

**START SMART**

# Utah Breakfast Program Handbook





## To help stakeholders...

**01**

Understand the requirements of the Start Smart Utah Breakfast Program

**02**

Understand the benefits of school breakfast

**03**

Understand the differences between breakfast *models* and breakfast *styles*

**04**

Find needed resources and information to create a successful breakfast program

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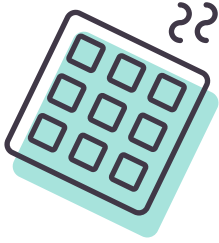
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# Introduction

# Utah Breakfast Legislation

## **SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM AMENDMENTS**

**(UTAH CODE 32B-2-304)**

This legislation allows state Child Nutrition funds to be used for reimbursement for meal programs outside of lunch, such as the School Breakfast Program. Prior to HB 16, these funds could only be used for lunch meals. This means that in future years you may see state reimbursements drop for lunches and see a new state reimbursement rate for breakfasts or other child nutrition programs.<sup>1</sup>

## **START SMART UTAH BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

**(UTAH CODE 53G-9-205.1)**

This bill requires all Utah schools that operate the National School Lunch Program to also operate the School Breakfast Program. This bill also requires schools with certain free and reduced percentages to provide an Alternative Breakfast Service Model, which is defined as a method of serving breakfast to a student after the instructional day begins.<sup>2</sup>

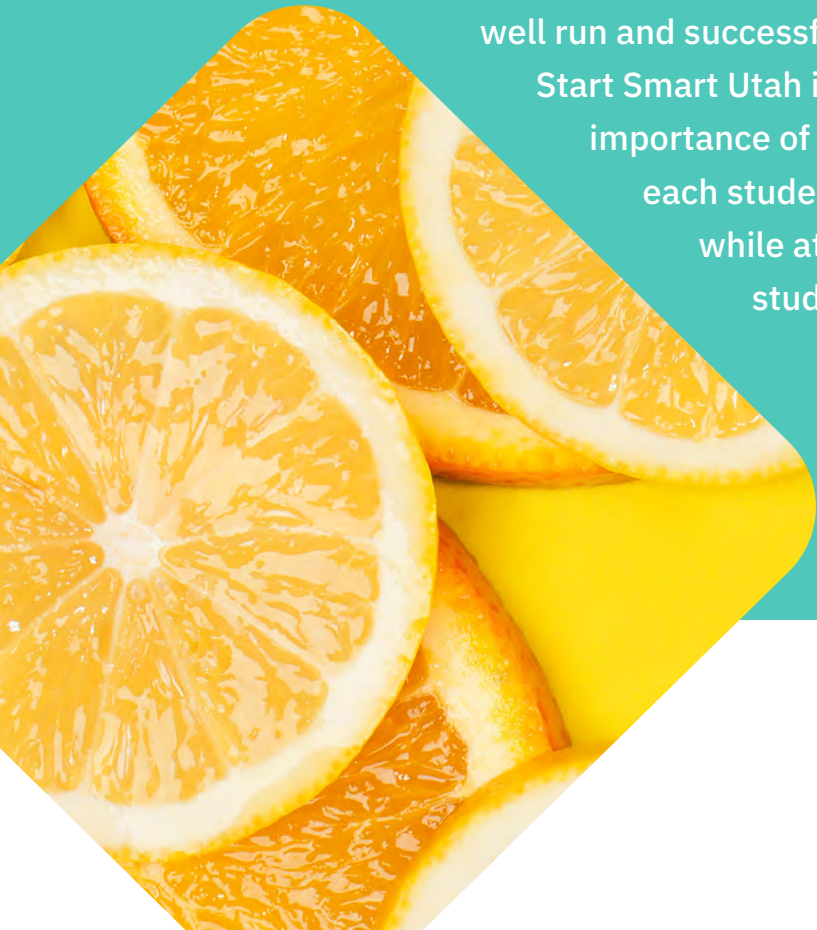
- Starting in school year 2020-2021 any school with a free/reduced percentage 70% or higher is required to use an alternative breakfast service model. (This requirement was waived by the Utah State Board of Education due to COVID-19 hardships and will move to school year 2021-2022).
- Starting in school year 2021-2022 any school with a free/reduced percentage 50% or higher is required to use an alternative breakfast service model.
- Starting in school year 2022-2023 any school with a free/reduced percentage 30% or higher shall use an alternative breakfast service model.
- If 70% or more of the free/reduced student population already participate in the school's current breakfast program, the site is exempt from these requirements.
- Individual schools may apply to the Child Nutrition department at the Utah State Board of Education for an individual site waiver allowing them to opt out of the breakfast requirements if they can demonstrate the Start Smart requirements cause undue hardship. Each waiver is for only one school year.

# Importance of School Breakfast in Utah

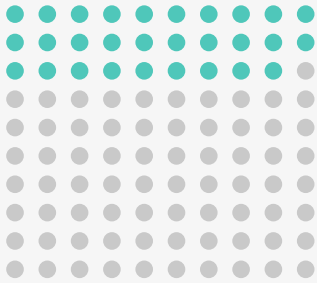
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“ School breakfast is important because it’s part of our academic makeup of schooling. In order for students to learn at an optimal level they need to have necessary nutrition...and that starts with school breakfast. Every student deserves to come to school prepared to learn, and that means having breakfast and having proper nutrition. So, by having that happen right at their school and most often in their classroom, we can ensure that each student is prepared to learn. Currently about 150 of our schools are not serving school breakfast. When I visit classrooms all around this state, I’m always delighted when I see programs like Breakfast in the Classroom where students can engage in mental exercises like mindfulness while eating breakfast, or review work for the day, or practice vocabulary, or have one on one time with their teachers. So many of our schools haven’t had this experience, and we want to ensure that every school has the experience of really well run and successful classroom breakfast programs. Start Smart Utah is a program that pushes forward the importance of school breakfast, and by ensuring that each student has the opportunity to have breakfast while at school we can also ensure then that students lean into the day ready to learn.”

Dr. Sydnee Dickson, Utah State  
Superintendent of Public Instruction



## Utah Breakfast Statistics



### BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION

Utah breakfast participation is the lowest in the country, serving only 39.6 students breakfast for every 100 students receiving lunch. <sup>3</sup>

# 20%

### NOTHING FOR BREAKFAST

20% of school children in the US are not eating breakfast at all. <sup>4</sup>



### FOOD INSECURITY

About 113,000 children in Utah were food insecure in 2018. <sup>5</sup>

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## Barriers to Eating Traditional School Breakfast

Many barriers stand between students and eating a traditional school breakfast, including:

- Little available time in the morning
- Not hungry enough to eat in the hours before school begins <sup>6</sup>
- Stigma associated with eating school breakfast
- Cafeteria is not convenient to students
- Arriving late to school (parent drop off, long commutes, late buses, access to transportation)
- Lack of support from school faculty
- Little food at home

Providing breakfast in schools will increase access to food for students. It not only provides a meal to a student that may otherwise go hungry, but research also demonstrates students who eat a nutritious breakfast tend to perform better in school, have better attendance, and exhibit fewer behavioral problems.<sup>7</sup>

# Benefits of School Breakfast



## HIGHER TEST SCORES:

Hunger makes school harder. On average, students who eat school breakfast achieve 17.5% higher scores on standardized math tests.<sup>8</sup>



## CALMER CLASSROOMS:

Children who do not regularly get enough nutritious food to eat tend to have significantly higher levels of behavioral, emotional and educational problems. Students who more often participate in school breakfast experience decreased anxiety and hyperactivity.<sup>9</sup>



## FEWER TRIPS TO THE NURSE:

When kids come to school hungry, they visit the school nurse more often due to stomachaches and headaches. Kids who struggle with hunger are also likely to be sick more often, slower to recover from illness, hospitalized more frequently and more susceptible to obesity.



## STRONGER ATTENDANCE & GRADUATION RATES:

On average, students who eat school breakfast attend 1.5 more days per year. Students who attend class more regularly are 20% more likely to graduate from high school.<sup>8</sup>



## INCREASED SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT:

Eating with classmates creates opportunities for conversations. Conversations can build positive peer relationships extending beyond breakfast time. These conversations can build language skills that contribute to improved social interactions.



## BENEFIT TO FAMILIES:

School breakfast can act to simplify mornings for families by offering kids and teens healthy options that fit into their schedule. School breakfast also benefits families experiencing financial hardship by ensuring their children receive access to affordable healthy food.



## NUTRITION:

School breakfast menus meet the national nutrition requirements, giving children the best opportunity for a healthy breakfast.



# Breakfast Models & Styles



# Definitions

## Alternative Breakfast Service Model:

A method of serving breakfast to a student after the instructional day begins <sup>2</sup>

## Traditional Breakfast Service Model:

A method of serving breakfast to a student before the instructional day begins <sup>2</sup>

## Breakfast Style:

A method of how and where breakfast is served (i.e. grab and go)

# Examples of Breakfast Styles

There are many ways school breakfast programs can be implemented, and different models and/or styles will work for different schools. Explore the examples of breakfast styles below to discover what may be adopted or altered to fit your program. Keep in mind that multiple models and styles of breakfast plans can be implemented simultaneously, so be creative! Most of the styles listed below can be applied as a traditional model (before school begins), an alternative model (after school begins), or both.



## CAFETERIA SERVICE

### Traditional Model Example:

- Breakfast is offered to students from the cafeteria prior to the start of the instructional day.

### Alternative Model Example:

- Breakfast is offered to students from the cafeteria at a specified time after the start of the instructional day. Meals would be consumed in the cafeteria.



## GRAB AND GO

### Traditional Model Example:

- Before the start of the school day, students pick up a pre-packaged breakfast from a service cart or kiosk in an area convenient to them (hallway, entryway, common area, cafeteria, etc.) Students may eat in the classroom, common areas, or other designated spaces.

### Alternative Model Example:

- At a designated time period after the instructional day has begun, students pick up a pre packaged breakfast from a service cart or kiosk in an area convenient to them (hallway, entryway, common area, cafeteria, etc.) Students may eat in the classroom, common areas, or other designated spaces.
  - In between first and second period
  - During a scheduled morning break
  - On the way out to recess



## BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

### Traditional Model Example:

- Breakfast is picked up by the student, and then taken to the classroom to be consumed before the start of the school day.
- If the school does not want students congregating in the cafeteria before school, certain classrooms could be designated as breakfast classrooms or the meals could be taken to the student's homeroom.

### Alternative Model Examples:

- Breakfast is delivered to classrooms after school begins from the cafeteria via coolers or insulated rolling bags by food service staff or designated students.
- Students congregate by class in a common area such as the cafeteria, gym, or hallway at the start of the school day. Students are then guided through the cafeteria, select or are given a reimbursable breakfast, and then take the meals to be consumed in the classroom. This system works especially well for younger grade levels.
- Students first meet in the classroom, then go to the cafeteria to pick up a meal and return to their classroom to eat and begin class.



## SECOND CHANCE

- Breakfast is offered to students during a morning break after the start of the instructional day, such as between first and second period, during a typical mid-morning snack time, or on the way to recess. Second Chance is typically done using some type of grab and go service method but could also be picked up from the cafeteria.
- Second Chance Breakfast is considered an alternate breakfast service model as it occurs after the start of the instructional day. The school may choose whether to implement Second Chance Breakfast in addition to a traditional before the bell service or only serve breakfast during the designated Second Chance timeframe.



## BREAKFAST VENDING

- Vending machines that contain reimbursable breakfasts are accessible prior to the start of the instructional day (for a traditional model) or after the start of the instructional day such as during a morning break, in between morning classes, or during recess periods (for an alternative model). Multiple areas can be designated for students to eat these meals based on what works best for the school. Students input ID numbers into the vending machines to retrieve meals which allows the appropriate meal benefits to be applied to the student's account by designated staff.



## BREAKFAST ON THE BUS

- In rural schools where a large portion of students ride buses for long periods of time, reimbursable breakfast meals may be offered on the bus. Breakfast on the Bus is considered a traditional service model as the meal is served prior to the start of the instructional day.
- If an alternative model is required, Breakfast on the Bus would need to be used in conjunction with another breakfast model that occurs after the start of the instructional day.

# Benefits of Using an Alternative Breakfast Model

Every school is unique with distinctive systems, students, and overall needs. Providing an alternative breakfast model gives each school the power and flexibility to implement the styles that work best for their individual circumstances. Specific benefits of alternative breakfast models include:



## FLEXIBLE TIMING

Breakfast is available at a time when most children become hungry. Customizable to fit seamlessly into the school's morning schedule without disrupting the academic day. Does not interfere with late bus or drop off schedules.



## INCREASED CONVENIENCE

Alternative breakfast models are more convenient to students, which can lead to greater participation. They also help solve the problem of an overcrowded or unavailable gym that doubles as a cafeteria



## INCREASED STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Studies show that alternative breakfast programs can dramatically increase student participation.<sup>10</sup> Having a breakfast program can also help to eliminate the social stigma of eating school breakfast, so students will feel comfortable participating.



## INCREASED REIMBURSEMENT/REVENUE

When more students participate in school breakfast, the amount of reimbursement your school receives also increases. Even though overall food costs will increase as more food is served, the difference between the cost of the meal and the amount of reimbursement per meal often results in increased revenue as a whole.<sup>10</sup>



## MAXIMIZES LABOR

The labor-hour cost per meal for Breakfast in the Classroom is typically less than for a traditional breakfast served from the cafeteria.<sup>11</sup>



## STARTS THE DAY RIGHT

Helps children and teachers to start the day in a positive environment.



## Universal Free Breakfast

Schools may choose to offer breakfast universally free to all students no matter how the students qualify (free, reduced, or paid). If a school chooses to do this, they will continue to claim federal reimbursement in the correct categories for each student participating (free, reduced, or paid).

Offering universal free breakfast eliminates the need to collect student payments, reduces administrative burden, greatly increases breakfast participation, removes stigma lower income students often face, and can be offered with any type of breakfast model or style. In many cases, offering breakfast universally free can increase participation to a level where the increased reimbursement covers the loss of revenue from student payments.

Universal Free Breakfast typically works well in schools with a higher free and reduced percentage, but schools with fewer eligible students have also operated it successfully.

**Please refer to the Smart Start Utah Breakfast Program Workbook for budgeting tips and how to calculate whether Universal Free Breakfast may work in your school.**



# Questions & Answers

# Questions & Answers

Beginning new programs can raise valid questions and concerns for everyone involved. It is recommended that administrators work closely with food service personnel and other breakfast stakeholders to determine a roll-out model that will work best for each school. Refer to the Q&A below to find answers to some common questions about school breakfast.

## INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

**Q: How do we make time for an alternative breakfast program after the start of the school day while trying to meet our instructional time requirements without extending the school day?**

A: Utah State Board of Education rule R277-419-5 on Pupil Accounting only requires that an LEA conduct at least 990 hours of educational services over a minimum of 180 school days each school year. Activities such as alternative breakfast models and recess can be counted toward this 990-hour requirement. This means that breakfast models that take place after the start of the instructional day will not take away from “seat time.” Also, research has demonstrated that while there are modest improvements in test scores when comparing Breakfast in the Classroom to traditional programs, there are no decreases in test scores, thus demonstrating that the time taken away from class for breakfast is not detrimental to student learning.<sup>12</sup>

**Q: Will Breakfast in the Classroom require a lot from our teachers and take away from their mornings?**

A: Breakfast in the Classroom on average takes 15-20 minutes. Most teachers report using the first 15- 20 minutes of class to take roll, collect assignments, and get the classroom in order, so it should not interfere with any of those typical daily activities. Other ideas for using time when students are eating or for students who choose not to participate in the breakfast may be things like independent reading, homework review, one on one time with the teacher, classroom clean-up, videos or podcasts, handing out graded work, or reading a book to the class.

## SCHEDULING & LOGISTICS

### **Q: How long after the school day begins must breakfast be available?**

A: Students must have a reasonable amount of time to receive a breakfast and consume the meal without penalty (e.g., tardy, punishment).

### **Q: If we must do breakfast after the bell, can we just keep a traditional breakfast going ten minutes after school starts so that we meet the requirement?**

A: The purpose of an alternative breakfast model is to offer all students the opportunity to eat after the beginning of the school day. If a traditional breakfast program is extended after the bell, then it should be integrated into a part of the instructional day and must allow children a reasonable amount of time to pick up a breakfast and consume it without penalty.

### **Q: What if we have students starting class at two separate times in the morning? How would we operate after the bell if not all kids are present until later?**

A: One solution to this may be offering a Second Chance grab and go breakfast after all students have arrived during a morning break, such as on the way out to recess. Another possible solution may be to provide a Breakfast in the Classroom when the second track time starts to reduce disruptions.

### **Q: Will this require a lot of additional staff? Do we have enough staff to successfully start a new breakfast program or an alternative model?**

A: The type of breakfast model and style chosen will determine how many staff are required, although many breakfast styles do not require extra staff to implement. Please refer to the Smart Start Utah Breakfast Program Workbook for information and ideas on staffing.

### **Q: How can we make sure classrooms stay clean and help students take responsibility for any messes?**

A: With a structured routine between students, teachers, janitorial staff, and food service staff, the amount of spill can be reduced. Planning a menu that provides breakfast items that are less sticky and do not require extra condiments may also help with cleanup. Check out the links below to see how some different breakfast programs run and gain ideas for your school.



Student Breakfast Ambassadors



Direct Delivery Breakfast in Classroom in Austin ISD



Breakfast in the Classroom Program Sustainability in Charleston County SD



Logan-Hocking School District: Getting Buy-in from Everyone

## FINANCES & MARKETING

### **Q: Does serving an alternative breakfast cost more than traditional service?**

A: Possibly, but alternative models also make financial sense. The School Breakfast Program is a federal program, and the meals are reimbursed by the federal government. According to Kelly Orton, Food Service Director for Salt Lake School District, “When comparing our Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) and regular breakfast, we show a 7.5% increase in food cost (due to individual packaging) and a slight increase in labor. On the plus side, our BIC schools double their breakfast participation which more than covers the added cost.”

### **Q: How do we attract adequate student participation to make the program financially feasible?**

A: Factors such as administrator and staff buy-in, menu items, student convenience, program marketing, and student/parent feedback all contribute to greater participation and program success. Refer to the Smart Start Utah Breakfast Program Workbook for specific ideas as well as help calculating items such as meal cost, reimbursement, and participation rates to help determine what your budget needs to be to remain financially viable.

### **Q: How do we market to households to create interest when there has been none in the past?**

A: Tailor breakfast marketing to your audience. Create a Breakfast Team where all the stakeholders are involved (administration, parents, faculty, teachers, students, etc). Allowing stakeholders to become invested in the breakfast program’s success, customizing the program to each school’s needs, and finding ways to address concerns will help create buy-in and a more successful program.

### **Q: How much will an alternative breakfast program cost? How can we budget for these new costs?**

A: Developing a budget is an important aspect to any breakfast program, and costs will vary from school to school depending on a variety of factors. Refer to the “Develop the Breakfast Program” section of the Smart Start Utah Breakfast Program Workbook for information on calculating total costs and reimbursement and other budget considerations. You may also contact a Child Nutrition specialist at the Utah State Board of Education at 801-538-7680.



## UTAH BREAKFAST LEGISLATION

### **Q: What if our school does not have a high free/reduced percentage of students? Do we still need to provide a breakfast program?**

A: All Utah schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program must also participate in the School Breakfast Program according to the Start Smart Utah Breakfast Program legislation passed in 2020. The requirement to provide an Alternative Breakfast Service Model is based on the free and reduced percentage of each school. Refer to the Introduction section of this handbook for specific details.

### **Q: This should not be a law; it does not apply to my school's population.**

A: This legislation helps to ensure that all children have access to breakfast. It requires that children are offered a breakfast at school, but no children will be required to participate in the program. Schools can and should individualize breakfast programs to best fit the needs of their student population. Providing the opportunity for children to eat school breakfast is important as research demonstrates students who eat a nutritious breakfast tend to perform better in school, have better attendance, and exhibit fewer behavioral problems.<sup>7</sup>

### **Q: Why offer an alternative breakfast style instead of a traditional breakfast?**

A: Providing an alternative breakfast model provides schools with the flexibility to customize a meal service that works best for their individual circumstances and student population. Alternative breakfast models are more convenient to students and families, lead to greater student participation and meal reimbursement, help students and teachers begin the day in a positive environment, and help to eliminate the social stigma of eating breakfast in the cafeteria before school.

### **Q: What if students take a breakfast against a parent's wishes to not purchase a breakfast from the school?**

A: The answer to this question will be determined by an LEA's local policies and procedures, including the LEA's unpaid meal charge policy. Clear communication about written policies with staff and households is paramount. Some strategies for preventing or reducing unwanted charges or school meal debt include offering breakfast at no charge to all students (Universal Free Breakfast) when it is financially viable, ensure students that are eligible for free or reduced-price meals receive those benefits, and responding quickly when students begin to accrue a negative balance.<sup>13</sup>



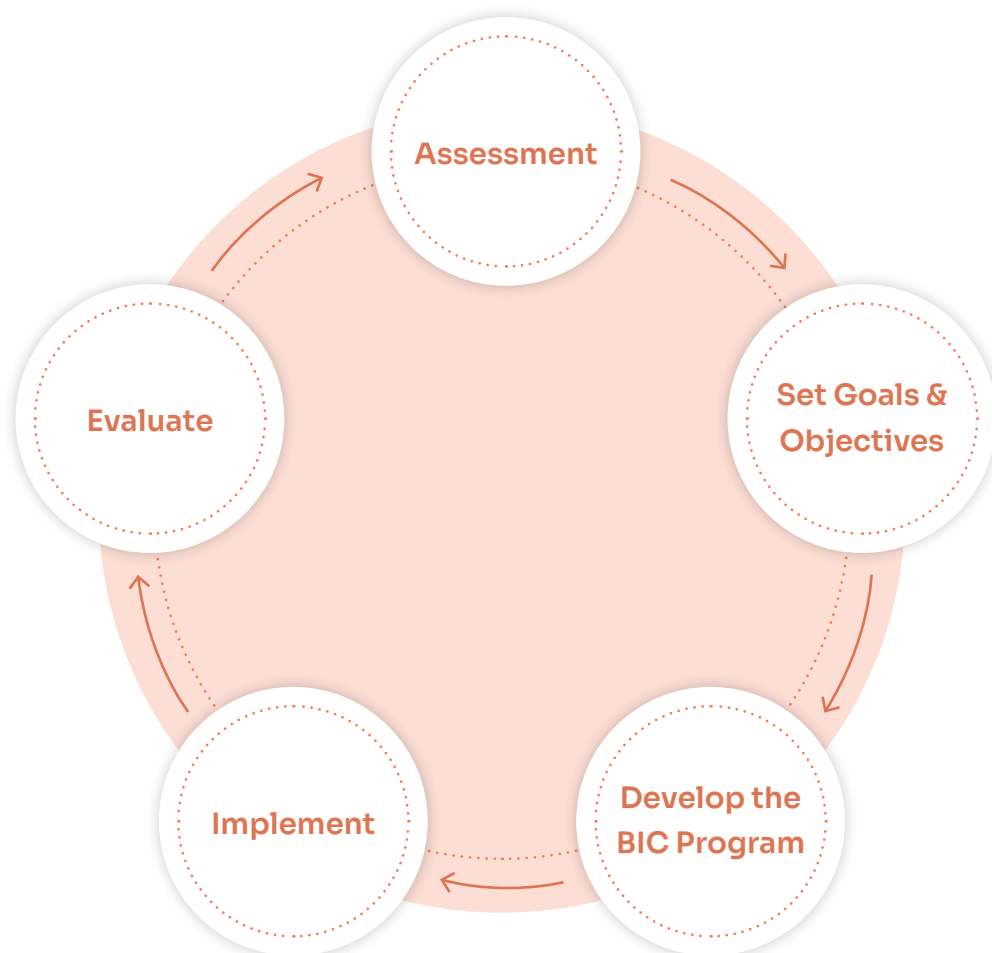
# Where to Start?

Beginning A New Breakfast  
Program, Model, or Style

# Beginning A New Breakfast Program, Model, or Style

There are many factors involved when beginning a new breakfast program, model, or style. The image below provides a framework outlining the process of assessing your current processes, developing new systems, and how to implement a successful breakfast program. These steps are expanded upon in detail in both the [UBET BIC handbook and workbook]. The Smart Start Utah Breakfast Program Workbook will specifically guide you through each step in detail and will be the place for you to create breakfast plans customized to your school, set goals, record notes and ideas, and identify and collaborate with key breakfast stakeholders.

**Please feel free to reach out to a Child Nutrition specialist at the Utah State Board of Education (801- 538-7680) to address any questions or concerns about this process.**



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