

MEMO

TO: Dr. Ilandus Hampton
Assistant Superintendent for Business & Personnel

FROM: Mr. Julie Adelman Director of Support Services

DATE: September 1, 2026

RE: Recommendation to OPT-OUT of Breakfast after the Bell Mandate

PA 99-0850 requires School Districts to provide “Breakfast After the Bell” in public schools in which at least 70 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in October of the preceding year. “Breakfast After the Bell” means breakfast must be provided to students after the instructional day has officially begun. Schools can decide the best method to provide meals after the start of the instructional day. Typical options include serving breakfast in the classroom, using “Grab and Go” carts, or creating an extended passing period after 1st or 2nd period so students can purchase/receive meals in the cafeteria. Schools are allowed to “Opt-out” of the mandate for specific reasons.

Joliet West is exempt from the mandate since the number of free and reduced eligible students was below 70 percent in the ISBE SY 2026 Eligibility Report. Joliet Central and Pathways are required to provide breakfast after the bell or opt out. I recommend the District Opt-Out for the following reasons:

The following cost analysis indicates the State and Federal reimbursement will not fully cover the cost of implementing and operating a breakfast after the bell program.

<i>School</i>	<i>Free & Reduced Percentage</i> ISBE SY 25-26	<i>Projected Loss for 2026-2027 School Year</i>	<i>Projected Loss in Future Years</i>
<i>Central</i>	<i>75.7%</i>	<i>\$117,409</i>	<i>\$69,819</i>
<i>Pathways</i>	<i>82.7%</i>	<i>\$1,918</i>	<i>\$1,918</i>
<i>West</i>	<i>59.3%</i>	<i>\$83,124</i>	<i>\$45,052</i>
<i>TOTAL PROJECTED LOSS FOR DISTRICT 204</i>		<i>\$202,451</i>	<i>\$116,789</i>

1. JTHS currently offers a full breakfast program at Central, West and Pathways consisting of several entrée choices each day. Breakfast is served at Central and West from 6:30 am until 8:15 am and at Pathways from 8-8:15am and 9-9:15am. JTHS served on average 1200 breakfast meals daily during the 2025-26 school year.

2. The reimbursement rates for 2026-27 school year are listed below. They would not cover the added costs associated with distributing breakfast meals outside the established location and hours currently in place.

Reimbursement Rates 2026-27

Breakfast – free meals \$3.05 (increased .11 over 2025-26)

Breakfast – reduced-price meals \$2.75 (increased .11 over 2025-26)

Breakfast – paid meals \$0.42 (increased .02 over 2025-26)

3. The mandate would require the following additional expenses:
 - a. Purchase refrigerated coolers and carts to distribute the meals with milk.
 - b. Employ additional staff to prepare the bagged meals, stock the carts and deliver the meals to every classroom or kiosks around the building.
 - c. Additional custodian resources during the day to empty classroom garbage cans so food and spoiled milk don't begin to stink or attract pests.
 - d. Purchase wireless laptop computers/iPads and scanners to run the food service point of sale software at each cart.
4. Serving meals and allowing students to eat in the classroom will cause disruption. Time would have to be allotted to throw away garbage and clean up individual areas. Extra time would be needed for spills and other clean-ups beyond the normal clean-up.
5. Serving meals in the PE classes will interfere with the class. Instructional time is already lost to allow students to change into the required PE uniform at the beginning and end of class.
6. Serving meals from Kiosks in specific locations would cause long lines during a 5-minute passing period. The kiosks will require additional security during the serving time and will require the school to issue late passes to students who were waiting for food.
7. Adding extra time between 2nd and 3rd period so every student can purchase a meal in the cafeteria will affect the overall daily class schedule. Each class period would need to be shortened or the school day longer. This would also require additional security for student supervision during the extended passing period since students not participating in breakfast would have nothing to do. JTHS begins serving lunch at 10:15 am, which is only 60 minutes after the passing period between period 2 and 3. Due to the constraints, this is not a viable option for JTHS.

Due to circumstances specific to JTHS, the attached cost analysis indicates the State and Federal reimbursement will not fully cover the cost of implementing and operating a breakfast after the bell program. I recommend the school district “opt-out” of the mandate. To opt-out, the school district must do the following:

1. Submit a cost analysis to the District’s Board of Education indicating the reimbursement will not fully cover the cost of implementing and operating the program.
2. The District Board of Education must hold a public hearing and must post the date, time, place, and subject matter of the meeting on its website and notify ISBE by emailing cnp@isbe.net at least 14 days prior to the hearing.
3. If District Board of Education passes a resolution that the district cannot afford to operate a breakfast after the bell program, district submits final resolution approving the breakfast after the bell exemption to ISBE by emailing cnp@isbe.net upon passage.

Open Public Hearing

Comments

Close Public Hearing