

2024 NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL MEALS

WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Students cannot learn if they are hungry. School meals are a powerful tool for increasing academic achievement and fighting child hunger. This profile provides a snapshot of how **Wake County Schools** is providing access to healthy school meals for students in **Wake County**. Use this profile to celebrate successes and identify opportunities to continue the fight against child hunger.

Overview of the Program

- The **National School Lunch Program** and **School Breakfast Program** provide healthy meals that meet federal nutrition guidelines to students.
- **School meals have many benefits** including improved academic performance and attendance, fewer behavioral issues, improved food security, and better diet quality.¹
- All students can participate in school meals. **Students from low-income households can qualify for free or reduced-price (FRP) school meals.**
- Districts that have a high percentage of low-income students may opt to serve meals through the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**. CEP provides school meals at no cost to families in high poverty areas without having to fill out school meals applications.



October 2023 Facts



157,657

students attended schools that served meals in the district

12

schools serving meals participated in the community eligibility provision (CEP)

6%



195

schools served school meals in the district



60,664

students in the district were eligible for FRP meals

38%

For more information visit: CarolinaHungerInitiative.org/Profiles

WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS

School Meals Policy Updates

- The North Carolina General Assembly allocated recurring funds in the 2023 Appropriations Act (House Bill 259) to **provide lunch at no cost to students eligible for reduced-price lunch.**
- During the 2023-24 school year, North Carolina began participating in the **Direct Certification with Medicaid** (DC-M) demonstration project. The DC-M project allows children receiving Medicaid from households who meet income eligibility guidelines to be directly certified to receive free or reduced-price school meals without having to fill out a household application.

October 2023 School Meals Participation

	School Breakfast		School Lunch	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Students	18,309	12%	50,030	32%
FRP Students	14,577	24%	32,014	53%

Innovative Breakfast Models

Students may have difficulty participating in school breakfast when it is served before school in the cafeteria. Many schools across North Carolina use innovative breakfast serving models such as **breakfast in the classroom, second chance breakfast, or grab n' go breakfast** to make it easier for students to participate and fuel up before learning. Learn more about breakfast serving models here: go.unc.edu/breakfastmodels



1.frac.org/wp-content/uploads/School-Meals-are-Essential-Health-and-Learning_FNL.pdf

Data Source: NC Department of Public Instruction October 2023 Meal Claims Data as of 2/8/2024

This profile only includes information on schools serving meals in October 2023. Additional information on data and calculations used in this profile can be found at CarolinaHungerInitiative.org/profiles.