



A nutritious breakfast that includes whole, nutrient-dense foods, helps students start the day with steady energy, improved focus, and better eating habits that follow them into adulthood. Choosing simple, real foods supports lower added sugars and sodium and meets one of the goals of the [USDA Pledge for Healthier School Meals](#).

Key Pledge Tips

- Focus on real, whole nutrient-dense foods including meats and meat alternates, milk, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and 100% whole grains.
- Limit added sugars by swapping out pastries with dishes made with savory meats or meat alternates.
- Keep sodium low with whole, nutrient-dense ingredients.
- Prioritize meats and meat alternates (such as eggs and yogurt), 100% whole grains, and whole fruit to meet USDA meal patterns and support satiety.
- Highlight local ingredients whenever possible.

Simple Whole-Food Breakfast Menu Ideas

Choose options that are easy to prepare, kid-friendly, and meet meal pattern requirements found at the Child Nutrition Recipe Box:

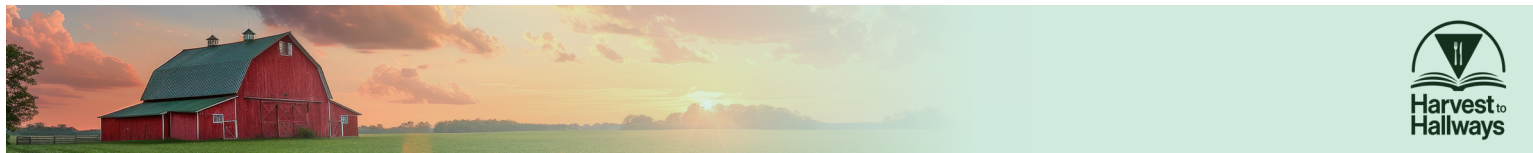
- [Breakfast Bowl](#)
- [Fruity Oatmeal](#)
- [Roasted Potatoes and Turkey Hash](#)
- [Breakfast Burrito](#)
- [Prairie Parfait](#)
- [Vegetable Frittata Bites](#)

School Spotlights

Switching from grain-based desserts to savory breakfast options that include meats and meat alternates can offer a wider variety of choices at breakfast.

- Lebanon School District in Pennsylvania swapped grain-based desserts for savory options like breakfast pizza, egg and cheese on a whole grain biscuit, and breakfast casserole to name a few.
- Recipe testing at North Crawford School District in Wisconsin revealed students preferred scratch-prepared savory breakfast options such as country breakfast bowls, breakfast “tot-chos”, freshly baked biscuits, ham and cheese muffins, or a breakfast taco bar.
- Brookline School District in Massachusetts has expanded their breakfast options to include more meat alternate options, featuring options like eggs and a tofu scramble.

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School Spotlights Continued

- Rose City School District in Michigan added a Pumpkin Overnight Oats menu item, after testing through their Discovery Kitchen recipe sampling initiative.
- NorthEast Washington Education Service District 101 staff in Washington participated in culinary training to learn three breakfast recipes using local ingredients: breakfast quesadillas (local tortillas, vegetables, cheese, and sausage), sheet pan pancakes (local flour and apples), and yogurt parfaits with scratch-made granola (local yogurt and berries).
- Four school food authorities in Iowa partnered with Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development to feature an overnight oats recipe with local dairy, berries, and honey in a monthly Scratch Cooking Cohort taste test.

Try It Out!

The following activities will help schools serve whole-food breakfast options.

1. **Swap Challenge:** What simple swaps can I make to replace pastries with whole-food options? List common pastries (e.g., muffins, danish, donuts) and replace each with whole-food alternatives like oatmeal, yogurt parfaits, or egg sandwiches.
2. **Harvest to Hallways:** Feature locally grown fruit (e.g., apples, berries, peaches) or regionally produced dairy items on menu boards or signs to help students understand where their food comes from.
3. **Taste Test ‘Try Day’ Event:** Host a student taste test featuring 2–3 whole-food breakfast options (e.g., vegetable frittata bites, egg-and-cheese whole-grain sandwich, savory breakfast bowl).
4. **Reflection Prompt:** Imagine your school breakfast program as a catalyst for positive change: How could you use whole-food breakfast options to foster a sense of community, celebrate local farmers and food traditions, or spark student curiosity about nutrition?

Helpful Tools

- [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#)
- [Crediting Tip Sheet Series](#)
- [The Real Food Guide To School Breakfast](#)
- [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast](#)
- [Offer Versus Serve Materials](#)
- [School Breakfast Posters](#)
- [School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern](#)
- [Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast](#)
- [Today’s Breakfast Poster](#)
- [Taste-Testing Event Resources](#)
- [Tips for Procuring Whole Foods](#)
- [Eat Real Food Toolkit](#)

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