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News Release

Colorado School Breakfast Challenge Feeds Cash Prizes To Schools That Increase School Breakfast Participation

The Colorado Department of Education today announced the launch of the Colorado School Breakfast Challenge, an initiative to increase participation in the School Breakfast Program. Colorado schools are automatically enrolled in the competition that challenges schools to increase participation. Top-performing schools will receive cash prizes.

“Whether a school has never served breakfast, or already has a breakfast program with high participation, we want to urge our schools to do more,” said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “We know that students perform better in school when they have access to a healthy breakfast.”

Currently, schools in Colorado serve breakfast to 101,000 children each school day. Schools that increase participation rates the most will be eligible for cash prizes up to \$5,000.

Specifically, students who eat breakfast:

- Score better on standardized tests;
- Have higher academic achievement;
- Have less health problems; and
- Behave better in class.

“Data shows us that many children in Colorado do not eat breakfast at home,” said Jane Brand, director of nutrition at CDE. “Fortunately the

School Breakfast Program provides funding for schools to provide nutritious morning meals to their students.”

Districts participating in the National School Lunch Program (those that receive federal reimbursement for school meals) will be sent a School Breakfast Program Expansion Toolkit, a mini cereal box containing materials designed to help increase school breakfast participation. The kit provides in-depth information about the six serving models: traditional breakfast, breakfast-in-the-classroom, grab and go breakfast, breakfast after first period, breakfast on the bus and vending machines. A sample one-week cycle menu and tools for teachers, school nutrition staff, building engineers and parents also make up the kit. Schools are also given steps on how to start a school breakfast program. The toolkit is sponsored by the Western Dairy Association.

The Colorado School Breakfast Program is a collaborative effort with the Governor’s office and the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger by 2015, which was launched in November 2009 in partnership with Share Our Strength, a national anti-hunger organization and Hunger Free Colorado.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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