



*Creating a hunger-free community*

# **Worcester County Forum on Hunger: *A Call to Action***

***School Meals as a Child Nutrition Resource -  
Overview***

**Justine Kahn**

**Director of Special Projects**

**Project Bread**

# School Meals:

## A Systemic and Sustainable Approach to Addressing Childhood Hunger

Justine Kahn, Director of Special Projects  
Project Bread—The Walk for Hunger

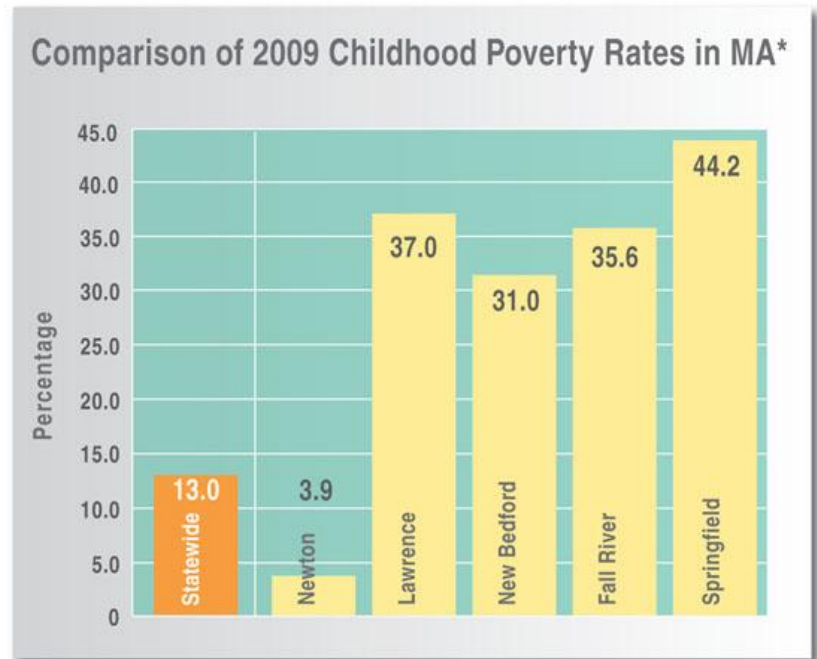
617-239-2572  
[justine\\_kahn@projectbread.org](mailto:justine_kahn@projectbread.org)

# Overview

- Why focus on school meals?
- How to increase access?
- How to improve quality?

# Poverty Rates in MA

- MA largest income gap\*
- Statewide: 10.3%
  - Double in low income communities
- Increase in childhood poverty



*Massachusetts children face the brunt of the recession. Although the state's overall poverty rate has remained relatively stable, the state's poverty rate for children has increased from 10 percent in 2007 to 13 percent in 2009. \*\**

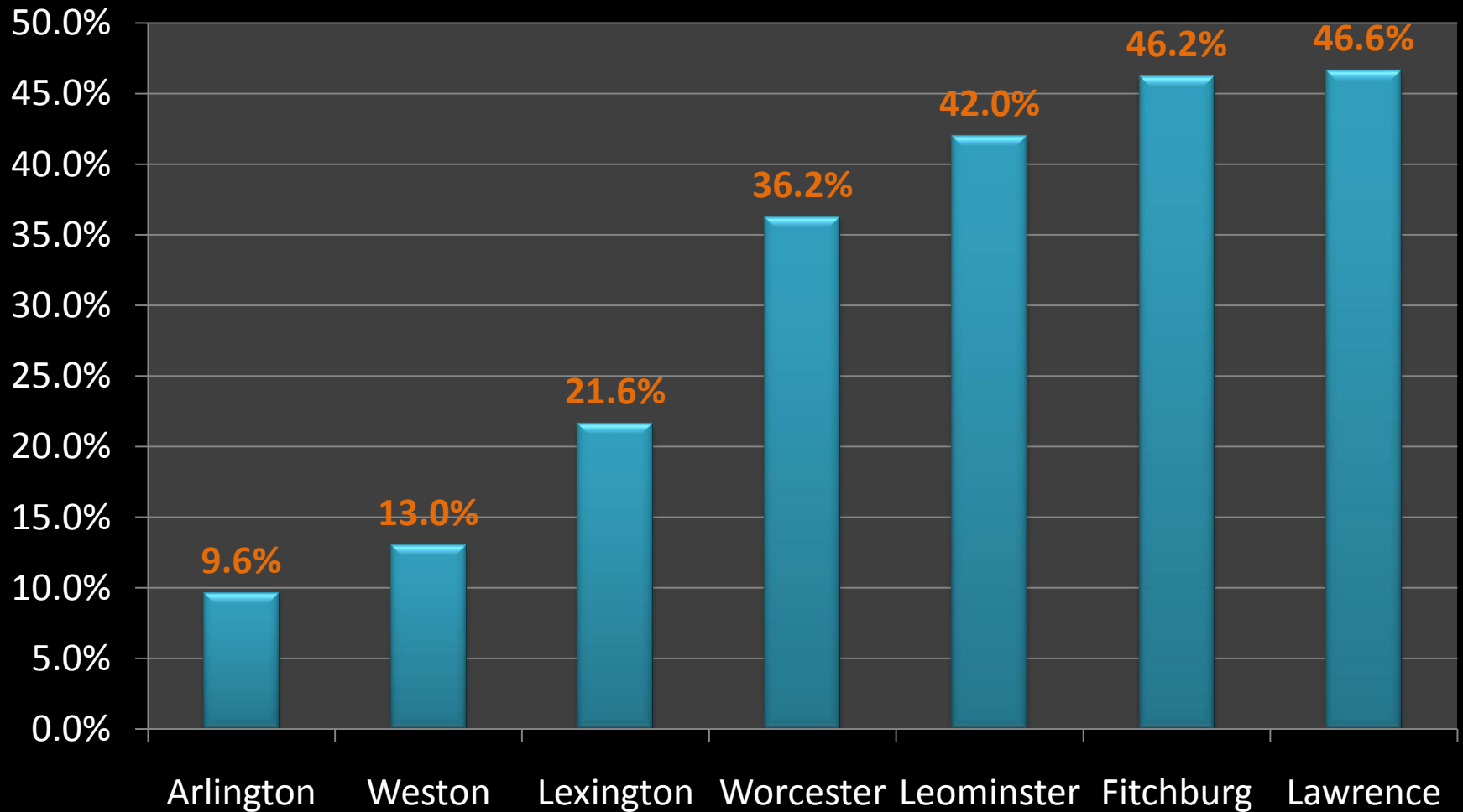
\* Latest data available

\*\* U. S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009.

\* Tied with AZ

# Impact of Childhood Hunger

**% Overweight or Obese in grades 1, 4, 7, 10 (2008-09)**



# Why focus on school meals?

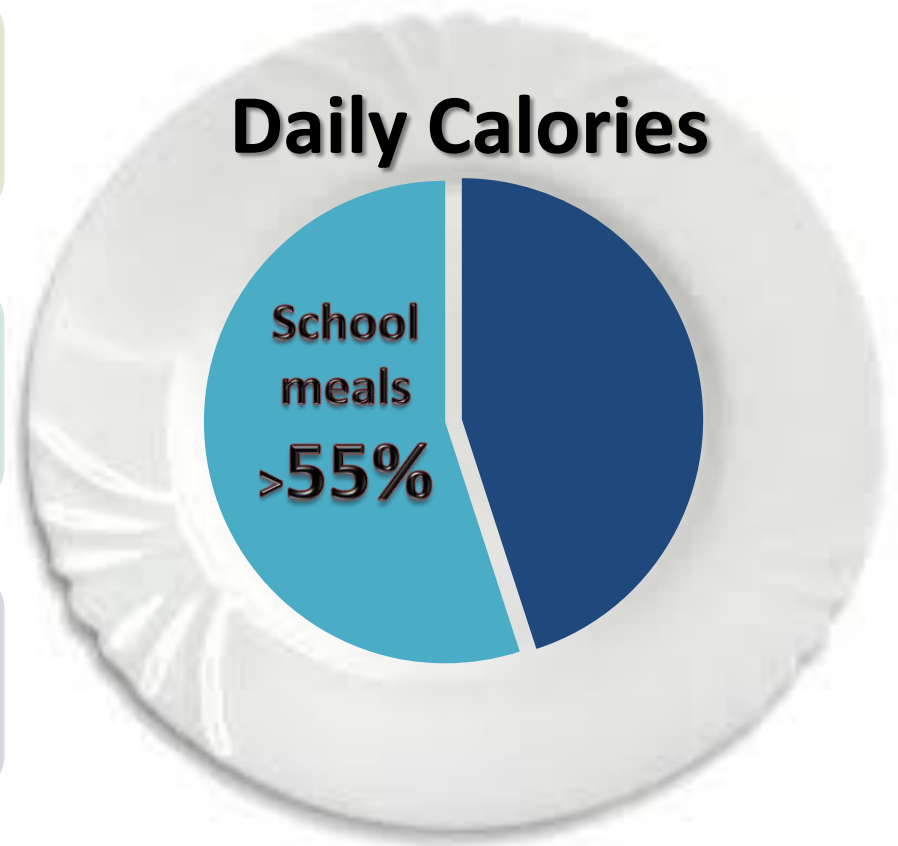
- Free /Reduced price meal eligibility

MA

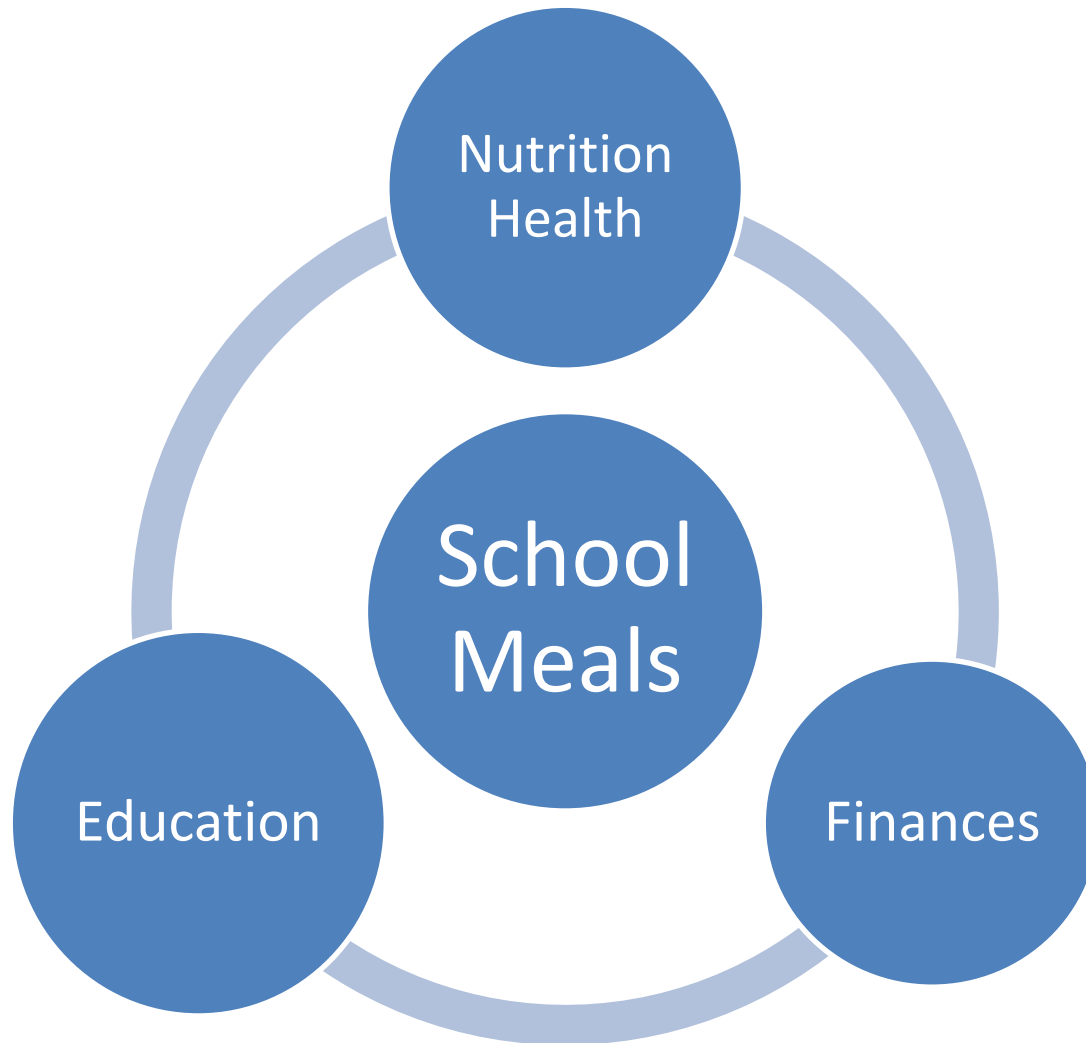
- 327,044
- 34.2%

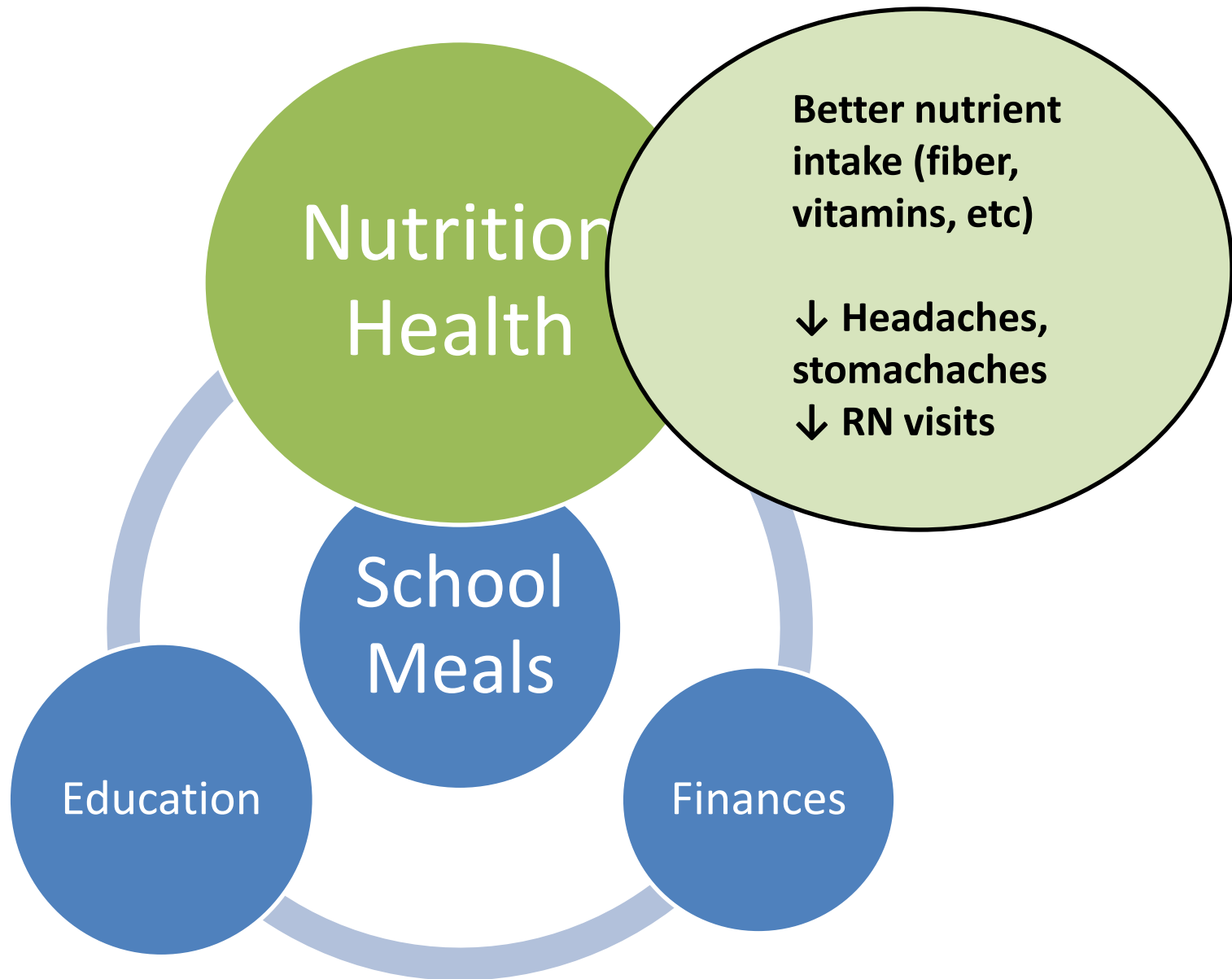
Worcester

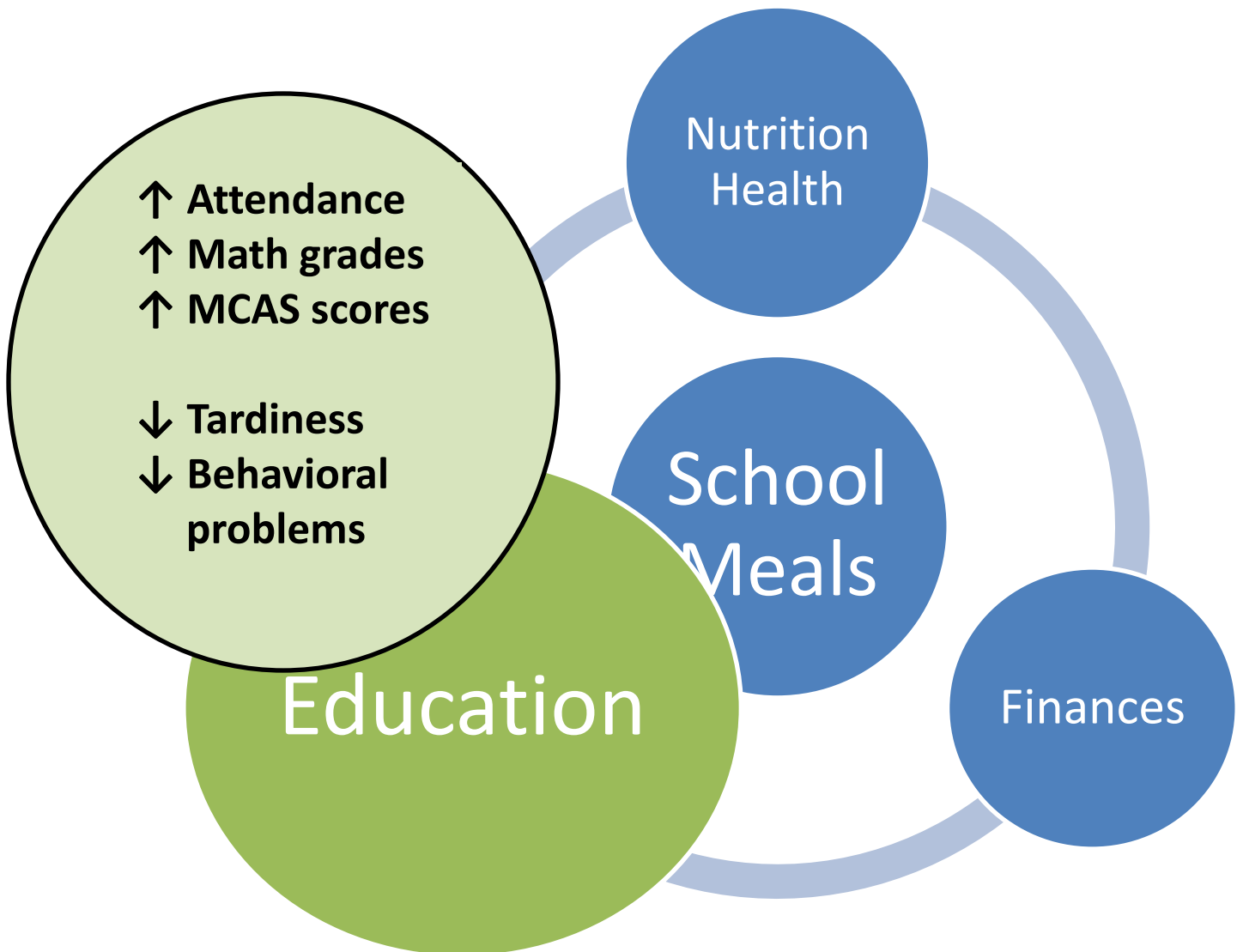
- 17,274
- 70.1%



# Benefits of School Meals







↑ Attendance  
↑ Math grades  
↑ MCAS scores

↓ Tardiness  
↓ Behavioral problems

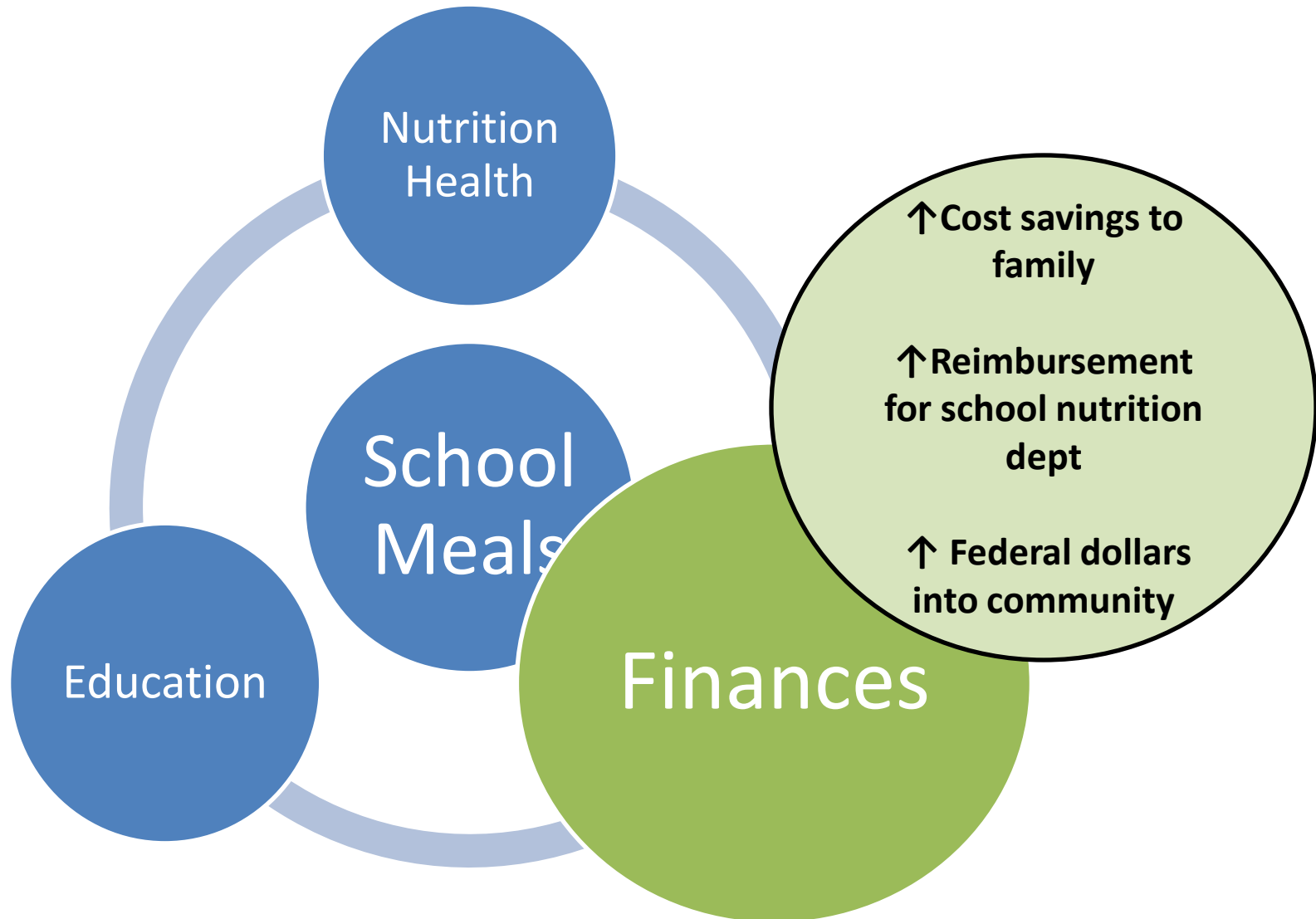
Education

Nutrition  
Health

School  
Meals

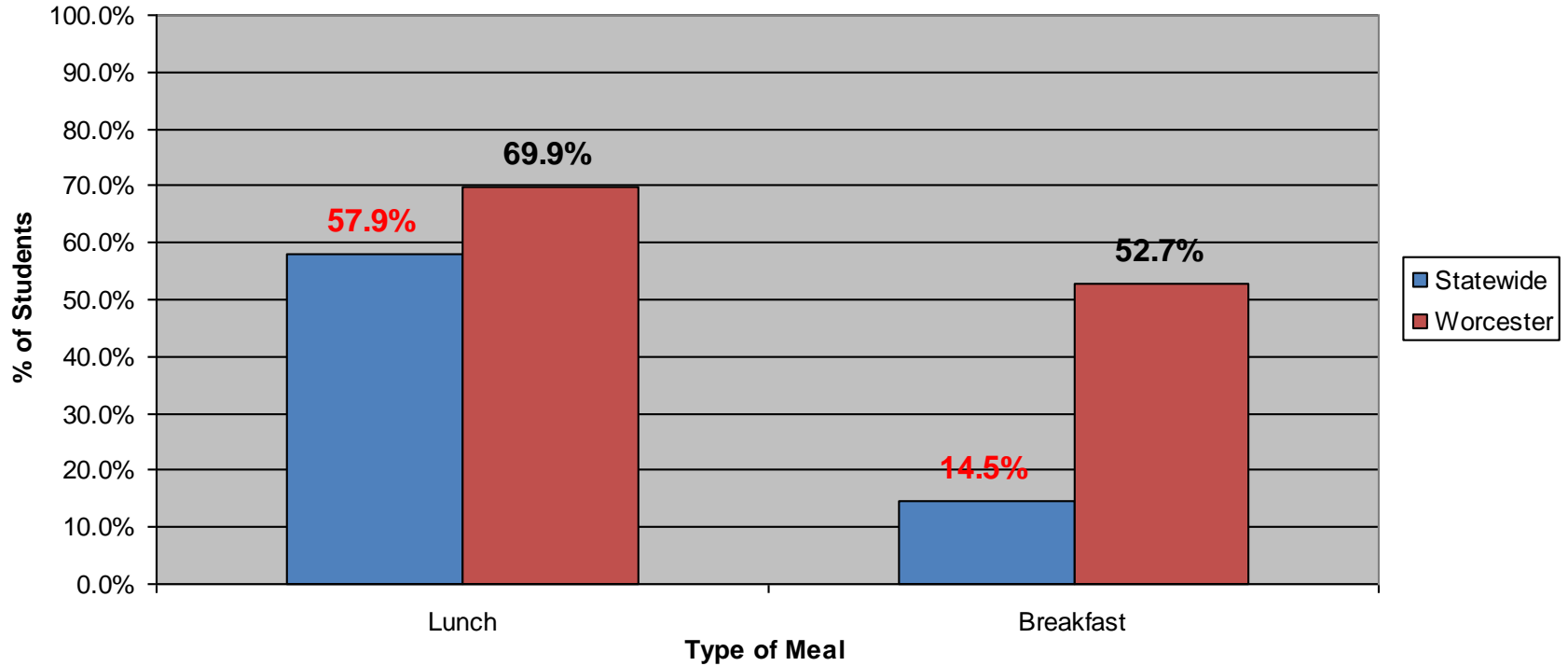
Finances

# Benefits of School Meals



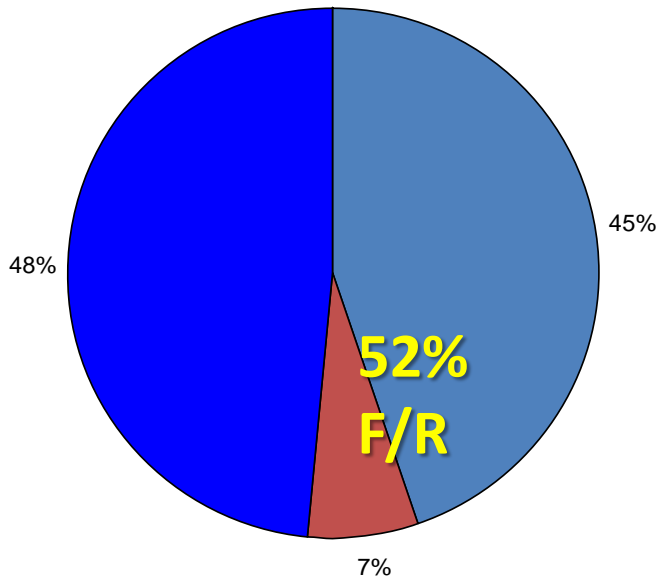
# School Meal Participation

Based on Oct 2010 Data



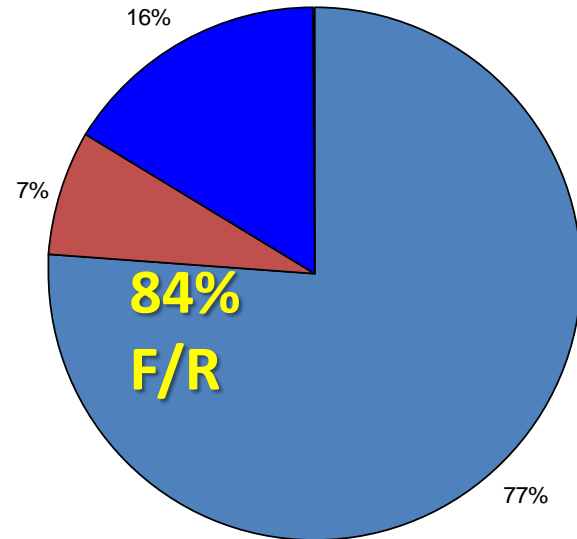
# Who is eating school meals?

F/R/P Lunches Served (Oct 2010)



- Free Lunches
- Reduced Price Lunches
- Paid Lunches

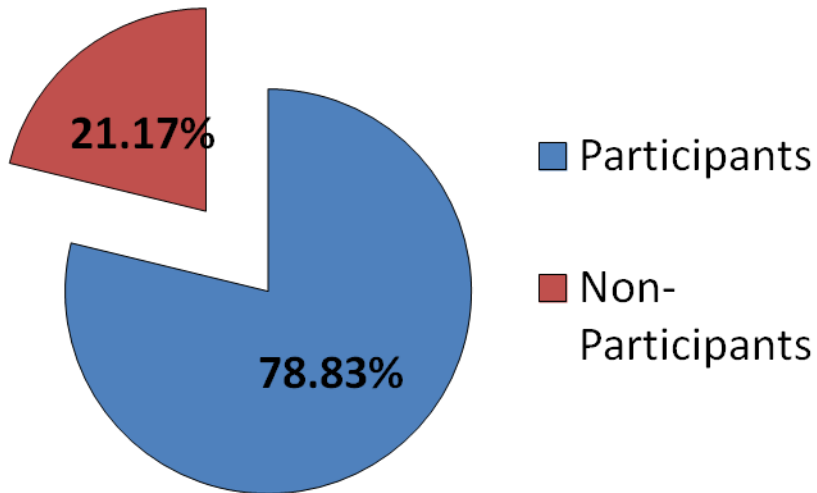
F/R/P Breakfasts Served (Oct 2010)



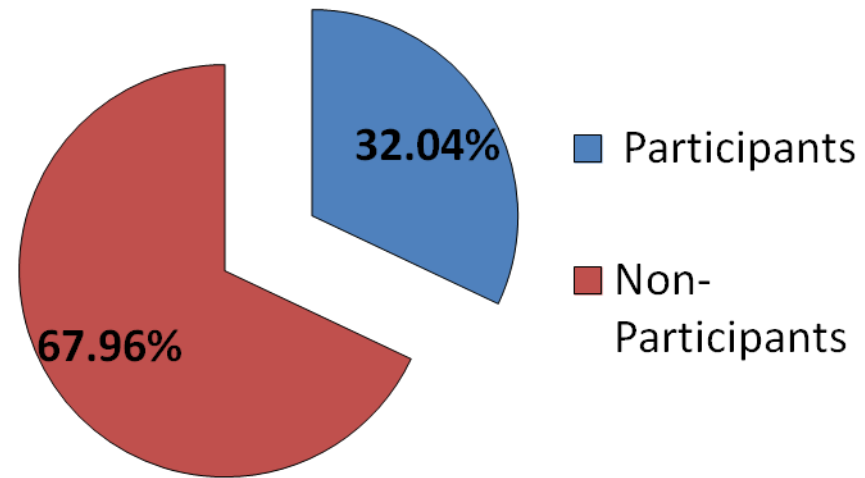
- Free Breakfast
- Reduced Price Breakfast
- Paid Breakfast

# Meal Participation among Students eligible for F/R meals

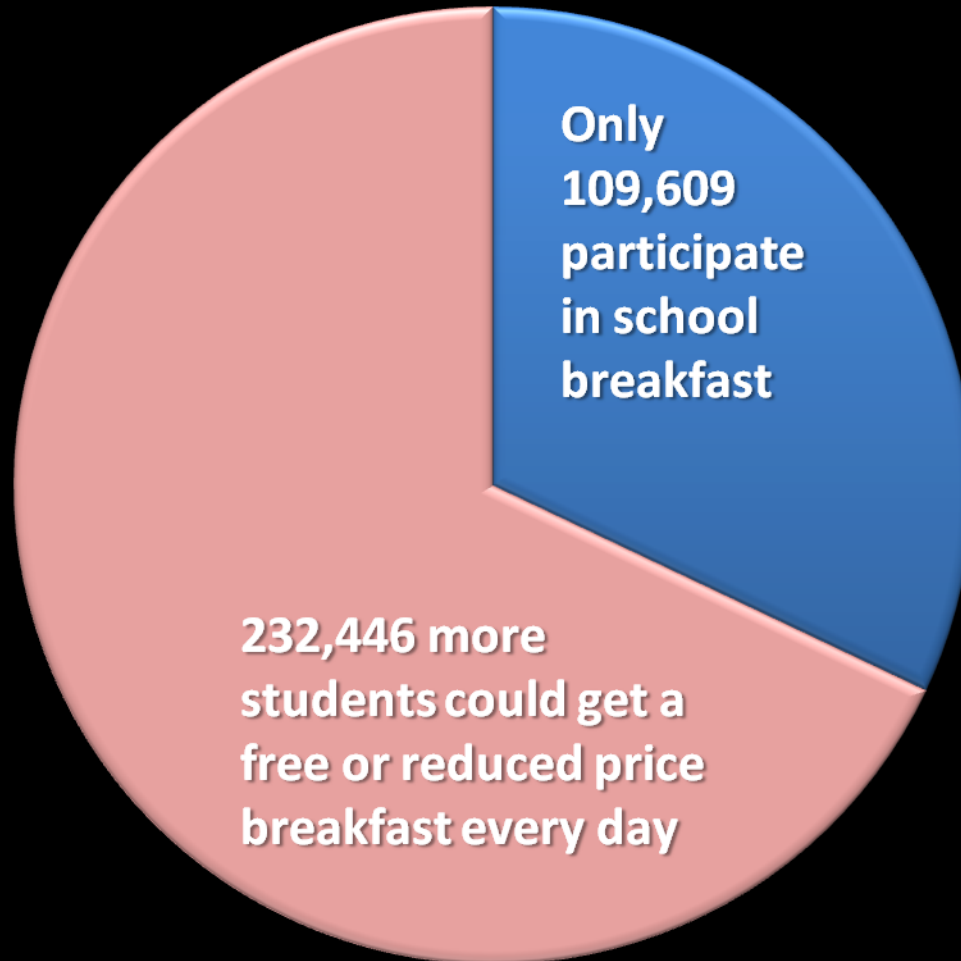
## Lunch



## Breakfast



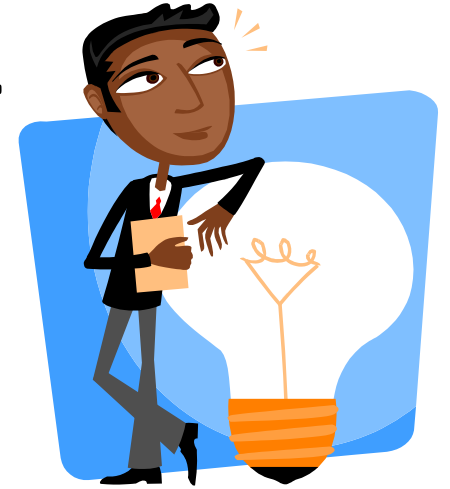
**342,055  
students in  
MA are  
eligible for  
F/R meals**



# Whose responsibility?



# Things to consider



- How much do meals cost?
- When and how is breakfast served?
- What is served at school?

# How much do meals cost?

## School Meal Applications (F/R/P)

- Confidential
- Apply any time during the year
- Reapply if income changes
- Do not need SSN
- Available in multiple languages
- If overincome, may be eligible to receive SNAP → FREE

## Eligible for FREE meals, regardless of income

- SNAP/TAFDC
- Homeless, runaway, migrant youth
- Foster children– *NEW*

# When and How is Breakfast Served?

- Best Practices:
  - Universal Free Breakfast
  - Make breakfast part of the school day
    - In cafeteria
    - Grab and Go
    - Breakfast in the Classroom



# What is served at school?



## Current Standards

- Not updated since 1995.
- No specificity re: fresh fruit, veg, whole grains, low fat dairy.
- Do not address sodium, fiber, trans fat, sugar
- Do not correspond with Dietary Guidelines for Americans

## Proposed standards

- Based on recommendations from IOM
  - ↑ fruit, veg, whole grains, low-fat milk
  - ↓ sodium, sat fat, sugar
- Will go into effect 2012-13

# Chefs in Schools

- Palatability
- Student engagement
- Taste testing
- Plate waste study



# Kids WILL eat it!



## At chef schools:

- Participation was 17% higher
- > 3x as many students ate vegetables
  - Ate 30% more of vegetables on plate
- Drank same amount of white milk as control school that served flavored milk.
- Meals had over 50% more whole grains
- Less food waste
  - 1/5 of food wasted vs 1/3 at control schools

Preliminary results of HSPH plate waste study