

# Breakfast in the Classroom A Case Study

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Dallas Independent School District

Dallas, TX



*July 2013*

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Acknowledgments.....	3
Dallas ISD: Creative Marketing Key to BIC Success .....	4
The Dallas Strategy: Communicating the BIC Mission .....	5
Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom: Developing the Action Plan and Budget .....	6
Implementing BIC Delivery Models: Standardize Equipment, Process & Training .....	7
Marketing BIC to Stakeholders: The ABC's of BIC Promotion.....	10
Measuring Success: Positive Impact on Students and FCNS.....	11
Appendix .....	13

## Introduction

This case study details the implementation of the universal breakfast in the classroom pilot in fourteen elementary and middle schools in the Dallas, TX Independent School District (DISD) during SY 2010-2011.

This pilot was funded by the Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom (PBIC), a partnership of four national organizations, Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), National Association of Elementary School Principals Foundation (NAESPF), National Education Association Health Information Network (NEA HIN) and the School Nutrition Foundation (SNF), funded by the Walmart Foundation. The primary metric of success for the pilot program, implemented in five (5) districts nationwide, was the additional number of students eating breakfast.

PBIC worked with DISD to engage all the local stakeholders needed for successful implementation of the program: teachers, principals, paraeducators, custodial staff, school nutrition staff, school administrators, parents and anti-hunger advocates. Convening the local stakeholders at the beginning of the implementation assured a successful roll out of the program that ultimately resulted in the district-wide implementation of breakfast in the classroom.

To assist food service operators in determining whether universal breakfast in the classroom is a financially viable option, the appendix of this case study has a spreadsheet study of revenue vs. expenses at the site level. This spreadsheet is meant as a starting point for calculating the cost associated with breakfast in the classroom as each individual school district operates under different parameters.

## Acknowledgments

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Thank you to Dora Rivas, MS, RD, LD, and Executive Director of Food and Child Nutrition Services as well as the staff and leadership team of DISD for their time and sharing the success of the DISD breakfast in the classroom program.

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## Dallas ISD: Creative Marketing Key to BIC Success

Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) was not a new idea to Dora Rivas, MS, RD, SNS Executive Director, Food and Child Nutrition Services (FCNS), for the Dallas Independent School District. In fact, she pioneered the concept. In the early 1990's, while serving as Director of Foodservice for the Brownsville Independent School District (TX), she piloted a Breakfast in a Bag Program which significantly increased breakfast participation and garnered a Best Practice Award from the United States Department of Agriculture. Thus, when Dora accepted the director position in Dallas in 2006, she was eager to increase student breakfast participation in Dallas by promoting a similar model of breakfast service. However, gaining acceptance of BIC as a cost-effective, convenient way to increase student access to a nutritious school breakfast proved to be a slower, more challenging process than she originally anticipated. After several attempts to pilot universal free breakfast in the classroom, the FCNS effort had stalled. Thus in the fall of 2010, when the Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom contacted Dallas ISD, Dora Rivas enthusiastically encouraged district administration to apply for a Breakfast in the Classroom grant funded by the Walmart Foundation.

The FCNS leadership team recognized that creating stakeholder awareness of the merits of BIC and determining a school's readiness to consider this alternative approach were prerequisites to implementing the BIC model. Key steps taken by FCNS to gain momentum in site adoption of the BIC model included:

- Reviewing lessons learned from sites who were early adopters of BIC.
- Involving key stakeholders in a standardized site assessment and planning process.
- Obtaining an external source of grant funding to jump-start a more strategic implementation process and reduce financial barriers.
- Creating a comprehensive BIC marketing plan.
- Designing menus compatible with BIC model, student preferences and USDA regulations.
- Standardizing an equipment list and accountability processes for three (3) distinct BIC delivery models.
- Staging roll-out of BIC pilot schools over 2 semesters to incorporate lessons learned in the initial pilots.
- Developing high quality resource materials and providing stakeholder/staff training prior to starting BIC.
- Gaining Administrative support and School Board authorization to implement BIC district-wide.

This case study illustrates how each action step contributed to stakeholder interest and expansion of universal free BIC to more than 60 schools by May 2012. The success at these sites paved the way for Dallas ISD Board of Education action in November 2012 authorizing district wide implementation of BIC. As of fall 2012, planning has begun to ensure all Dallas ISD students have access to a nourishing, classroom breakfast at no cost at the start of each school day. A child's hunger in the morning will no longer be a barrier to learning. Greater student

participation in school breakfast will also substantially increase in federal reimbursement revenue for FCNS, and thus support continuous quality improvement in the overall foodservice operation. Let's take a closer look at the Dallas story.

### The Dallas Strategy: Communicating the BIC Mission

Dora Rivas knew from analysis of district demographics that it was likely that many students attending Dallas ISD were arriving at school without consuming breakfast. Dallas ISD, with an enrollment of 157,000 students in 230 schools grades K-12, had approximately 89% of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals. Also of concern, 2010 data revealed that although school breakfast was offered in the cafeteria before school at all buildings in the district, the average district wide daily participation (ADP) was only 29% of eligible students. At that time, individual school site breakfast ADP ranged from 10% to 65% of those students in attendance. The barriers to eating breakfast in the school cafeteria, as identified by FCNS staff, included district bus schedules, students who walked to school arriving late, limited staff for early morning supervision, and limited time available to serve a meal before the start of the instructional day. Based on her experience in Brownsville, modifying the breakfast delivery model and allowing students to eat breakfast in the classroom at the start of the school day had been shown as effective in reducing these barriers and increasing student access breakfast. So why not implement BIC in Dallas? Thus, FCNS identified their BIC mission as *"Reach every student every day."*

To fulfill this mission, Dora and her FCNS team members, realized the need to share their vision of providing all students with access to breakfast. Communicating the student health and educational values of BIC as well as program delivery model options to district and community stakeholders became the cornerstone of the team's efforts. The administrative challenge was to designate the staff time and allocate the financial resources to develop a comprehensive marketing campaign. As they say, timing is everything! Securing Walmart Foundation funding for BIC pilots and filling key central office position vacancies enabled the FCNS team to develop and launch their communication plan. One of the first team assignments was to design a consistent media message to convey the BIC mission. Their skillfully crafted campaign message was "Wake Up! Fuel Up! Every Student – Every Day".



Figure 1 Designed BIC Marketing Campaign Message

## Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom: Developing the Action Plan and Budget

The Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom, representing an alliance between Food Research and Action, National Association of Elementary School Principals Foundation, National Education Association Health Information Network, and School Nutrition Foundation, negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Dallas ISD in late fall of 2010. The MOU established an achievement goal of a 7 % increase in the district's average daily breakfast participation by December 2011. This target percentage translated to serving on average an additional 3,150 breakfast meals per day in the schools selected to adopt BIC. So how did FCNS determine which schools would be chosen and how many total sites would be recruited into the BIC initiative to reach the participation goal?

The alliance, Partners for BIC, was established as a collaborative model at the national level. Likewise, the Partners envisioned stakeholders at the district and site level to be actively engaged in planning and implementing BIC. Consultants from inTEAM Associates were hired to assist Dallas ISD staff in engaging district and community stakeholders, completing a needs assessment, and developing project action plans and corresponding budgets for each selected school as well as a district action plan and budget.

- Target schools were those with greater than 80% of enrolled students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. Current breakfast participation statistics were compared to enrollment and daily attendance data to identify the schools with low rates of breakfast participation and thus capture the greatest gain in additional participation.
- Onsite assessments of potential BIC schools were conducted by the consultants and FCNS Operational Specialists. The site visits included meeting with the building principal and cafeteria manager to determine current barriers to breakfast participation, level of support for the BIC concept, and which breakfast delivery model might work best at the site. An assessment tool was used to gather data related to the school's enrollment, average daily attendance, current breakfast participation, number of first hour classrooms, adequacy of kitchen refrigeration and dry storage space, and building's physical layout including presence of portable classrooms, stairs and elevators. A list of equipment to be purchased with grant funds was developed.

A template site action plan was collaboratively developed with the FCNS team. After the consultants left, Operational Specialists conducted follow up visits with principals to gain or confirm their buy-in. Area Supervisors worked with each principal to develop an action plan for their school identifying what action steps needed to be completed, by whom, when and the resources required. Target participation goals were set for each site. Schools starting BIC were divided into Phase I and Phase II. Six Phase I schools would roll-out BIC in spring 2011, with an additional 13 schools starting in August and September to reach their goal of increasing average breakfast participation by 3,150 meals by December 2011.

The FCNS team completed the district wide action plan in late January. Their action plan emphasized development of standard operating procedures for each delivery model, staff training and a comprehensive marketing plan to create awareness and support for the project.

A final project budget was prepared, including a cost benefit ranking for each proposed site to be funded. The cost per additional breakfast projected to be served at each select schools ranged from \$31.63 to \$214.58. The action plan and budget supporting the addition of 19 BIC schools was submitted to the national Partners for consideration. The plan, with a corresponding proposed budget of \$627,757.76 and \$338,644.79 was approved and the pilot project began in March 2011.

### Implementing BIC Delivery Models: Standardize Equipment, Process & Training

During the initial site assessment process the FCNS team identified the need to tailor the BIC delivery model to the needs of the building. Communicating stakeholder needs and expectations were identified as a vitally important factor in creating the conditions for successful BIC. Stakeholder dialogue resulted in FCNS developing three delivery approaches to enable students to eat breakfast in their classroom:

- 1) Classroom Delivery Model
- 2) Grab and Go Model
- 3) Hallway Kiosk Model

For each delivery model the FCNS team identified equipment required and standard implementation procedures for each of the delivery models.



Figure 2 Assembly of meal items



Figure 3 Delivery to classroom door



Figure 4 Eating breakfast in classroom





Figure 5 Storage & Delivery Cart

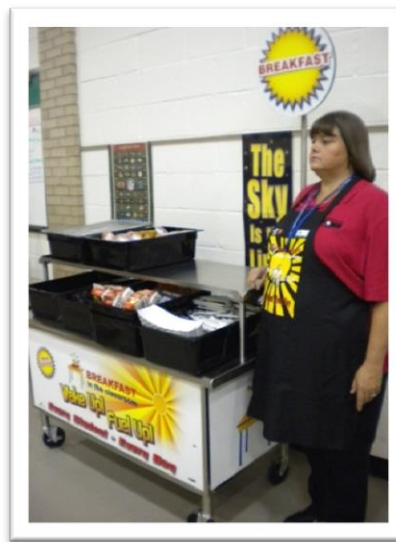


Figure 6 Hallway Kiosk

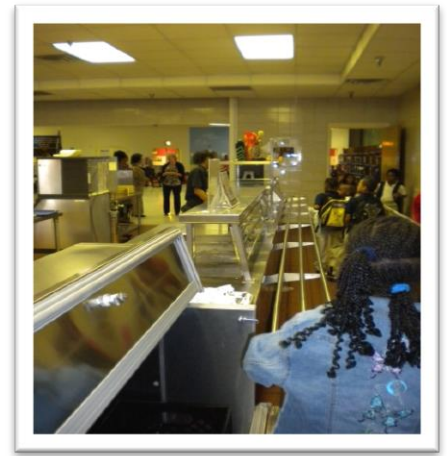


Figure 7 Grab and Go

The FCNS team developed a chart identifying the advantages and challenges for each delivery model as well as the specific procedures for line set up, meal counting and claiming, and trash removal process to be used for each model. This chart not only formed the basis for foodservice staff training but also focused the discussion with other building level stakeholders. Building layout, lack of an elevator, age of students, and student arrival time were a few of the factors considered when selecting the delivery model for a particular school.

Once the building stakeholders selected the delivery model that was perceived as the best fit for their site, a delivery model specific preplanning check list was used to guide the next steps in the BIC implementation process. Next step actions to be completed prior to starting BIC were identified in a pre-planning check list with the following headings:

- ✓ Principal & Operation Specialist Responsibilities
- ✓ Special Breakfast Program Request Form
- ✓ Service Traffic Flow
- ✓ Equipment
- ✓ Menus/Production Report
- ✓ Staffing
- ✓ Food Safety and Sanitation
- ✓ Breakfast Delivery
- ✓ Timing of Service
- ✓ Paper Supplies
- ✓ Accurate Record Keeping
- ✓ Responsibilities for Trash

These action steps were often discussed in combination with best practices identified for each delivery model. Based on previous lessons learned, the FCNS team outlined 5 requirements for a successful BIC program. The essential elements for success included:

1. Full compliance with the menu-order food to stay on menu
2. Quality food preparation every time and following the recipes
3. Accurate and reliable counting and claiming system



4. Proper trash management
5. Excellent customer service

Regardless of the delivery model selected, employees were instructed that the BIC menu was to be offered as planned. A two week BIC cycle menu was developed to achieve several operational objectives. First, the planned menu was required to meet USDA meal pattern requirements. The menu also was designed to include a variety of high quality and well-liked food items to encourage consumption and reduce food waste. In addition, food items included on the menu had to meet the production and portability requirements for students eating in the classroom setting. To ensure consistent results and control costs, standardized recipes were developed.

### Dallas ISD Breakfast in the Classroom Menu 2011-2012

#### Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Sausage Biscuit	WG Waffle Sticks	Ham and Cheese Croissant	WG Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich	Breakfast Burrito
Fresh Fruit	Yogurt	Fruit Cup	Cereal	100% Fruit Juice
Milk	100% Fruit Juice	Milk	Fresh Fruit	Milk
	Milk		Milk	

#### Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Sausage Kolache	WG French Toast Sticks	Sausage Egg and Cheese Biscuit	Breakfast Bowl	Yogurt
Fresh Fruit	String Cheese	Fruit Cup	Fresh Fruit	Cereal
Milk	100% Fruit Juice	Milk	Milk	100% Fruit Juice
	Milk			Milk

**Figure 8 BIC Cycle Menu**

To ensure compliance with meal counting and claiming, procedures were included on the preplanning checklist. This enabled the FCNS team to discuss and secure site stakeholder agreement prior to starting BIC. Although all students are served breakfast in the classroom free of charge, not all student meals are eligible to be claimed at the free federal reimbursement rate. Thus, for each BIC delivery model procedures were established to accurately capture the name of the student receiving a breakfast so meals are counted and claimed based on student's eligibility. For the classroom delivery model, a class roster is sent along with the food carrier each day. The teacher marks off each student's name who is receiving a meal and the roster is returned to the kitchen at the end of service with the carrier. Before the end of the day, the cashier enters the breakfast meal information from the roster into the automated point of sale (POS) system. Schools using the Hallway Kiosk and Grab and Go delivery models usually have students enter their ID number directly into the POS. However, marking of the classroom roster by cafeteria staff or a teacher may be used as an alternate method of obtaining an accurate count. The FCNS team developed standard BIC implementation procedures and designed training materials to support achieving each of their

operational objectives. Formal training sessions were conducted to ensure that foodservice employees were adequately prepared to implement BIC in their buildings.

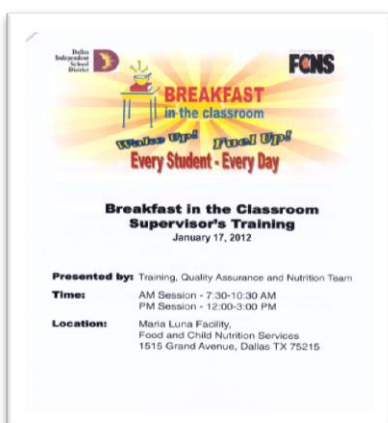


Figure 9 BIC Training Day

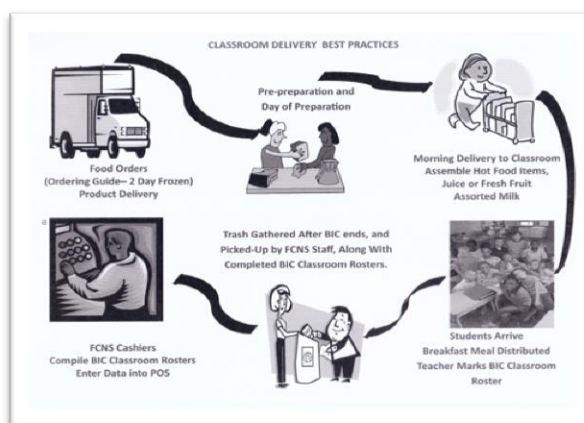


Figure 10 Best Practices Flow Chart

## Marketing BIC to Stakeholders: The ABC's of BIC Promotion

The key to expansion of BIC in the Dallas ISD has been effective marketing. The BIC campaign message “*Wake Up! Fuel Up! Every Child – Every Day*” was incorporated in all promotional materials used with stakeholder groups and the community at large. The FCNS focus for school year 2011-2012 was to inform key stakeholders how easily BIC can be incorporated into the school day and thus gain their support for expanding BIC beyond the 19 grant funded sites. Informational meetings were held with community partners including USDA Regional Office of Education, Dairy Max and Texas Hunger Initiative. BIC presentations were also given at several local professional meetings including National Education Association-Dallas and *Texas No Kid Hungry-Dallas Summit*.

FCNS partnered with Accion America, a Hispanic community activist organization, to host breakfast meetings with building principals. Operational Specialists scheduled meetings with principals to gauge their interest for starting BIC and follow up meetings were held with site based decision making teams.

Children at Risk organized a Hunger Summit. Area food service directors, including Dora, were asked to speak about hunger in Dallas and successful school-based initiatives to eliminate childhood hunger. The Dallas Food Planning Association adopted expanding school breakfast as one of their initiatives. Initially they worked to educate various service organizations and ministries on the benefits of BIC. Later on they assisted with efforts to expand BIC district wide.

A clever one-page BIC flyer, “A Proven Way to Improve Student Learning,” was developed to invite principals and teachers to start a successful FREE breakfast in the classroom program at their school. The flyer cited academic and health reasons for starting breakfast in the classroom. The ease of offering breakfast was also touted, citing the choice of 3 different delivery models. Contact information was provided to refer interested educators to a

knowledgeable resource person. A separate BIC *Frequently Asked Questions* piece was developed to assist in answering repetitive questions.

Dora provided periodic updates to her Superintendent detailing the BIC start-up schedule and successful implementation at each of the grant funded pilot sites. Keeping the Superintendent and the Board informed was an important factor building district-wide administrative support. Hearing about the positive results at pilot schools, the Superintendent arranged time on the Board meeting agenda for FCNS to share their BIC story. After the presentation, the Board complimented FCNS on the thoughtfully designed approach and the option for sites to select from one of three standardized BIC delivery models. They encouraged the department to work toward expanding the program on a voluntary basis.

To capture positive media attention during National School Breakfast Week, FCNS hosted a community breakfast event at Charles Rice Learning Center, one of the BIC sites. BIC schools were also encouraged to participate in promotional activities that would provide quotable feedback from students and teachers. The student promotion was “*Go for the Gold*” and asked students to write three to five sentences on how breakfast helps them achieve. Winning entries received prizes. The teacher promotion, “*Jump for Joy*,” was designed to solicit personal stories describing the difference breakfast in the classroom has made for them and their students. The winning teachers received a digital jump rope that tracked calories burned and distance traveled while jumping rope. Both promotions were well received. The student and teacher responses were subsequently posted on the FCNS website and incorporated into new promotional materials for school year 2012-2013.

In July 2012, a new Superintendent was appointed by the Board and internal marketing efforts focused on providing the Superintendent with background information regarding the Dallas BIC initiative as well as progress reports on expansion of the program. A tour was planned for the new administrative team members and provided them with an opportunity to obtain a first-hand understanding of how the BIC program functioned. Two key messages were reinforced during the tour. First, the importance of securing campus input into selecting the appropriate delivery model for their campus was stressed. Second was to highlight the value of providing standardized training and resources to ensure smooth implementation at each site

A major undertaking has been the development of Dallas ISD Breakfast in the Classroom training and promotional video, “*Set Up for Success*.” The video features Dallas ISD personnel explaining various aspects of the BIC program from their own occupational perspective. The video standardizes the promotional message and describes best practice methods used for each one of the delivery models. By capturing the information on film, repetitive aspects of conducting outreach and staff training will be reduced and viewer/learner convenience increased.

### Measuring Success: Positive Impact on Students and FCNS

The BIC success can be measured by the impact on student health and academic achievement. Although initial data collection and analysis by a Baylor University research team was unable to document statistically significant results, principals and teachers have reported on the calming

effect the BIC program has had on student's morning routine. Decrease in morning chaos means teachers are starting the instructional day on time with more of the students attention focused on learning. Anecdotally teachers report less discipline problems, less tardiness and fewer referrals to the nurse's office for headaches and tummy aches. General BIC comments from students and parents have been very positive. FCNS plans on conducting an on-line survey of students, parents, teachers and administrators at BIC schools to further document areas of program success and areas for improvement.

Implementing BIC has had a positive financial return for the operating budget of FCNS. Through the expansion of BIC in 14 schools, student participation in school breakfast grew from a daily average of 46,077 students in base year 2009-2010 to a daily average of 50,773 students during school year 2011-2012. The increased breakfast participation translated to providing 4,766 more students per day with the nourishment needed to focus their attention on learning. This increase in breakfast participation resulted in FCNS receiving an additional \$1.9 million in federal reimbursement when compared to the 2009-2010 base year.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Total Breakfast Meals Served</b>	<b>Breakfast ADP (175 days)</b>	<b>Federal Breakfast Reimbursement</b>
2011-2012	8,885,347	50,773	\$15,331,858
2009-2010	8,051,317	46,007	\$13,431,725

In November 2012, the Dallas ISD Board of Education overwhelmingly recommended that BIC be expanded district-wide. Although voluntary implementation had expanded the BIC program, it had not been at the level they would have liked to see. They agreed that a Board policy requiring that BIC be expanded district-wide would assure all students access to a healthy breakfast and help with the core belief of achieving academic success. The community support for the program through the various community partners and their efforts to reassure the Board that the benefits to the students outweighed any negatives related to the implementation helped make their decision easier and resulted in a win-win for students and the district.

The following page provides a sample cost analysis of implementing breakfast in the classroom at an individual school site. You can use this worksheet as a template when determining the feasibility of implementing breakfast in the classroom.

This spreadsheet is intended as a guide. Each school site has different needs. Those needs should be taken into account as final determination is made to implement breakfast in the classroom.

## School Nutrition Foundation

### Sample case study worksheet for breakfast in the classroom implementation

#### Riverview Elementary

Enrollment	415	Free	345	83%
ADA	398	Reduced	19	5%
Number of classrooms	20	Paid	51	12%

	# of students	% participation
Current participation	146	37% (current overall participation/ADA)
Goal participation	360	90% (goal participation/ADA)

#### October

##### Daily Revenue

Current	Meal Price	Reimbursement	Number of students	Total
Free	\$ -	\$ 1.85	125	\$ 231.25
Reduced	\$ 0.30	\$ 1.55	7	\$ 12.95
Paid	\$ 0.80	\$ 0.27	14	\$ 14.98
			<b>146</b>	<b>\$ 259.18</b>
<b>Universal BIC</b>				
Free	\$ -	\$ 1.85	320	\$ 592.00
Reduced	\$ -	\$ 1.55	15	\$ 23.25
Paid	\$ -	\$ 0.27	25	\$ 6.75
			<b>360</b>	<b>\$ 622.00</b>

##### Start up expenses Year 1

Storage containers	\$ 1,900.00
Milk cooler	\$ 2,000.00
Insulated bags	\$ 1,080.00 (2 per classroom for hot and cold items)
Waste containers	\$ 240.00 (20 classrooms at \$12 each)
Supplies	\$ 900.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,120.00</b>

Total 5 year expenses **\$9,880.00** (replacement and misc. additional supplies)

**Assumption** : 5 year amortization period  
180 serving days per year x 5 = 900 days\*

##### Daily Expenses

Current	(146 meals)	Total
Food cost	\$ 124.10 (Meal cost = \$.85)	\$ 124.10
Labor cost	\$ 59.50 (3.5 hours at \$17/hour)	\$ 59.50
		<b>\$ 183.60</b>
<b>Universal BIC (360 meals)</b>		
Food cost	\$ 306.00 (Meal cost = \$.85)	\$ 306.00
Labor cost	\$ 102.00 (6 hours at \$17/hour)	\$ 102.00
Consumables	\$ 21.60 (\$.06 per meal)	\$ 21.60
Expense amortization	\$ 10.98 (\$9,880/900*)	\$ 10.98
		<b>\$ 440.58</b>

##### Analysis

Monthly	Daily	# of serving days	
<b>Current</b>			
Revenue less expenses	\$ 75.58	20	<b>\$ 1,511.60</b>
<b>Universal BIC</b>			
Revenue less expenses	\$ 181.42	20	<b>\$ 3,628.44</b>
<b>Annually</b>			
<b>Current</b>	\$ 75.58	180	<b>\$ 13,604.40</b>
<b>Universal BIC</b>	\$ 181.42	180	<b>\$ 32,656.00</b>



Education, Research and Scholarship

[www.schoolnutrition.org/bic](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/bic)

This spreadsheet is intended as a guide. Each school site has different needs. Those needs should be taken into account as final determination is made to implement breakfast in the classroom.  
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