

Education and Training

Evaluation of the School Breakfast Clubs Program Interim Report

March 2018

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Introduction

Breakfast is considered to be the most important meal of the day for children. Extensive research has found that children who eat breakfast have improved concentration to be at their best and are more ready to learn. Unfortunately, not all children start the day eating breakfast at home. In 2013 the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that one in seven children arrive at school without having had breakfast, and recent research reveals more than one in five Australian children arrive at school hungry (ABS 2013; Redmond et al. 2016).

Concerns about children's diets in western nations have increased in recent decades as research suggests that children's diets have deteriorated, impacting not only children's health but also their capacity to learn (Belot and James 2011). Research has found that eating a healthy breakfast contributes to children's cognitive skills, concentration and academic outcomes (Dykstra et al. 2016; Education Endowment Foundation [EEF] 2016; Frisvold 2015). It has been argued that providing breakfast at school can be likened to an increase in household income because the children's breakfast needs are being looked after elsewhere (Fletcher and Frisvold 2017).

Research has found that it is not only eating breakfast that has an impact on children's learning. Attendance at breakfast club also has an impact on children's behaviour, learning and wellbeing (Belot and James 2011; Dotter 2013; Dykstra et al. 2016; EEF 2016). There is evidence around the globe that the provision of free breakfast for all students removes the stigma for children who do not have breakfast at home and increases participation rates in breakfast clubs (Dotter 2013; Dykstra et al. 2016; Hoynes and Schanzenbach 2015).

In the 2015–2016 Budget, the Victorian Government committed \$13.7 million over four years to Foodbank Victoria to establish breakfast clubs at 500 government primary schools¹.



¹ For the purpose of this report 'primary schools' refers to primary schools, as well as specialist and primary/secondary colleges that are eligible for the program due to their primary component.

The School Breakfast Clubs Program

The Victorian Government School Breakfast Clubs Program (SBCP) commenced in 2016 and has been operating in 500 of the most disadvantaged primary schools around the state during 2016– 2017. In partnership with Foodbank Victoria, the Victorian Government's SBCP provides a free breakfast to students. This program commenced in 2016 and will run until 2019.

Schools are identified by their Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) data that are based on parental occupation and education level data collected at school level and considered to be the most accurate measure of disadvantage currently available (DET 2017). Now that the program has been implemented in all 500 schools, the SBCP is providing a nutritious breakfast to vulnerable children throughout Victoria. Foodbank Victoria continues to assist schools with advice and support on how to run or grow their SBCP (Foodbank 2018).

The aim of the Victorian Government's School Breakfast Clubs Program is to tackle the disadvantage children experience through the effects of hunger when they arrive at school without having eaten a healthy breakfast. When students are provided with a nutritious breakfast, they are able to participate and engage in all aspects of their learning over the entire school years. Classroom teachers report that 'students are better able to concentrate and make connections with their learning after having breakfast. Some of my students don't get to have breakfast – this [SBCP] is a way they can focus on their learning' (Grade 3 teacher, North-Eastern Metropolitan School; 50% attendance).

Engaging staff, parents and community volunteers to run breakfast clubs remains the greatest challenge for schools. However, research has found that teachers' concerns about running an SBCP can be allayed over time as the provision of breakfast becomes a regular program in the school calendar, particularly when the program runs smoothly and demands little time and effort from school staff (Fletcher and Frisvold 2017; Folta et al. 2016).

In the 2017 findings, 88% of SBCP schools report that they are meeting the breakfast needs of their students, but 46% still report that staffing and volunteers remain the greatest barrier to the program being offered more frequently.

The Research

Victoria University (VU) completed the second year of research and evaluation of the School Breakfast Clubs Program in 2017. The preliminary findings from the research have provided rich insights into project operation, impact, challenges and areas that warrant further investigation in 2018. As the impact of SBCPs on students and school practices is considered, themes around classroom behaviours, social skills and relationships are emerging. The second interim report includes preliminary findings from the first two years of the research, a final report will be delivered at the end of 2018.

In 2017 the research included three components:

- The annual survey conducted with coordinators and principals in all SBCP schools, which included additional questions around the cost for schools of SBCPs in terms of money and time;
- A survey inviting teachers from all SBCP schools to share their professional judgment on the impact of SBCPs on their students. Responses were received from classroom and specialist teachers, Education Support, Welfare and Wellbeing staff and school leadership;
- In-depth case studies of six SBCP schools—four primary schools, one Prep – Year 12 multi-campus college and one Special Development School. Three schools were located in the metropolitan area of Melbourne and three in regional towns and cities.

This interim report is based on preliminary data from the Foodbank baseline survey, the 2016 and 2017 annual survey, the 2016 and 2017 teacher survey and the six case-study findings. The report builds on the first interim report in 2017 to provide an overview of the impact of SBCPs, their operational practices and the challenges schools face offering the program to all students every school day.

The SBCP has now been operating for two years. Of the 500 schools participating in SBCPs, 81% responded to the annual survey and staff from 26% of schools participated in the teachers' survey. To ensure student voices were included in the research, focus groups were conducted with students in the six case-study schools, providing us with rich data about their engagement with SBCPs. Students were asked why their school ran an SBCP.

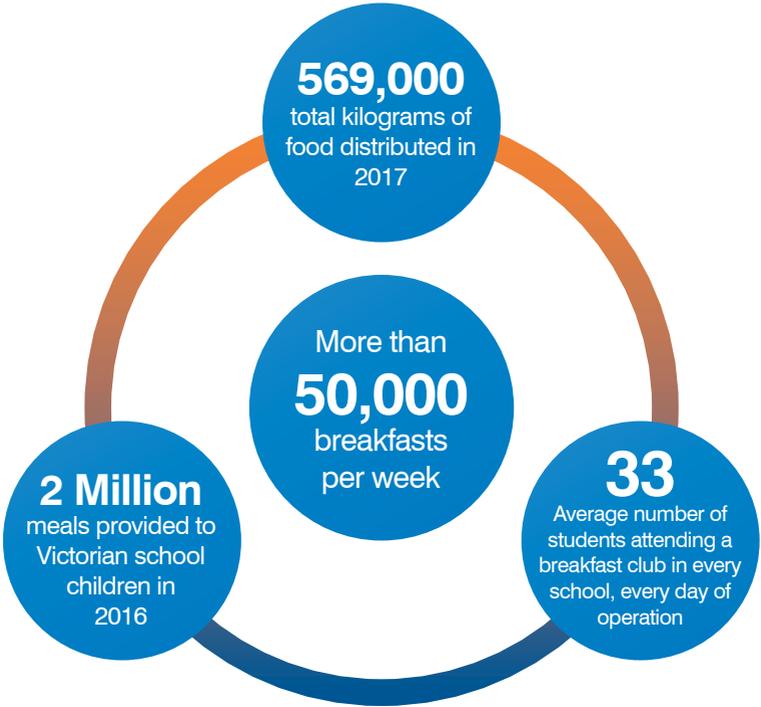
“ Student 1: Well, I think that they [schools] have breakfast because a lot of people don't have breakfast at home, they don't have enough money to buy food.

Student 2: Maybe just home situations, like they just want to get out of the house really quickly.

Student 3: Or they sleep in pretty much every day

(Student Focus Group, North-Eastern Regional School; 15% attendance).

The Numbers



Foods provided



Summary of Preliminary Findings

Impact

98% of schools use their SBCP for informal learning, including leadership opportunities for students

81% of teachers surveyed report improvements in concentration for students who attend SBCPs

76% of teachers surveyed report improvements in social relationships between staff and students attending SBCPs

Operation

88% of SBCP schools report that they are meeting the breakfast needs of their students

82% of SBCP schools provide additional food for students

Challenges

60% of schools report that children arriving late is a reason more students do not participate in SBCPs

55% of schools report that staff are committing 2–6 hours a week to their SBCP

46% of SBCP schools report that engaging staff, parents and community volunteers remains their greatest challenge

20% of schools report a decrease in parent and community involvement in SBCPs in 2017

9% of regional schools report bus arrival time as a challenge to operating more frequently or having more students attend

SBCP Impact

Making a Difference to Children’s Learning

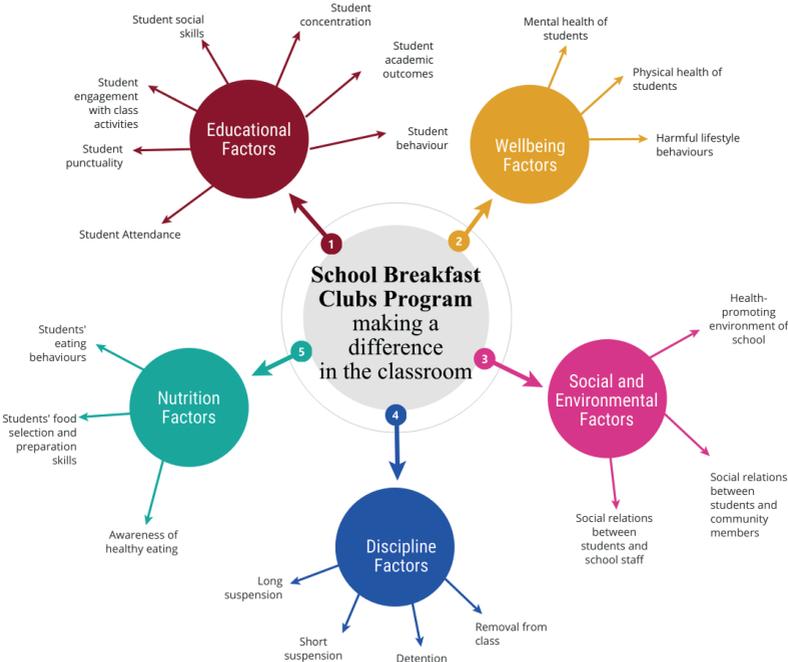
The teacher survey asked teachers for their professional judgment about the impact of SBCP for students in their class. The teacher survey recognises that teachers are best placed to notice changes in their students.

Drawing on their professional judgement, the survey invites teachers to give their professional opinion on the impact of SBCPs on five key factors; Educational, Wellbeing, Nutrition, Discipline and Social and Environmental Factors.

The teacher survey gave teachers six options for each question and they could respond to multiple options in different combinations: got better for most or got better for some, and no change for most or no change for some, and got worse for most or got worse for some.

This enabled teachers to report the impact of SBCP more accurately as it removed the possibility of teachers reporting no change if the SBCP had impacted on all children except one, or a few, in their class. In this example the teacher could respond got better for most and no change for some.

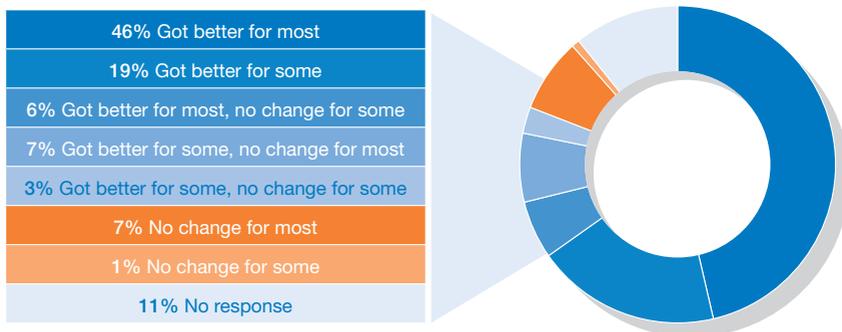
In 2017, 376 responses were received from classroom and specialist teachers, wellbeing and welfare staff, education support staff and school leadership; these are reported on in this report.



Impact on Students' Capacity to Learn

The SBCP is having an impact on Victorian students' capacity to learn and in the classroom. The most noted areas of impact is on students' concentration, with 81% of teachers reporting that their SBCP impacts on concentration for students who attend.

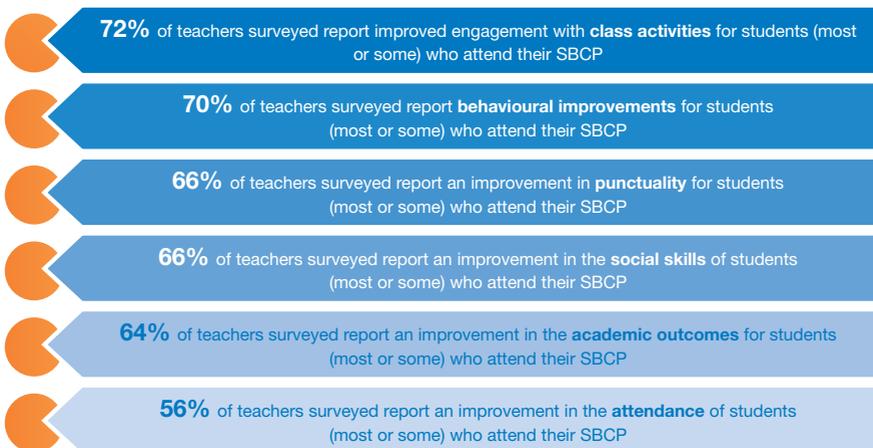
SBCP Impact on Student Concentration Reported by Teachers (n=376)



Less than 2% of teachers reported that student concentration got worse as a result of attending SBCPs.

Many of these children would not and often do not eat breakfast before coming to school. On the days we have breakfast at school, these children are more engaged and able to cope with the learning we do prior to playtime. They are able to concentrate on tasks
(Year 3/4 Teacher, North-Eastern Metropolitan School; 26% attendance).

Teachers also report that SBCPs are impacting on the following educational factors.

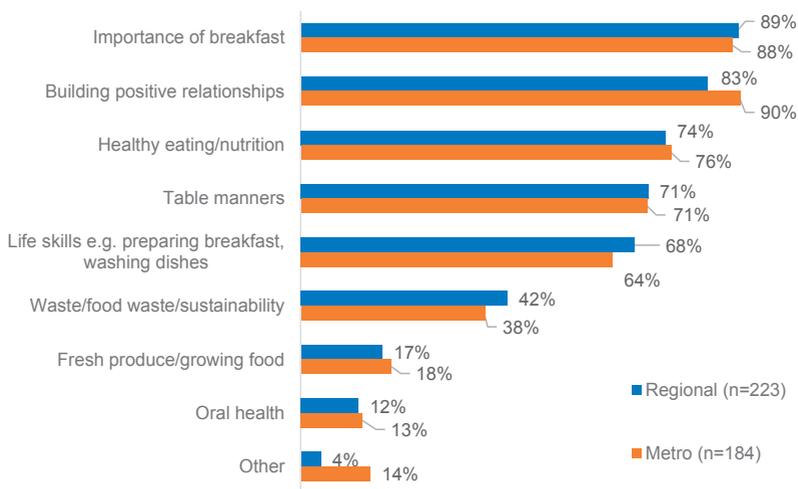


Findings from our case-study research suggest that the 6% of teachers who reported that student punctuality got worse represents students turning up to class late as a result of attending SBCP rather than being late to school.

Impact on Students' Informal Learning

Schools use their SBCPs for informal learning opportunities. Students are being taught about the importance of breakfast and building positive relationships with their peers, staff and volunteers in over 85% of SBCP schools.

Informal Learning from SBCPs Reported by Coordinators and Principals



Coordinators and principals were invited to respond to multiple informal learning opportunities.

Students at Broadmeadows Special Development School learn valuable life skills through their SBCP. The program is run by a leading teacher, but students are involved at every step in the process: from stocktaking and ordering through to food preparation and customer service. For many of these students the SBCP has made a difference to their ability to look after their own breakfast needs.

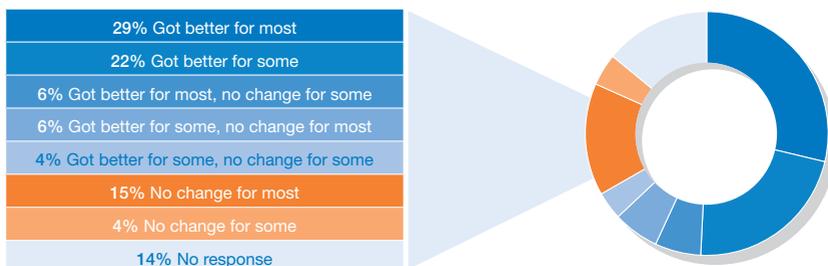
He's got to learn these skills so the more he can become independent and be able to understand food and cook for himself – he's never going to be able to cook like you and I can but at the moment he will make his own breakfast. He'll make his Weet-Bix or if he wants toast, he'll make his toast and that so he's learned that. He knows how to use the toaster now and microwave.

(Steve and Donna, Parents, North-Western Metropolitan School; 100% attendance)

Impact on Students' Social and Emotional Health and Wellbeing

The SBCP is having an impact on students' health and wellbeing. The importance schools place on this aspect of SBCP was evident in the case-study research with four of the six schools run by welfare staff, social workers or youth workers.

SBCP Impact on Student's Physical Health Reported by Teachers (n=376)



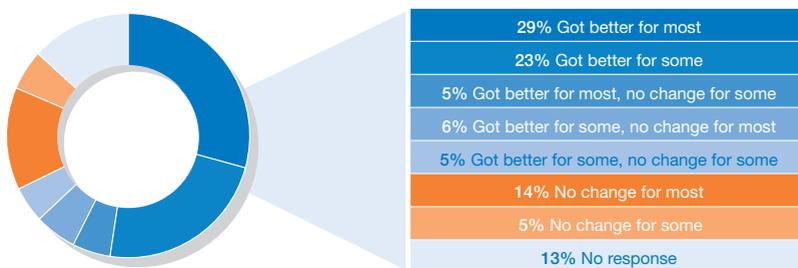
Less than 3% of teachers reported that student's physical health got worse as a result of attending SBCPs.

The case-study schools reported that the welfare and wellbeing aspect of SBCPs has had a significant impact for children who attend.

It's all that feeling of belonging and creating a safe place for our children to come to no matter what's happened overnight. And sometimes you hear the stories and it brings you to tears but they have fronted up in the morning, they walk in, there's familiar faces, they feel like they belong and they've got something to offer, to contribute. It doesn't matter how small you are, you can be a part of handing out toast or wiping down benches

(Principal, Prep – Year 4 Campus, North-Eastern Regional School; 15% attendance).

SBCP Impact on Student's Mental Health Reported by Teachers (n=376)



Less than 2% of teachers reported that student's mental health got worse as a result of attending SBCPs.

Some schools are building SBCPs into the duties of their wellbeing and welfare staff. One principal described this responsibility as a 'great extension' of the Social Worker's role.

It's a nice way of getting to know the kids; it's a nice way of them getting to know me. It's an everyday sort of task; it's not like you have to sit across from the table from me and tell me about your worries; it's more of a, hi, how are you going? What's happening? It's that first adult interaction in the school in a morning for some kids

(Social Worker, South-Western Metropolitan Primary School; 16% attendance).

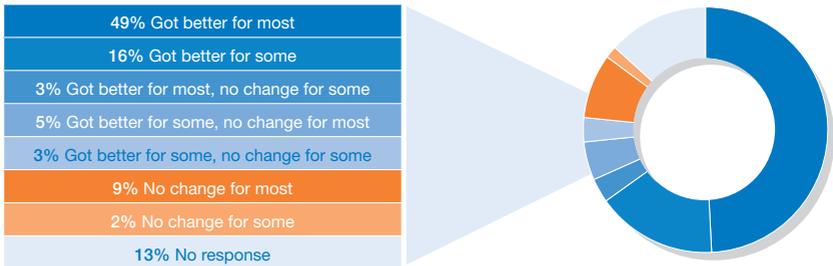
Impact on Relationships in Schools

The research identified the importance of SBCPs to relationship building in schools. Interviews with leadership and teachers in the case-study research suggest that the building of relationships between students, teachers and volunteers is a key aspect of SBCPs; for some staff this is as important as the food the children eat.

It's relationships, relationships, relationships with our kids.

(Principal, Prep – Year 4 Campus, North-Eastern Regional School; 15% attendance)

SBCP Impact on Social Relations Between Students and School Staff Reported by Teachers (n=376)



Less than 2% of teachers reported that social relations between students and school staff got worse as a result of attending SBCPs.

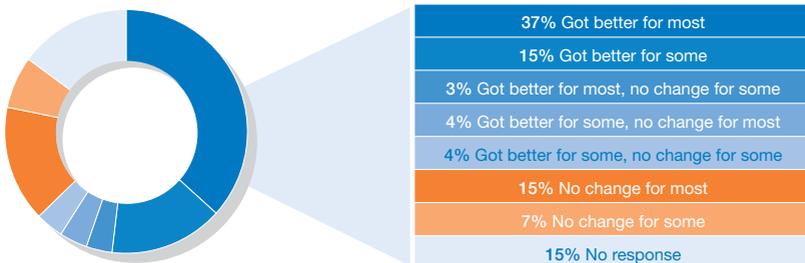
Talbot Primary School's SBCP operates in a Learning Street that links breakout learning spaces and classrooms.

Often what you will get is a couple of teachers who will sit down when the kids are eating and will sit down ... able to have that informal relationship-building kind of exercise, chat about the weekend, you know it's not about school, it's just about us getting to know each other

(Year 5/6 Teacher, North-Western Regional School; 80% attendance).

SBCPs are also impacting on social relations between students and community members, 63% of teachers reported an impact for most or some of their students who attend.

SBCP Impact on Social Relations Between Students and Community Volunteers Reported by Teachers (n=376)



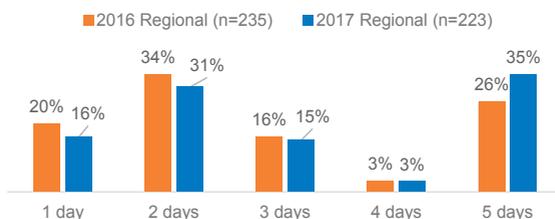
Less than 2% of teachers reported that social relations between students and community volunteers got worse as a result of attending SBCPs.

SBCP Operation

Frequency

The aim of the SBCP is to offer breakfast to all students on as many days as possible. As a result of the experience and confidence schools have gained from their first year of operation, seventy-seven regional and seventy-one metropolitan Schools are now offering their SBCP five days a week.

SBCP Frequency Regional Schools 2016-2017

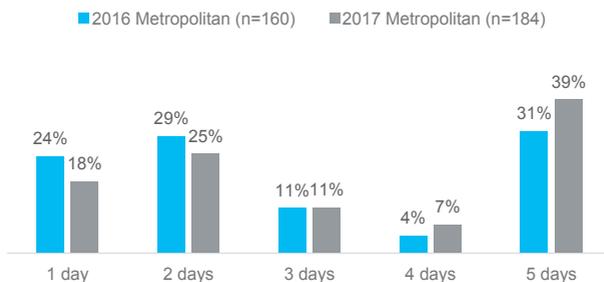


It's worth it though, it's worth it. You can't not – I mean when I first started here and they were running at two days a week and I said to Principal, I said, why?

Why? Why wouldn't you run it five days a week? ... what, the kids are going to not be hungry on the other three days? ... if it takes buttering a piece of toast and giving it to them, ... to have a better day, and they can learn a little bit better, and not worry about the hunger pains

(Welfare Officer, North-Eastern Regional School; 15% attendance).

SBCP Frequency Metropolitan Schools 2016-2017



Graphs do not add up to 100% as nil responses of 2% or less have not been included.

Increased attendance

Meadowglen Primary School operates its SBCP three days a week. The number of students attending has increased in 2017. In Term Two, 2017 Meadowglen's SBCP served 2,062 breakfasts, an increase from the 1,960 served for the same period in 2016.

**Meadowglen Primary School
Average Number of Students Attending SBCP Daily
Comparison of Term Two, 2016/2017**



Meadowglen's records highlight the increase in average daily attendance at their SBCP by comparing Term Two, 2016 attendance with the same period in 2017.

The average attendance in 2017 has been more consistent, suggesting there is a core group of students who attend every day when the SBCP is offered. This is supported by findings from the case-study research.

I go every day that it's on, because it's only on three days a week

(Nine-year-old, Student Focus Group, North-Western Metropolitan School; 15% attendance).

The variations in the graph may be the result of special breakfast days, where the club serves scrambled eggs to students, or the absence of students on camps or excursions throughout the term.

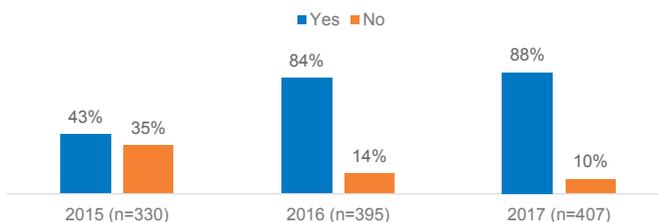
Meeting the Breakfast Needs of Students

In the 2017 findings, 88% of schools reported that they were meeting the breakfast needs of their students. This is an increase from 84% in 2016 and from 43% in the years prior to the SBCP.

The Breakfast club has had a huge positive impact on our school community. Not only does it offer a healthy breakfast, it has now become a very welcoming social place and a great opportunity for learning some life lessons

(Principal, South-Eastern Regional School; 60% attendance).

SBCPs Meeting the Breakfast Needs of Students



Graph does not add up to 100% as nil responses of less than 2% have not been included

Children recognised the importance of providing breakfast at school.

So, you can provide the kids who don't actually – so, if they're poor, they might not be able to afford breakfast, or if they can't because they're too late, or they have to be somewhere. It provides them breakfast, because breakfast is the most important meal of the day

(Nine-year-old student, Focus Group, North-Western Metropolitan Primary School; 15% attendance).

Teachers also recognised the role of SBCPs for students, particularly those whom they had identified as missing out on breakfast at home.

But, yes, we certainly found that it certainly hit the mark with a number of families where we found that kids were getting themselves up and to school, and often didn't have breakfast, and lunch was just whatever they could lay their hands on. So we had some regulars that really benefitted

(Teacher Year 1/2, North-Western Regional School; 15% attendance).

Timetabling of SBCPs

Preliminary findings suggest that some schools finish their SBCP at 8.45/8.50 am to allow time for the children and staff to pack up before the school day starts.

Balancing the breakfast needs of students, teachers and the SBCP program is a challenge for schools, given timetabling concerns and competing priorities. The findings, however, suggest that most schools aim to offer their SBCP as often and as long as possible.

With 60% of schools reporting that late arrival is a barrier to students' participation in breakfast clubs this may result in some children missing out. This will be investigated further in 2018. Schools in the case-study research always had something available for students who arrive late and hungry.

So if they come late and they haven't had breakfast, we'll give them breakfast through the Breakfast Club thing, because if they're the kids that haven't had breakfast it's more important that they've got time to have that, get settled and then come in. Because generally if they come in late and haven't had breakfast it hasn't been a great morning, so it allows for the calming before they enter the space as well

(Principal, South-Western Metropolitan School; 16% attendance).

A number of schools are delivering their SBCP in the classroom. This approach ensures all students can enjoy SBCP food everyday regardless of their arrival time at school.

The research suggest that the operation of SBCP and the intrusion into the school day presents a conflict for some teachers. This appears to be part of a larger tension between the role of schools, the timetabling, the demands of curriculum delivery and the management of volunteers in schools and whether schools should provide food to students. This will be investigated further in 2018.

They shouldn't rely on us providing breakfast, shouldn't feel entitled. They come in and say 'where is breakfast?' Sometimes we are busy and it doesn't happen

(Year 3/4 teacher, South-Eastern Regional School; 100% attendance).

Support from leadership and the opportunity for teachers to work through their concerns has addressed this issue in some schools.

I think initially they felt it was impinging on their teaching time. But once we had the discussion about teaching time needs to be supported by kids that are ready to learn and if they're not ready to learn, it doesn't matter what your teaching time is like, they're not going to take it in. So allow the fifteen minutes or however long it is to let them have their munch. That discussion then changed the way teachers deal with it in the classroom as well

(Principal, South-Eastern Regional School; 100% attendance).

Student Leadership

A number of schools are using their SBCP as leadership opportunities for students:

We have moved into a new phase with senior students being more involved in the preparation of the breakfasts. This is a leader responsibility and has been enjoyed by the senior students

(Prep – Year 6 Teacher, South-Western Regional School; 100% attendance).

The benefits of creating leadership opportunities through SBCPs became evident during the research. Education Support staff run Meadowglen Primary School's SBCP with the enthusiastic assistance of their Breakfast Club Captains.

We'd think 'what can we do that's a little bit different?' And that's when we came up with the Breakfast Club Captains. So you've got kids who don't necessarily shine because they're not academic or they're not out there in terms of how they present or getting in front of kids at assembly. But you want to acknowledge that they've got some unique skills sets that they can develop

(Principal, North-Western Metropolitan School; 15% attendance).

There is evidence of pride in the students' descriptions of their SBCP responsibility.

Yeah, and you know you're doing the right job when people are coming back because we see a lot of people – when we work on a Wednesday, we might see a little girl and then on Thursday and Friday we might see that little girl come back and then the next week we might see them come back again so that's when you know you're doing the right job

(Twelve-year-old Breakfast Club Captain, North-Western Metropolitan School; 15% attendance).



Additional Food

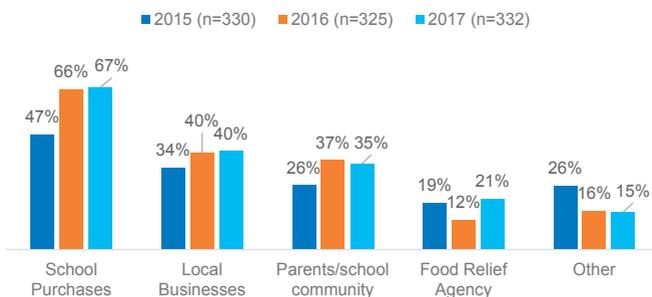
82% of schools provide additional food for students at their SBCP outside that supplied through the program. The most popular additional food is bread, with 93% of these schools purchasing bread for their SBCP, closely followed by 80% who report that they purchase spreads and butter.

Our students really prefer toast and toppings to cereal. Unfortunately bread is not provided through the Foodbank and so this cost falls onto the school

(South-Western Metropolitan School; 20% attendance).

Schools source their additional food in a variety of ways. While 40% of schools have food donated by local businesses, 67% of schools purchase additional food from their own budget.

Additional Food Sources for SBCP Schools



Graph does not add up to 100% as nil response of less than 2% were not included

50% of SBCP schools spend less than \$20 per week on additional food. 25% spend between \$20–\$50 and 7% report that spend more than \$50 per week on additional food for their SBCP. 55% of schools report that their level of spending has remained consistent over the two years of operation.

Findings from the case-study research suggest that schools are prepared to carry this additional cost while Foodbank provides them with the core products and support to run their program. Schools who are unable to purchase additional food are able to meet the breakfast needs of their students with the food provided.

We get – it's not just one cereal and one milk and an apple – we get some variety which I think is really beneficial

(Social Worker, South-Western Metropolitan School; 16% attendance).



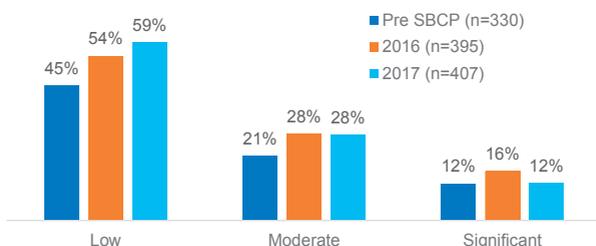
Challenges – Staffing of SBCPs

Parent/school community involvement

As breakfast club is run outside of normal school hours ... it is difficult to expect staff members who have classroom duties to provide assistance. Our senior students play a big role in the serving and preparation for breakfast club, but it has been disappointing that we have not had a greater level of assistance from parents

(South-Western Regional School; 15% attendance).

Level of Parent/School Community Involvement in SBCPs



Schools report a 20% decrease in significant parent/school community involvement with SBCPs in 2017. There are a number of factors that could influence this finding. The ongoing engagement of parents and a school community is a constant challenge as children gain independence through their primary school years, and then transition to secondary school, and as parents return to work or increase their working hours. The early morning commitment for parents organising their own children may be difficult to manage on an ongoing basis. Schools recognise the busyness of parents but see the SBCP as a great opportunity for parents to engage with school and their children.

I don't want them in there to help do the work, I want them in there to help build the relationships. And we'll work on that but I think it's quite a limited space because people are hurrying to get their day going

(Principal, North-Eastern Regional School; 15% attendance).

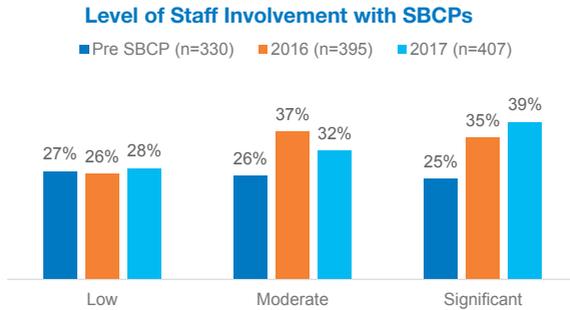
There was little evidence of parent involvement in SBCPs in the case-study research, with the majority of children arriving alone. There was a small number of parents at one school which has a policy of encouraging parents to stay and eat with their children. There is evidence in our case-study research that some parents feel annoyed or ashamed that their children are being offered breakfast at school. This made it difficult to engage with parents in the case-study research and may also impact on parents' capacity to volunteer.

They [parents] were very defensive and said that their kids don't need breakfast at school, they get it at home

(Youth Worker, North-Eastern Regional School; 15% attendance).

Staff involvement

Locating staff, parents and community volunteers to run SBCPs remains the greatest challenge for schools. While schools continue to source volunteers, the findings suggest that school staff are running or coordinating many SBCPs.



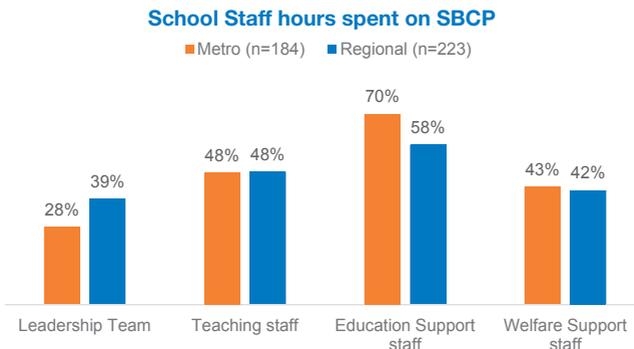
Graph does not add up to 100% as nil responses of less than 2% were not included

Over a third (39%) of schools reported a significant staff involvement in 2017, an increase of 15% from 2016. Increases in involvement were particularly evident in regional schools with 45% reporting a significant level of staff involvement with their SBCP.

Staff Commitment

95% of schools reported that school staff have made a commitment to their SBCP. Around 40% of schools indicated that their staff were spending between two and four hours a week on the SBCP.

A small number of schools, less than 5%, indicate that they are spending in excess of 10 hours a week on their SBCP.



Graph does not add up to 100% as coordinators and principals were invited to respond to multiple options

Education Support staff have made the greatest commitment to SBCPs with 70% of hours spent in metropolitan schools and 58% in regional schools.

Three Education Support staff at our school run this program outside their normal hours of work. They go to Woolworths, shop, collect the bread, set up the food, equipment, cook the breakfast and make the hot drinks, etc. This is all done before they commence their own normal working day at the school at 8:45 am. I am in awe at how much effort and dedication these wonderful girls contribute to this program without which the Breakfast club would not be able to run

(South-Eastern Metropolitan School; 33% attendance).

In some schools Education Support staff or ‘volunteers’ are being paid to coordinate and run the program.

We have hired a parent as an Education Support to run the Breakfast Club as we do not get any parent volunteers. Their salary is paid by the school

(North-Western Metropolitan School; 10% attendance).

While the intent may be to engage parents and the school community in the running of SBCPs, the challenges for schools in locating and retaining suitable volunteers is evident in the research. Schools are making strong links between their welfare and wellbeing programs and SBCPs. The longer term sustainability of the program may be more successful for some schools when they incorporate this responsibility into welfare, wellbeing and education support roles. This aspect will be further investigated in 2018.



Setting Up Costs for Schools

The cost of setting up SBCPs was borne by schools, with 55% reporting that the cost was less than \$1,000. Items purchased included fridges or freezers, microwaves, cutlery, bowls, aprons and mugs. Less than 2% of schools reported spending over \$2000.

Some schools had to update infrastructure including storage cupboards, installing kitchen sinks and power points. Where costs were significant schools applied for grants or assistance to cover costs.

Difficult to say – we had to purchase a big freezer, microwave, quality saucepan set, toasters, cutlery, plastic bowls and cups, other cooking utensils. We spent a \$2000 grant doing this before your support came along. I would say probably \$3000 all up.

(South-Western Metropolitan School; 20% attendance).

SBCPs appear to have benefited from the Building the Education Revolution (BER), with many having access to new kitchen and storage facilities. Schools have also benefited from the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation program, with new kitchen and dining facilities available for use by their SBCP.

We were very fortunate that we had a fully operational kitchen already established at the school so it was very easy to implement SBCP

(South-Western Regional School; 100% attendance).

19% of schools offer eggs to students at their SBCP. This is often a special breakfast and may not be offered on a regular basis. Stratford Primary School have been able to use eggs collected from their own chickens or donated by a member of their school community.

One of our families has an egg farm so they donated a number of eggs as well when we needed them, when ours weren't laying

(Principal, South-Eastern Regional Primary school; 100% attendance).

Future requirements of SBCPs

- 65% of schools have no ongoing item or infrastructure needs to run, or grow their SBCP.
- 75% of schools requiring additional items report that these would cost less than \$1000.

We really could do with another fridge as the one we have is shared between three different groups

(South-Eastern Metropolitan School; 33% attendance).

A number of schools has sourced donations from local businesses, their school communities or food agencies. Donations have included large items such as fridges or microwaves. A number of schools have negotiated ongoing weekly donations and in some instances donations of cash have been received.

It's amazing that Coles are able to donate the extra stuff. The cereals and everything are Monday, Wednesday, Friday, it's the cereals and the fruit. The bread is Monday and Wednesday we do spreads, so that's donated by Coles which is jam, vegemite and butter

(SBCP Volunteer, North-Western Regional Primary School; 80% attendance).

Conclusion

The School Breakfast Clubs Program (SBCP) in all 500 schools has now been operating for well over a year, and this report draws together multiple research components. Two key findings from the 2017 research are:

- An increased number of schools operating their SBCP five days a week;
- An increased number of schools report they are meeting the breakfast needs of their students.

The annual survey has made it possible to gain a greater understanding to the frequency of SBCPs, the number of students who attend, the costs to schools (both monetary and time), and the operational demands. An important insight into the significant commitment staff have made to SBCPs has been achieved, as well as a greater understanding of the challenges schools face in engaging parents and the community.

Over the first two years of the research, around 500 responses to the teacher survey have been received. The surveys have provided valuable insights into the impact of SBCPs on children's learning, both formal and informal, and the links to student welfare and wellbeing. Teachers report that concentration is improving for students who attend SBCPs. Relationships between students, staff and volunteers have been positively influenced by the program and there has also been an impact on overall health and wellbeing.

The case-study research enabled a conversation with parents, teachers, leadership teams and, importantly, students about their SBCPs, however it was difficult to locate parents to interview in some schools. Visiting the schools offered first-hand perspectives of the ways the schools are adapting their SBCPs to meet the unique needs of their students and school community. The decision to pay staff to operate SBCPs, the timetabling issues of SBCP, the stigma felt by some parents, and the conflict for teachers between SBCPs and curriculum delivery were identified. Research in 2018 will focus on these to gain a better understanding of the challenges.

The children consulted were very positive about their SBCPs and many attended as often as they could. Their active engagement with the programs, whether as participants, Breakfast Captains, Student Leaders or as the creators of art work and signage was evident. The interactions between children, staff and volunteers, and the children eating breakfast together or helping out with the daily running of the program demonstrates the importance of SBCPs for many Victorian children.

It means to me I like breakfast club because I have to get up so early in the morning to get packed, so we come here and help do breakfast club because we're one of the – me and Brent are one of the people who do breakfast club of a morning. And the part I love about breakfast club is the food

(11 year-old, Student Focus Group, North-Western Regional School; 80% attendance).

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