

# Grab n' Go Breakfast



## The Basics:

### How does a Grab n' Go breakfast work?

Similar to popular fast food restaurants, only healthier, Grab n' Go breakfasts are packaged in paper bags, boxes or trays. Students pick up their breakfast and eat it when and where they want, within school guidelines. Food service staff pack reimbursable breakfasts into individual paper bags, usually the day before, or purchase prepackaged reimbursable breakfasts in boxes. These are served with milk the next morning. Breakfasts are usually cold, but with a little bit of preparation in the morning, they can include hot items as well.

Grab n' Go breakfasts can be served first thing in the morning, between classes, or at a mid-morning break. Bags can be served from carts located in the hallway, school entrance, cafeteria, or other high traffic area. Students can take the breakfast and eat it outside, in the hall, in class, or in the cafeteria, depending on what the school decides is appropriate. There is a lot of flexibility with this method of serving breakfast, depending on the school's needs.

Students are responsible for following the school's guidelines as to where and when they can eat and for throwing out their trash.

### Why Serve a Grab n' Go Breakfast?

Most importantly, when breakfast is served as Grab n' Go, more students eat breakfast. Grab n' Go breakfasts bring breakfast to the students, making it easier for them to choose to eat breakfast. Many middle and high school students are not hungry first thing in the morning or they want to hang out with friends. Grab n' Go breakfasts allow students the flexibility and choice to eat breakfast where and when they want. Grab n' Go breakfasts are convenient for food service staff and prepackaged breakfasts can take less time to prepare than traditional breakfasts. Because it is so easy and efficient for students to grab a bag, this method also allows schools to serve breakfast more quickly to more students.

### When Does a Grab n' Go Breakfast Work Best?

Grab n' Go breakfasts work particularly well in middle and high schools because older students enjoy the flexibility and choice that Grab n' Go provides. Here are some other qualities where Grab n' Go breakfasts are likely to be particularly successful:

- The cafeteria or gym is crowded or not available for breakfast.
- A large number of students have to eat in a short amount of time.
- Busses arrive just before the start of classes.
- Teachers are supportive of breakfast and realize its importance to learning.
- Students rely on vending and convenience foods from outside the school for breakfast.
- The cafeteria isn't located where students enter the building or hang out.

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## Success Story:

**School:** Washington High School of Expeditionary Learning (Washington High School Campus)  
**School District:** Milwaukee Public School District  
**Contact:** Ann Giuffre, RD, CD  
 Supervising Dietitian  
 414-475-8369  
 (giuffram@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us)  
 Principal: Greg Ogunbowale  
 414-875-5906  
 Grades served: 9-12  
 Enrollment: 332  
 Free/Reduced: 72%  
 Breakfast Participation: 35%  
 Lunch Participation: 25%

This year, Milwaukee Public School students at Washington High School of Expeditionary Learning on the Washington High School Campus are trying something a little different. The Kitchen Manager, Jim Hadlock, and Supervising Dietitian, Ann Giuffre, noticed that student participation in the before school breakfast program was not as high as they would have liked, given Washington's high percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced price meals. After hearing about mid-morning nutrition breaks and how these better meet the needs of teens, Mr. Hadlock shared this with school administration.

By working with school administration and staff, homeroom was changed from 8:30am to 9:45am. This change allows for a 15 minute break between 9:30am and 9:45am when students can come to a room off the main hallway to grab breakfast and take it to homeroom class to eat. By altering the schedule and serving breakfast at 9:30am, this

meets a variety of student needs; it allows students who do not have a first period class to eat breakfast at school; it also offers students who are not hungry first thing in the morning another opportunity to eat breakfast; and it increases access to breakfast for all students. In addition, Mr. Hadlock serves breakfast in the cafeteria before class for students who prefer to eat at this time.

Food service staff order prepackaged breakfasts from their distributor. These are fully reimbursable meals when served with milk. Two kitchen staff bring the prepackaged breakfasts, milk and a laptop computer to the serving location. Students enter their pin number into the laptop and then take breakfast. There are a variety of prepackaged breakfast choices available from the distributor, with a different choice offered each day. In total, serving Grab n' Go breakfast takes two staff a half an hour.

Having supportive administration and staff and offering breakfast at 9:30 is key to the success of Grab n' Go at Washington High School of Expeditionary Learning. In addition, a Herbert Kohl Breakfast Grant offered through DPI allowed for the purchase of the laptop computer which is essential to this Grab n' Go program. By offering Grab n' Go breakfasts, participation almost doubled to 115 students - 30 more students than ate school lunch! In addition, the two other high schools on the Washington High School Campus are looking starting a Grab n' Go breakfast.