

BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two-Thirds of California Voters Support Breakfast Initiative to Improve Academic Achievement

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., April 9, 2015 ... Convinced that breakfast plays a critical role in driving academic achievement, two-thirds of California voters support legislation requiring schools to integrate breakfast into the school day, according to a newly released statewide poll conducted by The Field Poll on behalf of California Food Policy Advocates. Support was strong among all voters, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender or geography.

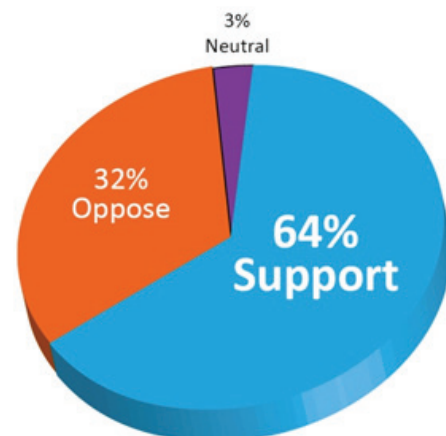
In a telephone survey of 1,251 registered voters, 64 percent expressed support for a proposal requiring public schools to offer breakfast after the start of the school day, such as in homeroom or during a mid-morning break. Currently, most schools offering federally funded breakfast serve it only before the school day begins, significantly lessening participation and effectively denying the nutrition and academic benefits of a school breakfast to 4.3 million California students.

The poll shows that 4 out of 5 California voters (77 percent) recognize what a growing body of research has shown -- starting the day with breakfast positively impacts student academic achievement. A recent [national study](#) links school breakfast participation with higher math, science and reading test scores, and other studies have shown that school breakfast improves attendance, behavior and student health.

“Californians see breakfast as essential to a child’s ability to learn in school,” says Mark DiCamillo, senior vice president of the Field Research Corporation, which administers The Field Poll. “What’s striking in this poll is the magnitude of voter support for schools to proactively offer all kids an opportunity to eat breakfast, and this includes a breakfast after the bell requirement.”

Voters were also strongly in favor (78 percent) of using existing federal funding to ensure that more students start their day with breakfast. Presently, up to \$344 million in federal school breakfast funds go untapped by California schools each year. This is largely because almost 20 percent of California schools do not offer breakfast, and among schools that do offer breakfast, the majority only serve it early in the morning before the start of the school day. As a result, the federal School Breakfast Program (SBP) reaches only half the number of students served by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Two-thirds of registered California voters support Breakfast After the Bell



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In late February, Assemblymembers Rob Bonta (D-Oakland) and Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond) introduced AB 1240, the “Breakfast After the Bell” bill. The legislation would increase access to school breakfast and improve academic achievement statewide by implementing many of the changes strongly supported in this Field Poll.

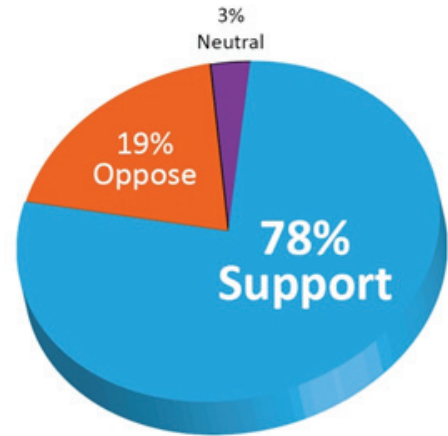
“It is encouraging, but not surprising, to know that so many of our constituents stand behind this proposal,” says Asm. Bonta. “Any teacher will tell you that hungry kids struggle to stay focused. By ensuring more students have access to breakfast at school, AB 1240 offers a practical solution to help us close California’s achievement gap.”

[AB 1240](#) would require schools where 40 to 60 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price (FRP) school meals to offer breakfast as an option for all students. Schools where 60 to 80 percent of students are eligible for FRP meals would be required to offer breakfast after the school day begins. Schools where at least 80 percent of students are eligible for FRP meals would be required to offer breakfast after the bell and free of charge to all students. This is made possible by existing federal reimbursements.

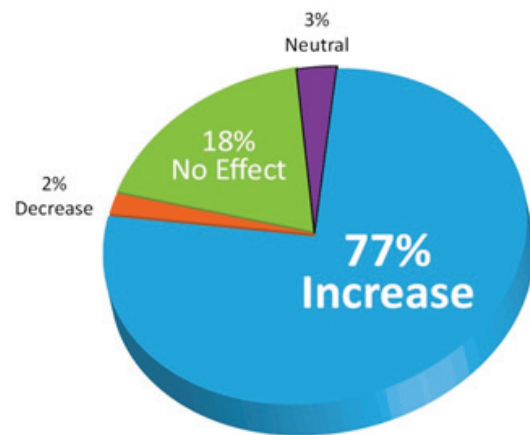
“Schedules are hectic, transportation is challenging and, as parents know, many kids aren’t ready to eat when they first wake up,” says Asm. Thurmond. “‘Breakfast After the Bell’ is a win-win opportunity that will help children start their day off right and help educators build better learning environments that enable every student to succeed.”

AB 1240 is sponsored by California Food Policy Advocates, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing access to nutritious, affordable food, with support from the No Kid Hungry campaign. More information about AB 1240 is available at www.calbreakfast.org.

Three-fourths of registered California voters want schools to use existing federal funds to offer breakfast



Three-fourths of registered California voters say breakfast contributes to academic achievement



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EDITORS NOTE: A full online pressroom that includes spokespersons’ contact information, press kit materials, fact sheets and photographs is available at www.calbreakfast.org.



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California Food Policy Advocates question series – Topline Findings –

I am going to read some proposals about the K-12 schools aimed at making sure that more kids in California to eat a nutritious breakfast each school day. Please tell me whether you favor or oppose each proposal.

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------------|
| 1. | Public schools should take advantage of an existing government program that provides funding to offer kids a nutritious breakfast at school. | FAVOR..... 78% |
| | | OPPOSE 19% |
| | | NO OPINION 3% |
| 2. | Many schools offer breakfast before the start of the school day and find that challenges, such as busy family schedules and limited transportation options, prevent the majority of kids from eating a nutritious breakfast at school. A proposal has been made to increase the number of kids who eat breakfast by requiring public schools to offer breakfast after the start of the school day, such as in homeroom or during recess. | FAVOR 64% |
| | | OPPOSE 32% |
| | | NO OPINION 3% |
| 3. | If California’s public schools increased the number of kids who eat a nutritious breakfast each school day, do you think this would increase, decrease or have no effect on the academic achievement of students? | INCREASE 77% |
| | | DECREASE 2% |
| | | NO EFFECT 18% |
| | | NO OPINION 3% |
| 4. | Millions of California children live in families that don’t consistently have enough food to eat. Do you agree or disagree that California’s public schools should use existing government funds to address this problem? | AGREE 74% |
| | | DISAGREE 23% |
| | | NO OPINION 3% |