

SCHOOL BREAKFAST TALKING POINTS

- ▶ Good nutrition that let's school children learn has been a strong bipartisan priority in the United States for over fifty years. Since 1966 the federally funded School Breakfast Program (SBP) has been a strong component of the national school nutrition commitment.
- ▶ There are many reasons why a child needs a school breakfast. Poverty is one of them, but so too are parents' work schedules, long distances to school and morning bus schedules.
- ▶ SBP is a simple, flexible meal that can be served hot or cold, before or during the school day, in the cafeteria, in the classroom or on the bus. USDA nutrition standards ensure that, however the breakfast is served, every child has the right food to be ready to learn.
- ▶ Decades of academic and government studies confirm the benefits of school breakfast. Student attention, academic performance and test scores go up. Disciplinary problems, listlessness and inattention, sickness and absences go down -- a hungry child cannot learn.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA

- ▶ In the early 90s, only about 50% of schools in California offered school breakfast. Today, about 75% of California's 9,940 schools that serve lunch also serve breakfast. As access has increased so has participation among low-income students, by about 5%.
- ▶ As compared to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), California's impressive rank of 30th out of the 50 states in low-income student breakfast participation and 32nd out of the 50 states in schools serving breakfast is attributable to two key factors:
 - Start up and expansion grants. An innovative pool of state funds -- currently set at \$1,000,000 per year -- available to any school that wants to start or expand a breakfast program, has 20 percent or more low-income students, and agrees to operate SBP for at least three years. These state funds provide critical help up to \$15,000 per site to tightly budgeted school districts, allowing them to do important planning and outreach and to purchase necessary equipment.
 - State funding -- currently set at .1317 cents per breakfast and amounting to \$20 million per year -- for every USDA approved school breakfast served to a free or reduced-price child.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST CAMPAIGN 2003

Despite California's exemplary progress, much remains to be won. A recent Food Research and Action Center report showed that California's participation falls below the national average of 43%.

BALANCE: California's School Breakfast Campaign Serve Breakfast whenever and wherever possible.

* California's Child Nutrition Task Force, convened by First Lady Sharon Davis is convinced that "Breakfast Assures Learning and Nutrition for Child Everyday" (BALANCE). This Task Force is focused on promoting innovative breakfast strategies that increase participation in the SBP. Some schools choose to feed students on the school bus, 'after the bell' in the classroom, in the gym, grab 'n' go meals, or 'second chance meals during mid-morning breaks--ensuring that all students are afforded a nutritious breakfast so that they can be productive learners for the rest of the school day.