or-reduced price lunch. The Challenge also recognizes school districts that have at least 70% of free-or-reduced price lunch students also participating in the school breakfast program. In addition to organizing the Challenge, **No Kid Hungry NC** also offers guidance to help schools and districts implement robust school breakfast programs. For more information, contact Outreach Educator Helen Roberts at [helen\\_roberts@unc.edu](mailto:helen_roberts@unc.edu).
- **Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom** offers grants to schools that want to implement innovative school breakfast options in order to increase school breakfast participation. Schools where at least 70% of students qualify for free-or-reduced price lunch and where the average school breakfast participation rate is less than 50% are eligible to receive grants. For more information, visit [www.breakfastnc.org](http://www.breakfastnc.org).

All North Carolina students deserve opportunities to grow, learn, and reach their full potential, and starting the school day with a healthy breakfast is important to making that happen. By using school breakfast options to help address food insecurity, together we can improve the well-being and academic achievement of children across our state. We appreciate your attention to this important issue and your efforts to support students and schools.

Very truly yours,



Governor Roy Cooper



First Lady Kristin Cooper