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DATE: June 25, 2019

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

FROM: Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Education

Douglas H. Fisher, Secretary
New Jersey Department of Agriculture

SUBJECT: School Breakfast Program

The New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture have partnered to communicate the importance of school breakfast programs and the positive impact they have on student learning, health and academic achievement. A state law signed by Governor Phil Murphy on May 30, 2018 ([N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.3](#)) requires implementation of a “breakfast after the bell” program no later than September 2019 in schools where 70% or more of the enrolled students are eligible to receive free or reduced priced meals.

According to a report by [Hunger Free New Jersey](#) and the [Food Research & Action Center](#) (FRAC), New Jersey ranked 19th nationally in 2018 for student participation in school breakfast, up from its rank of 46th in 2010. Despite this great stride, approximately 300,000 eligible New Jersey school students continue to miss out on a healthy breakfast at school. The new “breakfast after the bell” state law will require qualifying schools to incorporate breakfast programs as part of the school day, usually during an allotted time in home room or first period class. It is important to note that serving breakfast after school begins counts toward instructional time.

The “breakfast after the bell” service method has been shown to significantly boost student participation in the federal School Breakfast Program, which ensures consumption of balanced, nutritious meals. It also provides federal dollars to feed breakfast to low-income students in New Jersey and across the nation. When participation increases, so do federal dollars claimed.

The [New Jersey Food for Thought Campaign](#) provides a host of information related to the “breakfast after the bell” program, including guidelines and resources for implementing a school breakfast program and success stories from New Jersey schools currently participating in the program.