

“Oriole Corner”

*This week’s Oriole Corner has been written by guest columnist
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Increasing Breakfast Participation

Your mother was right. Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day! Eating a healthy breakfast is important for everyone, but especially for children and adolescents. According to the American Dietetic Association, children who eat breakfast perform better in the classroom and on the playground, with better concentration, problem solving skills and eye-hand coordination.

Over the past few years Charlotte Public Schools has been increasing breakfast participation with “Breakfast in the Classroom”. Prior to “Breakfast in the Classroom”, students had to arrive early to eat breakfast. This did not always work if the bus was late or a student was dropped off just before school started. The children that came late that wanted breakfast had to hurry to eat and get to class. That was not the best way to start their day.

The USDA and Michigan Department of Education does not regulate the price of breakfast as they do lunch pricing. We have kept our breakfast price at \$1.50 for all grade levels since 2014. If a student qualifies for free lunch they also qualify for a free breakfast. A reduced price breakfast for students that qualify is 30 cents. Free and Reduced Applications must be completed each year and can be submitted any time during the school year or if a family financial situation changes.

Breakfast participation has doubled at the Upper Elementary, Parkview and Washington. The Middle School just started “Breakfast in the Classroom” this year. The students are offered a nutritious breakfast including whole grains, fresh fruit, low fat dairy, 100% juice and milk each day. Many teachers have told me that the change in the morning routine has been good for the students. “Breakfast in the Classroom” does increase the teacher’s workload because they have to serve and tally the meals, but the teachers and foodservice team have worked in collaboration with one another to make “Breakfast in the Classroom” an overall success.

The High School Students start school at 7:30 AM; much too early for any teenager. If they want breakfast, they have to come even earlier - before school starts. If they are late they go without food until lunch. We are going to try something different at the High School this January starting second semester. In between first and second period, around 8:40 AM, the students are going to have the opportunity to **grab** breakfast after first hour **and go** to second hour to eat breakfast.

It may not be exactly what mother had in mind, but I think she would agree the more children eating breakfast the better.

Go Orioles! Oriole Pride!!