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Maine Ranks 8th on Annual School Breakfast Participation Scorecard

Portland, ME, February 20, 2020 — During the 2018–2019 school year, 37,173 students with low income in Maine started the day right with a nutritious school breakfast through the School Breakfast Program according to a report released by the [Food Research & Action Center](#) (FRAC). Nationally, 12.4 million students with low income participated in school breakfast in the 2018–2019 school year.

FRAC's [School Breakfast Scorecard](#) ranks states on the rate of participation of children with low income in the School Breakfast Program. In the 2018–2019 school year, Maine's school breakfast program reached 64 low-income children for every 100 who participated in school lunch. While there are still more students who can benefit from starting the school day with a nutritious breakfast, Maine is moving closer to FRAC's goal of serving school breakfast to 70 children with low income for every 100 who receive school lunch.

"Since 2016 Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative has worked with communities, schools, and families to increase the number of students participating in the school breakfast program," said Meredith Cook, Maine Hunger Initiative Social Change Advocate. "We have witnessed the positive impact of school breakfast on student's health and academic performance. Just as students are provided with books, computers, and desks to be set up for success, we must ensure every student has the fuel they need to learn and thrive."

Research shows that students who eat breakfast at school are more alert and better able to concentrate, leading to improved attendance records, a boost in academic achievement, and higher graduation rates. For the one in five Maine children who live in a food insecure home, school breakfast is an essential part of the day.

"When breakfast is offered during the school day, all students have an opportunity to eat together, so no student is singled out," said Senator Marianne Moore. "I have seen firsthand the success of breakfast after the bell programs, and what it can do for so many students across our state. That's why I introduced 'Breakfast After the Bell' legislation last year."

In 2019, thanks in large part to advocacy efforts led by Preble Street, Full Plates Full Potential, and the Ending Child Hunger Coalition, Maine passed Breakfast After the Bell legislation, sponsored by Senator Moore, Senator Shenna Bellows, and Senator Cathy Breen. This program allows schools across the state to provide breakfast in the classroom before the school day

begins, after first period, or through a “grab and go” option and will increase school breakfast participation among students with low income.

"Over the last four years Full Plates Full Potential has worked with schools and granted \$142,000 dollars to support their breakfast programs flipping to a breakfast after the bell meal program", said Justin Alfond co-director of Full Plates Full Potential. "This new law will jumpstart our coalitions work to help thousands and thousands of more children get access and eat breakfast daily." In addition to the many benefits school breakfast provides students, Maine schools are reimbursed by the federal government for each breakfast they serve to students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

About the *School Breakfast Scorecard*

Based on a variety of metrics, the *School Breakfast Scorecard* report measures the reach of the School Breakfast Program in the 2018–2019 school year — nationally and in each state — and examines the impact of select trends and policies on program participation. On an average school day, nearly 12.4 million children with low-income participated in the School Breakfast Program in school year 2018–2019. More than 3.6 million more children with low-income received school breakfast on an average day in the 2018–2019 school year than in the 2008–2009 school year. Read the [School Breakfast Scorecard](#) in full.

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Preble Street is a nonprofit human service agency serving the most vulnerable people in Maine since 1975 through innovative, best-practice, client-centered programs. In addition to the largest direct service emergency food program in northern New England, Preble Street operates low-barrier programs throughout Maine providing 24/365 services for individuals and families, including homeless youth, women, veterans, and survivors of human trafficking, driven by its mission to meet urgent needs, empower people to move beyond the crises in their lives, and advocate for solutions to homelessness, hunger, and poverty. PrebleStreet.org