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August 30, 2016

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
Renaissance School Project Lead Persons
Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

FROM: Susan Martz, Chief Learning Supports & Specialized Services Officer/
Assistant Commissioner
Division of Learning Supports and Specialized Services

SUBJECT: Breakfast after the Bell

The New Jersey Department of Education encourages schools to implement “breakfast after the bell,” where breakfast is typically served in the classroom during the first few minutes of the day, so the meal is available when all children are in school. According to the Food Research and Action Center, children who regularly eat breakfast are absent from school less often, participate in class more, have reduced discipline issues, and demonstrate improved academic achievement. One way that schools can support children to eat breakfast regularly is by implementing a “breakfast after the bell” program.

This federally funded child nutrition program may be implemented in a variety of ways. Schools may choose to serve a classroom breakfast, provide a grab-and-go breakfast, or offer a “second chance” breakfast in which a nutrition break is incorporated into morning classes. Teachers may choose to incorporate lessons on nutrition during this meal time or allow students to eat breakfast during daily housekeeping activities, such as listening to schoolwide announcements and taking attendance. Information on implementing “breakfast after the bell” can be found on the New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign page at <http://acnj.org/school-breakfast/>.

While student participation from New Jersey school districts serving “breakfast after the bell” programs has increased 75% over the past five years, thousands of eligible children are still not receiving this important meal. School leaders interested in implementing “breakfast after the bell” in their school district should contact Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, coordinator, School Nutrition Programs, Division of Food and Nutrition, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, at (609) 984-0692.

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