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More students are choosing to eat breakfast at school as menu options improve

New statistics show students are making healthier choices in school cafeterias

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) Monday, December 5, 2016 - It's been 50 years since schools first started a pilot program that would allow students to eat breakfast at school. Since that program launched, the number of students eating school breakfast continues to increase, better preparing students for success in the classroom.

According to new statistics released by the [American Dairy Association Mideast](#), about 28 percent of children nationally are lining up for breakfast at school. But thanks to dairy farmer funding, that number is even higher for Ohio and West Virginia schools receiving a [Fuel Up To Play 60](#) grant. Breakfast numbers at those schools have climbed to more than 43 percent.

"It is a program that was designed by dairy farmers and the National Football League working together with the United States Department of Agriculture to help improve the lives of children by offering healthier options and encouraging 60 minutes of physical activity a day," said Scott Higgins, CEO for the American Dairy Association Mideast, headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. "Across the country, dairy farmers have invested more than a quarter billion dollars in schools since 2009 to help improve access to nutrient-rich foods and get kids up and moving."

One of the main ingredients leading to larger school breakfast crowds is expanded menu options. For example, Jonathan Alder Local Schools in Plain City, Ohio recently used grant money provided by dairy farmers to purchase smoothie machines for every school in the district. "Smoothies have been a big win for us," said Tonya Grove, Jonathan Alder Local Schools' Food Service Director. "Students love the different tastes and flavors so it's something new and exciting for them to try that they may not have the opportunity to consume outside of school."

It's a concept that kids are embracing in the cafeteria line. New American Dairy Association Mideast statistics show 88 percent of students are drinking more milk at school and 77 percent are eating more yogurt at school in Ohio and West Virginia. Nationally, yogurt and milk consumption are also climbing with 78 percent of students drinking more milk at school and 81 percent eating more yogurt at school. That's something Grove credits with the revamping of school breakfast programs including additional healthy options like smoothies. "We feel we've got a very nutritious product that can get the kids going and it also provides a

broad base of nutrients so that they're ready to go. You must have dairy products at breakfast, especially when you are fueling young minds.”

For more on the American Dairy Association Mideast and Fuel Up To Play 60 program, go to www.drink-milk.com.

MULTIMEDIA AVAILABLE: For broadcast quality b-roll and sound bites and high resolution stills, you can access the American Dairy Association Mideast’s multimedia newsroom here: bit.ly/1QekGi6

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