

Fast Break to Learning

School Breakfast Program



Third-Year Results
2001-2002
Executive Summary

Breakfast is a great kick-off to a productive day at school. At Fast Break to Learning schools, the majority of students take advantage of the opportunity to fuel up for a successful education day.

Research has shown a direct link between good nutrition and learning. *Fast Break to Learning* is an innovative school breakfast program that supports breakfast for all students at low-income elementary schools. The program provides adequate nutrition for children who come to school hungry.

Implication for Meeting No Child Left Behind Requirements

In 2001, Congress passed sweeping legislation to improve educational outcomes for children — the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Schools must demonstrate adequate yearly progress, which is continuous and substantial improvement for the school as a whole and defined subgroups of students.

Test results shown in the Academic Achievement section of this summary indicate that the Fast Break to Learning breakfast program can assist elementary schools in meeting their goals for academic achievement under the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. The Fast Break to Learning breakfast program helps support the academic program at lower-income schools, which have lower average test scores. The mean average Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments score for Fast Break to Learning schools has risen to the point of exceeding the current benchmark of 1420 for adequate yearly progress, in school year 2001-2002.

Schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress face progressive sanctions including replacing staff or significant staff restructuring, state takeover, hiring of management contractors, conversion to charter school and loss of federal funds. The Fast Break to Learning breakfast program can be an important strategy for low-income schools to improve educational outcomes and meet *No Child Left Behind* requirements.

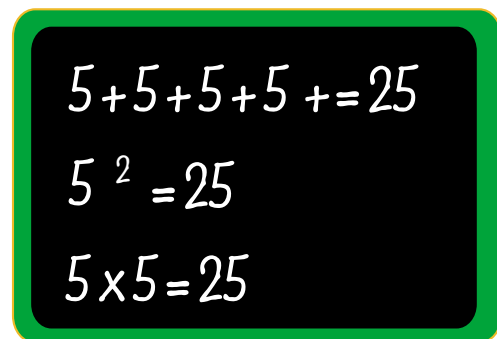
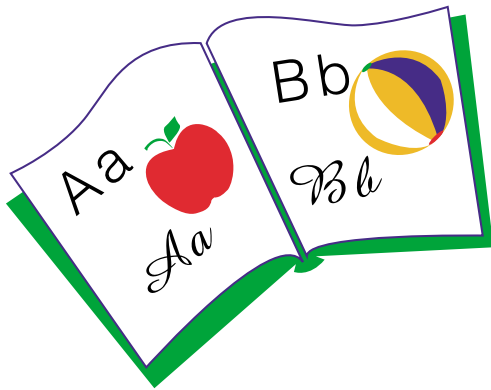
University of Minnesota Research Results

Research on the first three years of Fast Break to Learning breakfast program has been conducted by a collaboration of the Minnesota Department of Education and three research groups from the University of Minnesota.

¥ Office of Educational Accountability

¥ Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement

¥ School of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology



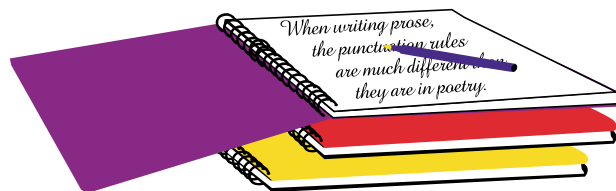
Academic Achievements

Math, reading, and writing components of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments were used to measure academic achievement at Fast Break to Learning schools compared to control schools. School year 1998/99 was used as the baseline for measuring gains because that was the last year before the Fast Break to Learning breakfast program was available. Control schools were those elementary schools that did have a school breakfast program but did not participate in the Fast Break to Learning breakfast program.

Fast Break to Learning schools had greater rates of increase on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments than the control schools in:

1. overall scores,
2. percentage of students achieving at or above Level II, and
3. percentage of students achieving at or above Level III.

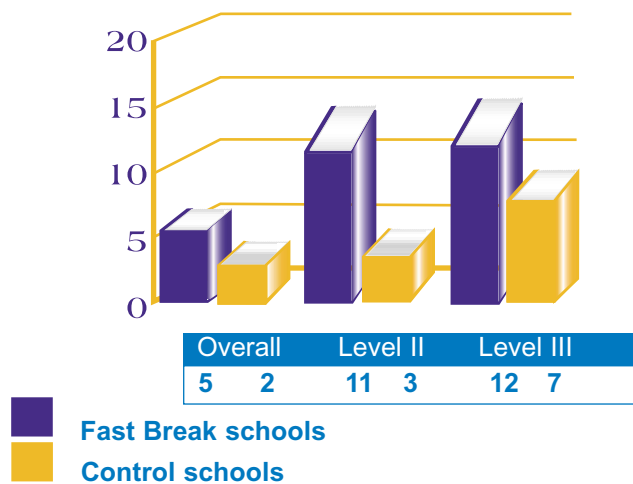
The percentage of students achieving at least Level II is particularly important because Level II defines an acceptable level of achievement on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments.



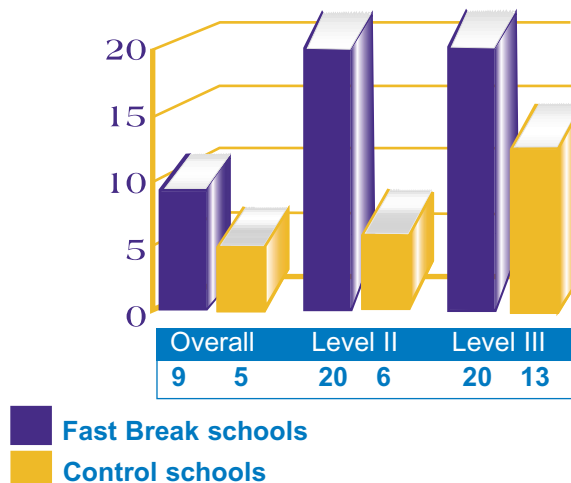
Math Achievement

- Overall, the percent increase in mean score for 3rd and 5th grade students on the math portion of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) at Fast Break to Learning schools was approximately **twice** that of the increase at control schools.
- Percent increase in the number of 3rd and 5th grade students attaining Level II on the math portion of the MCAs at Fast Break to Learning schools was more than **3 times** that of the increase at control schools.

**3rd Grade Math Percent Gain
from 1998-99 (baseline year) to 2001-02**



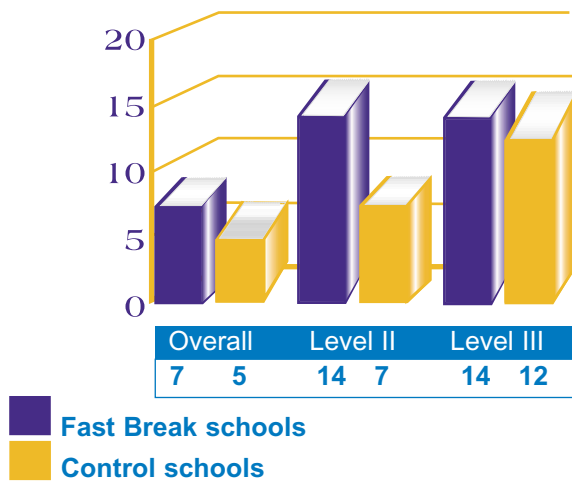
**5th Grade Math Percent Gain
from 1998-1999 (baseline year) to 2001-2002**



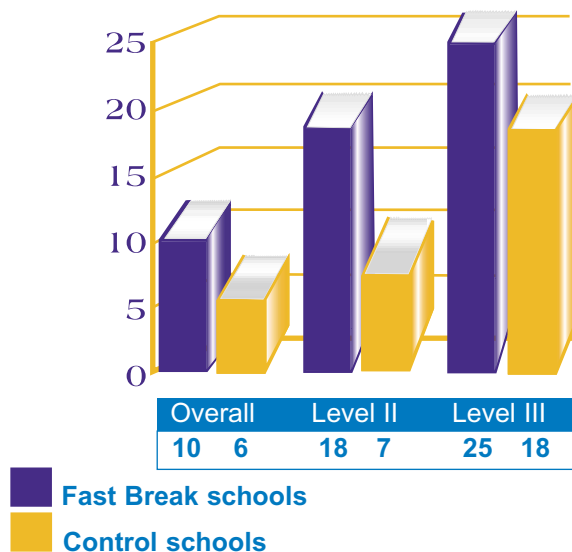
Reading Achievement

- Overall, the percent increase in mean score for 3rd and 5th graders on the reading portion of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) at Fast Break to Learning schools was **1.5 times** the increase at control schools.
- Percent increase in the number of 3rd and 5th grade students attaining Level II on the reading portion of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) at Fast Break to Learning schools was more than **double** that of the increase for control schools.

**3rd Grade Reading Percent Gain
from 1998-1999 (baseline year) to 2001-2002**



**5th Grade Reading Percent Gain
from 1998-1999 (baseline year) to 2001-2002**

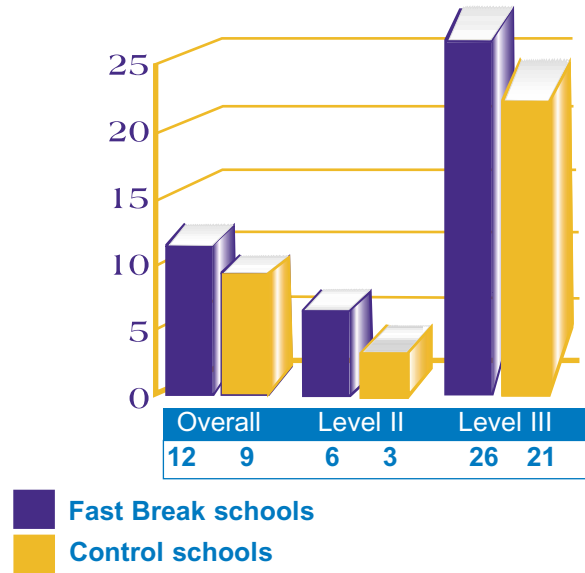


Writing Achievement

- Overall, the percentage in mean score increase on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) 5th grade writing test at Fast Break to Learning schools was **one-third higher** than the increase at control schools.
- The percent increase in the number of fifth graders attaining Level II on the writing portion of the MCAs was **twice** the increase at control schools.

(The writing portion of the MCAs is not given to 3rd grade students.)

5th Grade Writing Percent Gain from 1998-1999 (baseline year) to 2001-2002

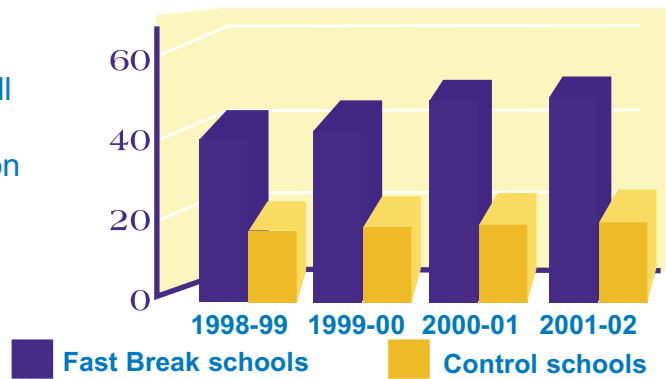


Participation

In school year 2002, over 400 Fast Break to Learning schools served breakfast to **59,000 students each school day**. Since the start of the Fast Break to Learning breakfast program, there has been a gradual increase in the percentage of participating students.

Overall participation rose to 51 percent of all students at Fast Break to Learning schools, almost three times the breakfast participation rate at the control schools.

Students eligible for free meals have the highest participation rates.



Observation

Teachers at participating elementary schools were asked about their hands-on experience with the Fast Break to Learning breakfast program.

The chart at left indicates effects of the Fast Break to Learning breakfast program that more than half of surveyed teachers rated as very positive (score of 4 or 5). Principals also reported that all of these areas are priorities for their schools.



Comments from Principals



"Fast Break to Learning is a wonderful program. I hope it can continue."

Principal, Herman-Norcross Elementary School
Herman, Minnesota

"Our student participation in breakfast increased at least 50 percent. Feedback from parents has been very positive."

Principal, Lynd Elementary School
Lynd, Minnesota

"Kids skip off the school bus and into the cafeteria smiling. The kids are counting on it."

Principal, Braham Elementary School
Braham, Minnesota

"It has been well recieved. It is a great start to the day for so many of our kids who would otherwise be hungry all through the morning."

Principal, Lincoln Elementary School
Brainerd, Minnesota

"We want very much to continue the program. It is important to student learning and behavior."

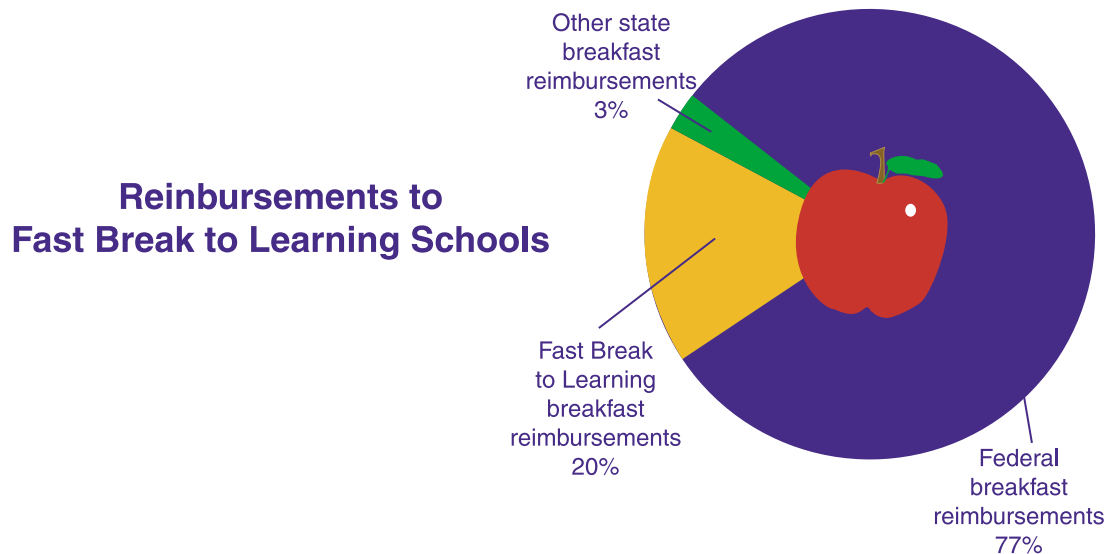
Principal, Sheridan Elementary School
Montrose, Minnesota

"Very worthwhile – We are glad to have the Fast Break to Learning program available to our students."

Principal, Viking Elementary School
Viking, Minnesota

Funding

Federal reimbursements account for three quarters of breakfast funding at Fast Break to Learning schools.



During the course of the year, Fast Break to Learning schools:

- had an overall breakfast participation rate of 51 percent, compared to 21 percent for control schools.
- received an **additional \$3 million in federal breakfast reimbursements** due to the much greater number of breakfasts served to the students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Conclusion

In its third year, the Fast Break to Learning breakfast program helped 59,000 elementary students to prepare for a full morning of learning each school day.

Fast Break to Learning schools continued to show higher rates for participation and for academic improvement than control schools.

Implications for No Child Left Behind

The Fast Break to Learning breakfast program is offered to schools that serve more economically disadvantaged students. These schools have lower average academic achievement scores. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments score for Fast Break to Learning schools has risen to the point of surpassing the current adequate yearly progress level of 1420 in school year 2001- 2002. Continuation of these achievement gains has become critical with the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* legislation.

Minnesota Department of Education

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