

# WHO'S HUNGRY?



**How to Start a  
Breakfast Program  
in your School!**

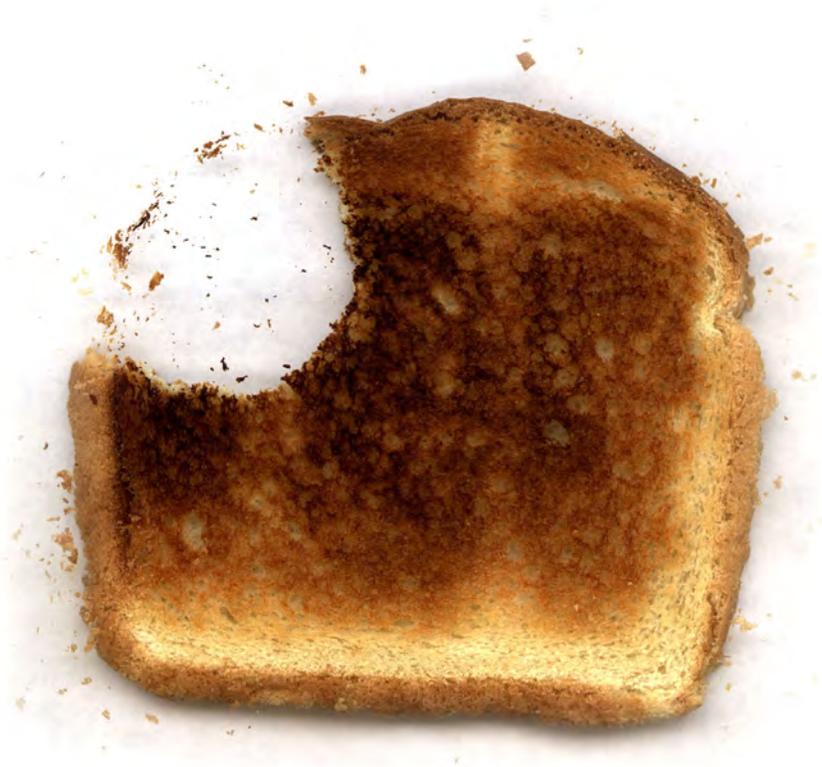




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## INTRODUCTION

This manual is an educational resource produced by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA). It is designed to assist teachers, school administrators, parents, and volunteers in developing a Breakfast Program in their school. The NBTA Equity in Education Committee reviewed and supports this publication.

The goals of this manual are to:

- bring awareness to the research linking hunger and learning.
- assist schools interested in launching or improving a school Breakfast Program.
- provide ideas and resources for Breakfast Programs in New Brunswick.

This resource draws upon current research, case studies, and nutrition policies to create a user-friendly manual for starting or improving a Breakfast Program.

**“I know that the biggest difference I found after toast cart started was that the kindergarten students no longer spent all morning asking “when is it recess? I’m hungry?” Those who were hungry were able to eat in the morning, and then were able to focus better on their work.”**



## RATIONALE

When comparing poverty in New Brunswick to the connection between hunger and learning, the importance of establishing Breakfast Programs in New Brunswick schools becomes evident. The purpose of this manual is to demonstrate steps of how to go about creating a Breakfast Program that is effective and realistic for schools to develop and sustain. By providing nutritious foods to all children and youth in schools, we are generating a better classroom environment in which students have an equal opportunity to learn and grow. When students can concentrate on class material and activities with energy and enthusiasm they are less likely to act out in bad behaviour and cause class disruptions. Students benefiting from a Breakfast Program have increased self-esteem, cognitive ability, and overall learning potential.

There are numerous benefits to ensuring the children in public school systems are well fed. A child's overall health and happiness greatly depends on their access to nutritious foods. Unfortunately, "Canada is globally unique in its relaxed approach to school food. It is the only G8 country with full day classes and no national school meals program, the often fraught system that nonetheless ensures grade school children from the United States to Japan have access to some form of sustenance – either free or at subsidized prices – during each day of study" (Globe and Mail, October 7th, 2011). "About 90 per cent of Canadian children are not provided with a meal at school unless they bring it from home. The small numbers of meal programs that exist endure because the administrators and volunteers who operate them are convinced of the benefits" (Globe and Mail, October 7th, 2011).

Finally, if all students have these increased abilities it is fair to say that more students will have increased opportunities upon graduation. "Students who perform poorly in high school are unlikely to go to college or university and have difficulty in finding jobs" (Learning: Everybody's Project). If more students are able to go on to post-secondary education, they will eventually be contributing to the economy in New Brunswick. "Post-secondary graduates earn more over their lifetimes and therefore are the strongest contributors to tax revenues that fund the programs needed. New Brunswick has one of the lowest percentages of postsecondary participation in Canada. Although more than half of high school graduates continue to college or university, only 60% complete their program" (Learning: Everybody's Project). Not only does education contribute to the economy it is also lowers the costs for other areas such as "social, justice, and healthy services" (Learning: Everybody's Project).