

**Three Square Food Bank**  
**Pilot: Breakfast After the Bell in Schools with 60%+ FRL in Clark County**

**Purpose**

This white paper, developed by Three Square Food Bank, provides the background on school breakfast in Nevada, details the successes of legislation passed in 2015, and proposes: 1) a pilot in school years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 to reduce the threshold for schools serving breakfast after the bell from 70% to 60% in Clark County; and 2) \$275,000 for Three Square to conduct the study and report its findings.

Three Square has carefully examined the impacts on breakfast after the bell thus far, and estimates that by expanding this opportunity to the 39 CCSD schools with FRL rates between 60-69% would result in close to 1 million additional breakfasts served to low-income students. Three Square also took a deep dive to forecast the impact on increased reimbursement meal claims for FRL students, as well as the impact on “lost” revenue, meaning the uncollected cost typically paid by non-FRL students. This white paper asserts that reducing the threshold to 60% is feasible, and that sustained operations and improvements in the program such as meal quality, can take place simultaneously. A pilot is needed to test these theories and study the impacts of breakfast participation among free, reduced and paid students, as well as on the sustainability of food service operations and implications for other school districts in Nevada and across the country.

Three Square would lead the study, in collaboration with the school district using SIF funding from Share Our Strength. In 2017-2018, Three Square will receive \$550,000 through a Social Innovation Fund grant awarded by Share Our Strength. Half of this funding, \$275,000, would be dedicated to the study and would come from the State of Nevada. The other half of the grant, \$275,000, would be dedicated to sustained support for efforts begun the previous two years of the grant, including efforts in breakfast after the bell in schools with 70+ FRL, and in program efforts aimed at expanding after-school and summer meal programs for children.

Three Square would commit to providing an annual report to the Governor’s Council on Food Security and to Share Our Strength in July 2018 and July 2019 in order to communicate data findings, and disseminate recommendations on thresholds for mandated breakfast after the bell initiatives in Nevada and elsewhere.

**Background**

Historically, Nevada has been plagued with low rankings in state comparisons on breakfast participation among school-age students attending public school. However, in 2015 bipartisan support led to the passage of SB503, the breakfast-after-the-bell (BATB) initiative. Nevada hit the trifecta in SB503, measuring success in three key areas of policy implementation: 1) increased participation in breakfast statewide, particularly among free and reduced lunch (FRL) enrolled students; 2) increased federal funding via USDA reimbursements for breakfast meals consumed by participating students; 3) private/public partnerships that leverage federal funds with private, charitable funds to further the breakfast-after-the-bell initiative and ensure positive community perception of the effort.

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Clark County, one of the largest of the school districts in the nation, has more than 207,000 students enrolled in free and reduced price school meals (64% of the total student population). The mandate in SB503 immediately impacted 154 schools in Clark County, including 112 elementary, 27 junior high and 6 high schools (9 schools are categorized as “other types”). Table 1 demonstrates the first and second measures of success, in terms of increased participation and increased federal reimbursement based on meal claims to the USDA. Of particular importance to Three Square Food Bank is the number of additional meals served in these high-risk schools, which helped close the meal gap in Clark County by 3.2 million between August 2015 and June 2016.

Table 1: Growth in Breakfast Participation and Reimbursements in Clark County SB503 Schools

YEAR	Meals Served	Participation Rate	Federal Reimbursements
2014-2015 Baseline SB503 schools	8,331,867	36.4%	\$14,916,411.66
2015-2016 Year 1 SB503 schools	11,570,883	50.6%	\$20,722,635.37
<b>Impact of Legislation</b>	3,239,016 more meals	14.2% more participation	\$5,806,223 added

**Successful Breakfast Legislation**

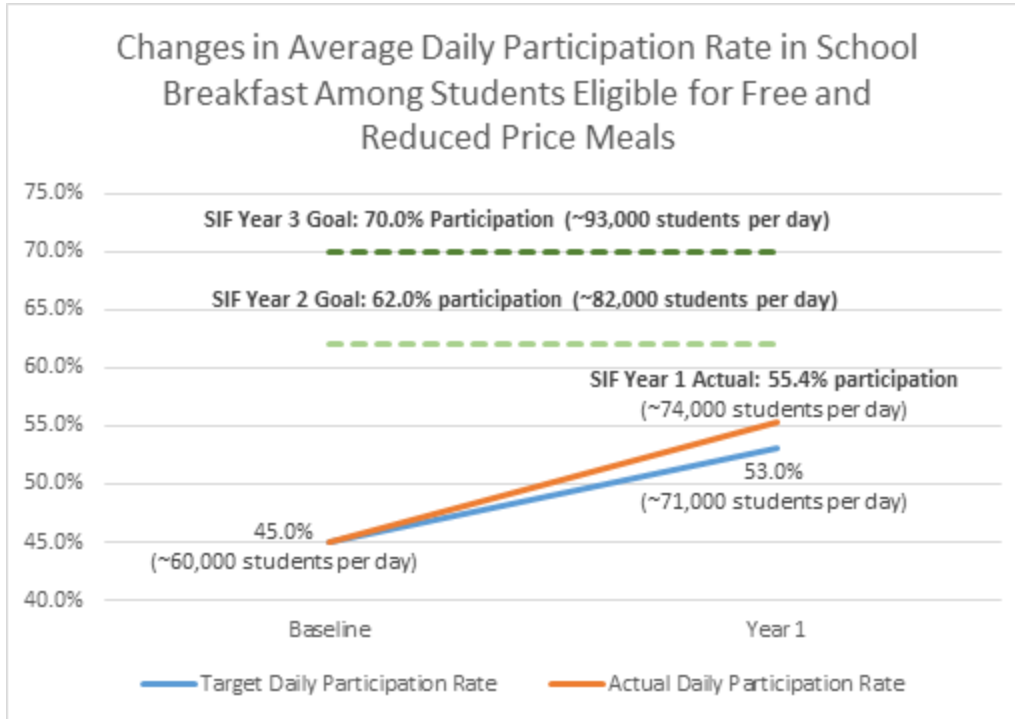
Clearly, the policy itself was the catalyst for the greatest amount change in the shortest period of time. Having the policy in place ensured that meals were available, which considerably increased participation and reimbursements. Of the 154 schools, 82 were new to breakfast after the bell efforts and 72 had previous experience. The 72 schools with previous experience continued to increase their participation in the first year of SB503, despite not having access to the \$1 million dollars reserved for schools implementing BATB for the first time.

In addition to the policy, Three Square, CCSD Food Service and the Nevada Department of Agriculture worked tirelessly to promote the initiative, and engage community leaders and influencers to ensure a positive community perception of the initiative. The third measure of policy success has also been secured with \$550,000 in a pledged annual grant with half of the funding coming from Share Our Strength’s Social Innovation Fund (SIF), and half of the funding raised by Three Square (none of the matching funds, thus far, were derived from SB503 funding). SIF is a three year grant, beginning May 2015 and running through April 2018. SIF funds come with a breakfast participation goal: 70% of FRL students who participate in lunch, will also participate in breakfast. Based on 2014 participation data, Clark County’s SIF goal is 93,000 FRL students participating in breakfast on average per day by 2018. To reach this goal, Clark County’s multi-dimensional, collaborative strategies would result in 11,000 additional breakfasts per day, per year: from 60,000 as the baseline to 71,000 in 2016, to 82,000 in 2017 and 93,000 by 2018.

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With the combined efforts in policy and grassroots support, Clark County exceeded its year one SIF goal of 71,000 breakfasts served on average per day by about 3,000 additional meals. This is reflected in Table 2. Once all SB503 schools reach the three-year goal, about 93,000 breakfasts will be served to FRL students per day, an increase of 33,000 meals per day. This means that 70% of FRL students in CCSD participating in lunch, will also be participating in breakfast. These additional meals will close Nevada’s meal gap in Clark County by 5 million.

Table 2: Baseline to SIF Year 3 Breakfast Participation Goal



In the fall of 2016, 34 new schools will begin BATB, having just reached the threshold of 70% student enrollment in free and reduced lunch (FRL). These new schools will contribute to new growth that is needed to reach the SIF year two target of 82,000 average meals served per day. As well, we can reasonably assume that many of the 154 schools will continue to improve based on lessons learned in breakfast after the bell efforts in previous years. The projection for average daily breakfasts among the 188 schools mandated under SB503 is 83,000 breakfasts served per day.

**Proposed Pilot to Reduce the Threshold to 60% in Clark County**

To reach the third year SIF goal of 93,000 breakfasts served on average per day, Clark County will likely need to increase the eligible participate pool in breakfast after the bell. Table 3 outlines the tactics and expected yield in participation over the three-year SIF timeline.

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Table 3: SIF Tactical Plan to Reach Target by 2018

School Year (SIF grant year)	Tactics	Expected Increase in Daily Breakfast Participation	Expected Daily Breakfast Participation (running total)	Breakfast Participation Rate Among FRL Students Eating Lunch
2014-2015 (baseline)	--	--	60,104	45.0%
2015-2016 (year 1)	Provide marketing and technical assistance to new SB503 schools	13,834 (actual increase)	73,938 (actual participation)	55.4%
2016-2017 (year 2)	Provide support to CCSD Food Service, specifically technical assistance to new SB503 schools as well as continued support to SB503 schools from the previous year with emphasis on schools that did not achieve 70% participation	11,600	85,539	64.1%
2017-2018 (year 3)	Reduce threshold for SB503 participation from 70% to 60%.  Provide the technical assistance, equipment, labor and cleaning costs necessary for CCSD to implement BATB in 39 schools with 60-69% FRL, as well as continued support to schools that have previous experience in BATB especially with schools who did	8,000	93,539	70.1%

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	not achieve 70% participation.		
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It has been established that SB503 was a solid investment with a high rate of return in participation leading to increased federal reimbursements. When Nevada adopted the 70% FRL mandated threshold in SB503, it was based on initial, conservative projections of financial costs in operations balanced with claims projections to ensure that that districts would be able to make ends meet. No one, legislators or public citizens, desired a result that increased the financial burden on schools and the state’s budget for education. As implemented with a 70% threshold, Clark County increased their federal reimbursements for meals by nearly \$6 million dollars – double the initial estimate! Cost estimates and anecdotal information from CCSD indicates that a 70% threshold has been more than adequate to balance the operating costs with the claim reimbursements, considering much of the hard costs in implementation were covered by SB503 funds. Clark County received more than \$800,000 in SB503 to implement BATB in 2015-2016.

Initial estimates suggest that lowering the threshold to schools with at least 60% in Clark County would also return more federal funds to Nevada than it would take to operate the program. A pilot, focused on studying the threshold in terms of operational cost against meal claims and participation increases among FRL students for two-year period is recommended though to test this assessment and to examine its long-term sustainability and implications for other school districts.

Table 4 outlines cost/benefit projections for a pilot on lowering the threshold to include the 39 additional schools with FRL rates between 60-69%. Three Square estimates that endeavor would yield more than \$700,000 in federal funds and increase participation between 6,200-8,000 among FRL students in the first year with expected increases in the second year.

Table 4: Projected Increases in Participation and Reimbursement in SB503 Expansion

Reimbursement Period	Paid Reimbursement	Free Reimbursement	Reduced Reimbursement	Total Reimbursement
Baseline (2015-2016)	\$ 16,479.83	\$ 1,121,253.56	\$ 156,641.03	\$ 1,294,374.42
Expansion (2017-2018)	\$ 81,046.22	\$ 1,702,524.13	\$ 245,536.98	\$ 2,029,107.33
<b>Difference</b>	<b>\$ 64,566.39</b>	<b>\$ 581,270.57</b>	<b>\$ 88,895.95</b>	<b>\$ 734,732.91</b>

Estimates are based on actualized increases in SB503 schools in 2015-2016. In this period, students on free and reduced price schools meals increased participation, as did students who are not participating in free and reduced school meals. Food service meal claims are based on income status: districts who claim a breakfast for a student who is designated “free” receive a

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reimbursement of \$1.99; “reduced” designed breakfasts are reimbursed at \$1.69; and students who are not enrolled in FRL are considered “paid” and receive only \$.29 per breakfast served. In order to maintain food service operations in the positive, or at least at the breakeven point, the increased participation must account for higher proportions of free and reduced students than paid students.

CCSD must reasonably expect that “lost” revenue, in terms of not collecting the meal cost difference from “paid” students will be offset by the higher collections in reimbursements from free and reduce price student participation and from the reduced operational expenses that are derived from higher volume within an established system. For example, increased participation in breakfast might slightly reduce unit food costs and doesn’t increase transportation or fuel costs since the number of deliveries doesn’t change. Some schools, however, may require an extra milk cooler. In the first year of the pilot, should these hard costs be needed, Three Square could cover up to \$275,000 with SIF federal/match funds. Or, hard costs could be covered by CCSD funds left after operational expenses have been deducted from federal meal reimbursements.

To pilot a study examining the right threshold for breakfast after the bell, the Governor’s Council on Food Security, legislators and relevant state agencies must be reasonably assured that implementation would be well-supported by anti-hunger partners and the community at large. Three Square’s SIF efforts are guaranteed for three years, ensuring that the first year of hard costs relating to the study would be financially supported up to \$275,000. Table 3 (above) demonstrates that expansion in year three of the SIF grant would also help ensure Nevada reached its three-year breakfast participation goal and had research to support recommendations on appropriate threshold levels for districts of a larger size, as well as implications for other, smaller school districts in Nevada and elsewhere. The study results and recommendations would be provided to the Governor’s Council on Food Security by June 30, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

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Appendix A: List of schools in CCSD between 60-69% FRL

Antonello ES	Hummel ES
Bonanza HS	Hyde Park MS
Bracken ES	Jacobson ES
Brookman ES	Johnson JHS
Brown JHS	Kahre ES
Burkholder MS	Kim ES
Cimarron Mem HS	Las Vegas HS
Clark HS	Laughlin JSHS
Cram MS	Lawrence JHS
Derfelt ES	Lied MS
Desert Rose Alternative HS	McCaw ES
Deskin ES	Miley Achvmt SEC
Duncan ES	Morris Sunset
Durango HS	Sandy Valley MS
Earl Marion ES	Simmons ES
Eisenberg ES	Thorpe ES
Gilbert ES	Virgin Valley ES
Hill ES	VTCTA HS
Hoggard ES	White MS
Hughes MS	