

My name is Catherine Parsonage and I am the executive director of the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, one of the City's partners that support the 700= nutrition programs that nourish more than 142,000 of the most vulnerable children in this city.

I'd like to start by thanking all of you on the Board of Health. Since amalgamation, the Board of Health has shown incredible leadership in the area of student nutrition and has fostered a program that is the envy of many communities across the country.

Last June Dr. McKewon presented Nourishing Young Minds, a comprehensive review of international practice, the nutritional needs of our children and the challenges local communities are face every day. It is an excellent report.

Today you will be considering a 2013 operating budget request and proposed five year plan. Once again this plan shows strategic vision and leadership. I urge you to support this report.

Across Toronto thousands of parents, volunteers, principals are struggling to make sure children in priority communities have get the healthy food they need . This isn't easy. Food costs are going up, need is increasing and the fridges , stoves and dishwashers they are using are breaking down. Programs are being forced to make difficult choices. Some can't offer their programs every day, others can't afford three food groups and still others cope by reducing the portion sizes of the healthy they provide.

The report before you offers a way forward that will stabilize these critical programs and over five years, provide core funding for these programs not only from the City but also from the province and eventually the federal government. This is what our communities need and what our children and youth deserve.

Other deputants are going to speak to the needs, their programs and their challenges and that is best heard from the people on the ground every day. But what I wanted to highlight for you is the results of a three year research report involving more than 6,000 vulnerable youth in our city. The results were very

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clear. Children and youth who eat a healthy breakfast, with three full servings from different food groups every day:

- Miss school less often due to illness
- Develop the habit of eating breakfast every day which carries over to the weekend. This is a key strategy to combating obesity
- Reported a massive **29%** improvement in their “self-rated” health
- Pass 10% more classes in grade 9 and 17% more classes in grade 10. 78% of these students are on track for graduation. And we know that education is a key social determinant of health.

But the impact carries far beyond this. This summer we have seen a huge spike in gun violence. Significantly, the research demonstrates that children who eat a full healthy breakfast at school are much better at problem solving, resolving conflict and showing initiative. This translates to our teens. As you know schools now have a zero tolerance policy for aggressive physical and verbal behaviour which results in suspension. With the introduction of a universal breakfast program in the three high schools studied in the Jane Finch community, suspension rates fell by 50%.

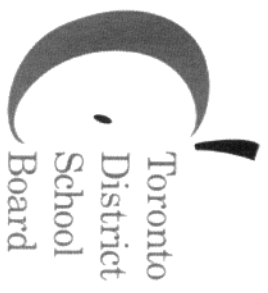
With the approval of the recommendations before you today, stabilization of these programs over five years will begin. City lead advocacy at the provincial and federal levels will commence and outreach, through a strategic roundtable chaired by Dr. Mckewon will contribute further to bolster community capacity

I urge you to continue to show the courageous vision and leadership for student nutrition programs that you began at the birth of our amalgamated city and approve the Proposed Five Year Plan for Student Nutrition Programs

Thank you.

Catherine Parsonage

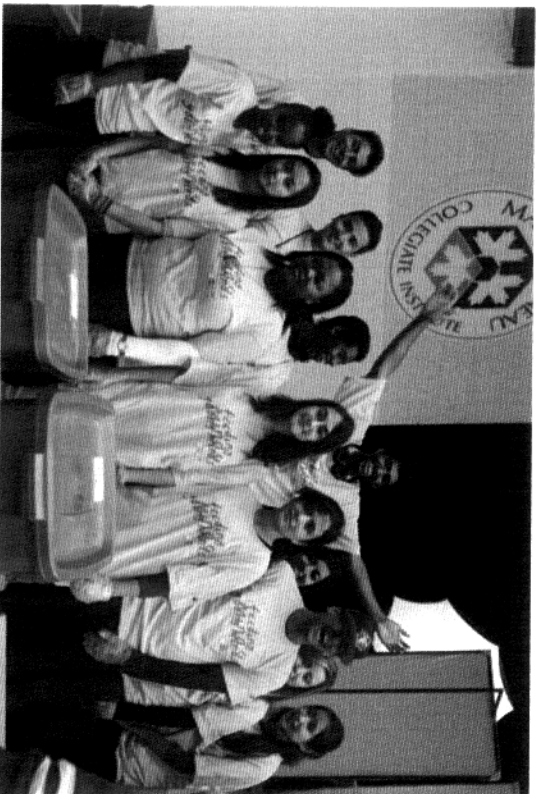
Executive Director, Toronto Foundation for Student Success



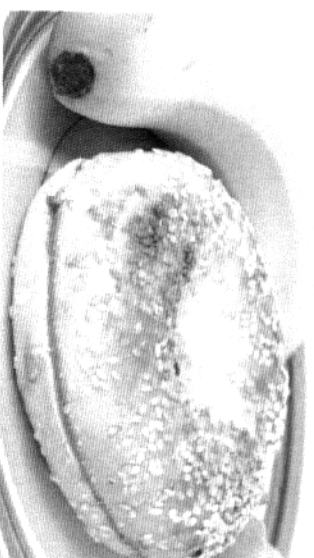
Toronto Foundation for Student Success

FEEDING OUR FUTURE

Nourishing Toronto Students: Two Year Final Report



Feeding Our Future: General Summary

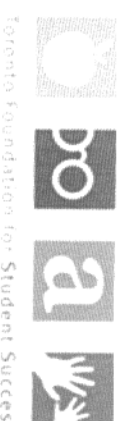


- Feeding Our Future is a universal nutrition program that offers nutritious breakfasts every day to students, regardless of their ability to pay.
- A pilot program from 2008-2010, Feeding Our Future provided healthy morning meals to about 6,000 students. The program runs in four TDSB middle schools (Grades 6 to 8) and three TDSB secondary schools in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood.
- Feeding Our Future is funding jointly by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the City of Toronto and the Toronto Foundation for Student Success.



Ontario

MINISTRY OF
CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES



Toronto Foundation for Student Success



Feeding Our Future: Why This Program?

- After the first shooting incident in a Toronto high school, principals in the Jane and Finch community were asked what the TFSS could do to support them. Unanimously they asked us to feed their students.
- TDSB's 2006 Student Census revealed that a majority of students from the Jane and Finch neighbourhood (51% elementary and 68% secondary) were coming to school every day without eating breakfast.

	Middle Schools	Secondary Schools	Total
Number of Students	2,289	3,154	5,443
Age	From 10 to 14	From 13 to 21	From 10 to 21
Female	1,088 (48%)	1,494 (47%)	2,582 (47%)
Born in Canada	1,678 (73%)	1,898 (60%)	3,576 (66%)
Home Language - English	840 (37%)	1,344 (43%)	2,184 (40%)

Based on October 2008 TDSB Student Information System snapshot

- The Jane and Finch neighbourhood faces considerable socio-economic challenges such as elevated rates of poverty, immigration, and violent crime, and health challenges such as elevated rates of diabetes, obesity and eating disorders. Feeding Our Future aims to change that.



Purpose:

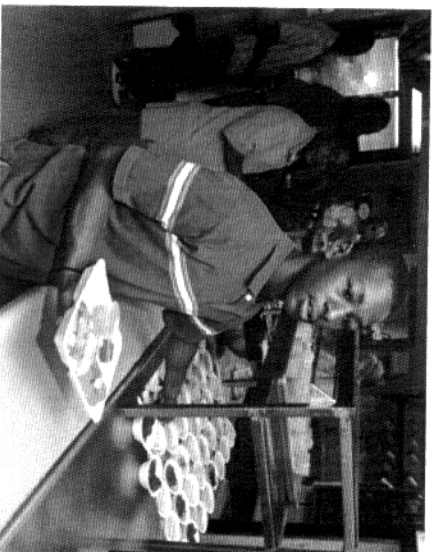
Improving Performance and Community Living

Virtually all scientific research on the matter agrees that serving breakfast to school children who don't get it elsewhere significantly improves their cognitive abilities. They are more alert, pay better attention, and do better in reading, math, and other standardized test scores. It also significantly decreases the risk of health problems such as obesity, diabetes and other diet-related chronic diseases, saving the public millions in long-term health costs.

Short-term Goals

To improve:

- health;
- student behaviour;
- attention in school;
- attendance; and
- student achievement.



Long-term Goals

To improve:

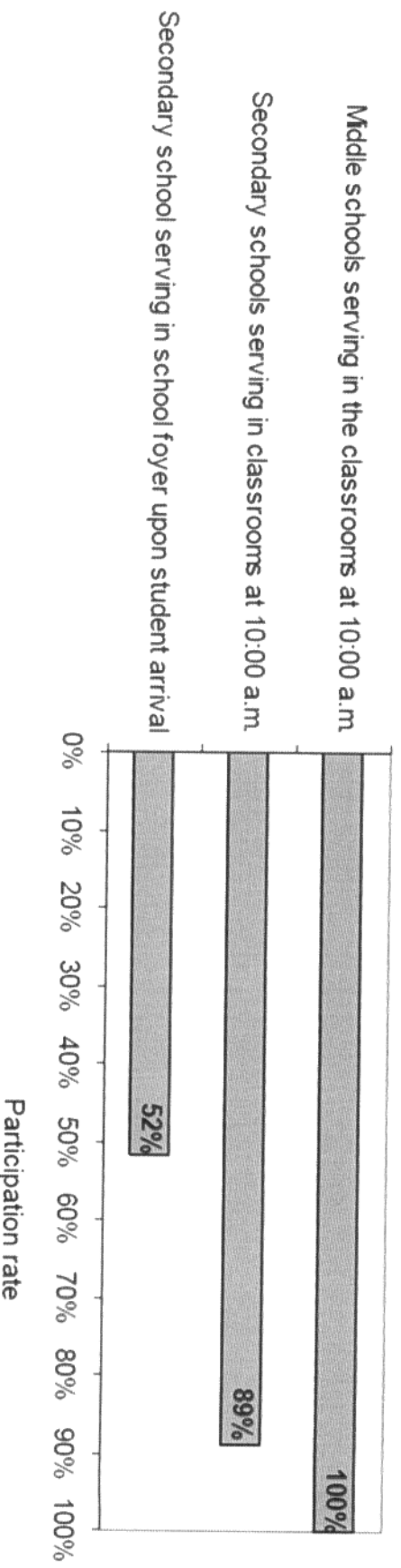
- graduation rates; and
- nutrition for entire families.

To reduce:

- violence in the school and community; and
- diabetes and hypertension.

Comparison of Models: Meals in the Classroom Produce Best Results

- There is considerable need for a nutritious breakfast in our schools, but the success of any meal program hinges on how many students eat the meal provided.
- Almost all middle school students (97%) participated in Feeding Our Future, with the vast majority (82%) participating at least three days in a school week. In the participating secondary schools, the majority of students (85%) participated and nearly half (46%) participated at least three days in a school week.



The Results: What the Schools are Saying

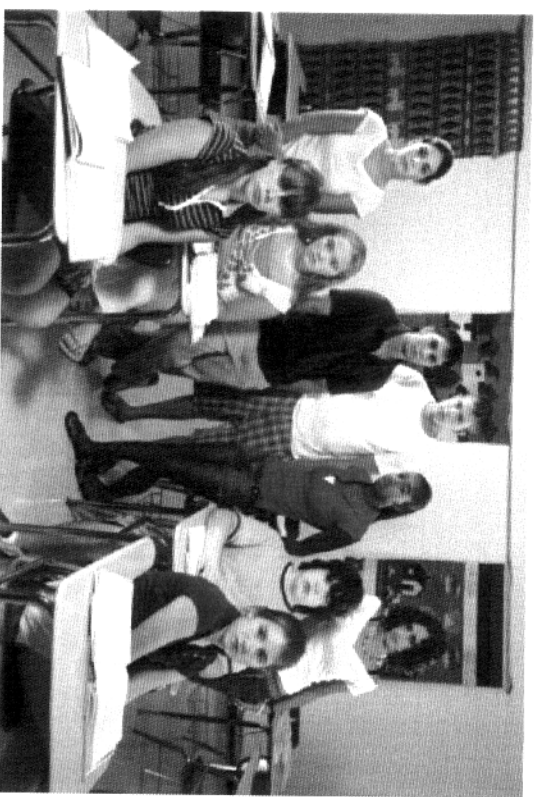
- Principals and teachers surveyed perceived that student attitude, behaviour and rate of tardiness has improved.
- Five out of seven principals perceived that disciplinary problems have been reduced.
- Students are more likely to participate if they are male, if they are in elementary school and if they are not Caucasian.
- Participation increases by 35% or more when breakfast was served in the classroom.
- Our first year findings relating to student achievement are positive and mirrors international research.
- EQAO scores have improved in all middle schools.
- EQAO math scores have improved in three of the four middle Schools.
- Grade 9 student credit accumulation improved in two of the three secondary schools which is an important predictor for graduation.
- Five of the seven schools had decreased suspension rates.
- Five of the seven schools showed decreased absenteeism.



The Results: What Students are Saying*

- 82% of students (3,195) said the program kept them from feeling hungry.
- 74% (2,291) said their health got somewhat or much better compared to their health during the previous school year.
- 72% of students (2,788) said the program helped them develop the habit of eating breakfast in the morning.
- 70% of students (2,750) said that the breakfast program increased their energy levels.
- 62% of students (2,442) said the program helped them concentrate on classroom activities.
- Students increased their intake of milk and dairy products.

* Excerpts from the preliminary 2009/2010 Evaluation Program

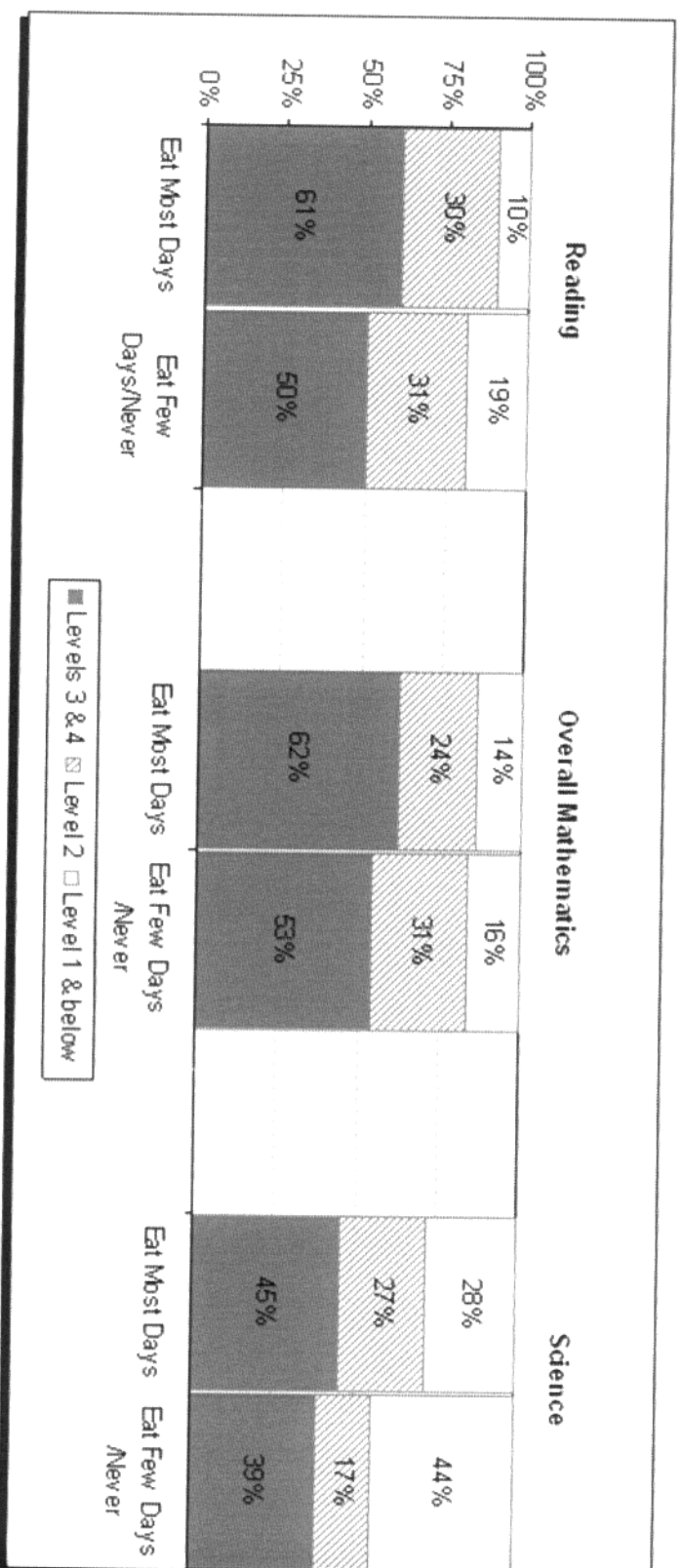


The Results:

What the Data Says About Academic Achievement

The Grade 7 and 8 students who ate morning meals on most days during a school week achieved better grades and were less likely to be at-risk (achieving Level 1 and below on their report cards) compared to those who ate morning meals on only a few days per week or who never ate in the morning.

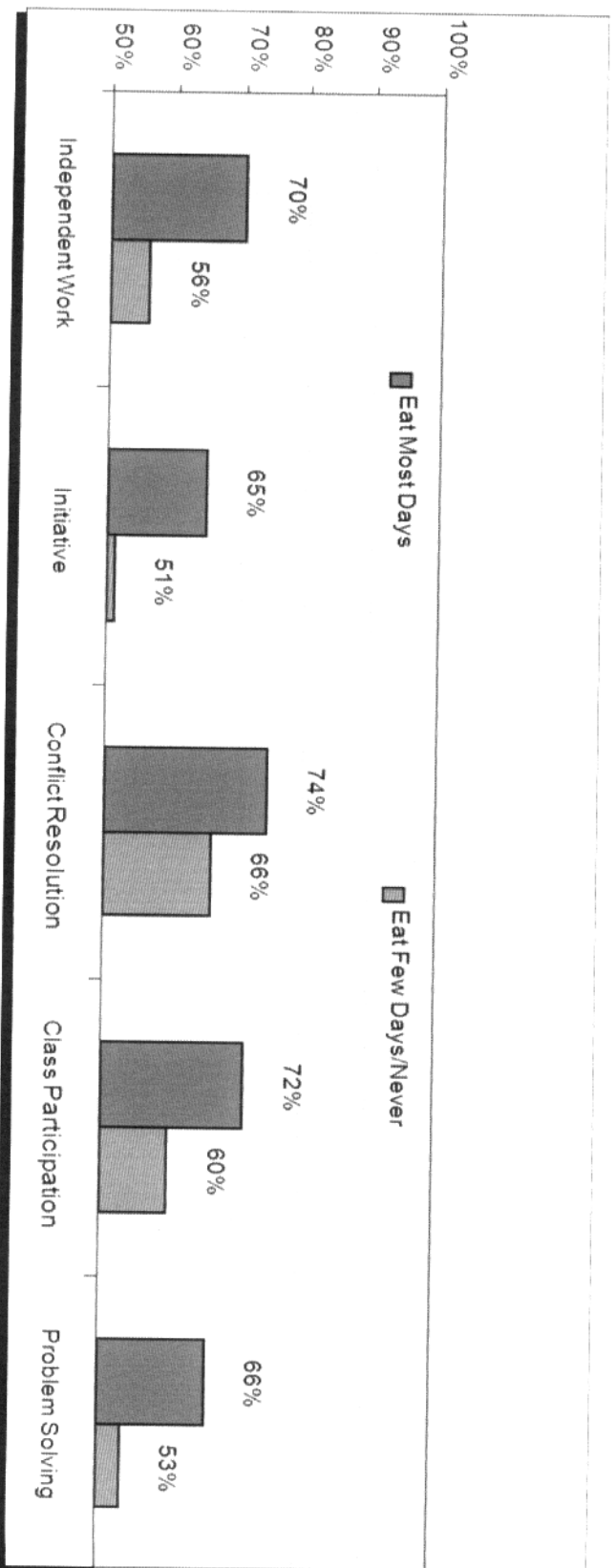
Figure 1: Grades 7 and 8 Student Academic Achievement (2009-10 Term 3 Report Card) and Eating in the Morning During a School Week



The Results:

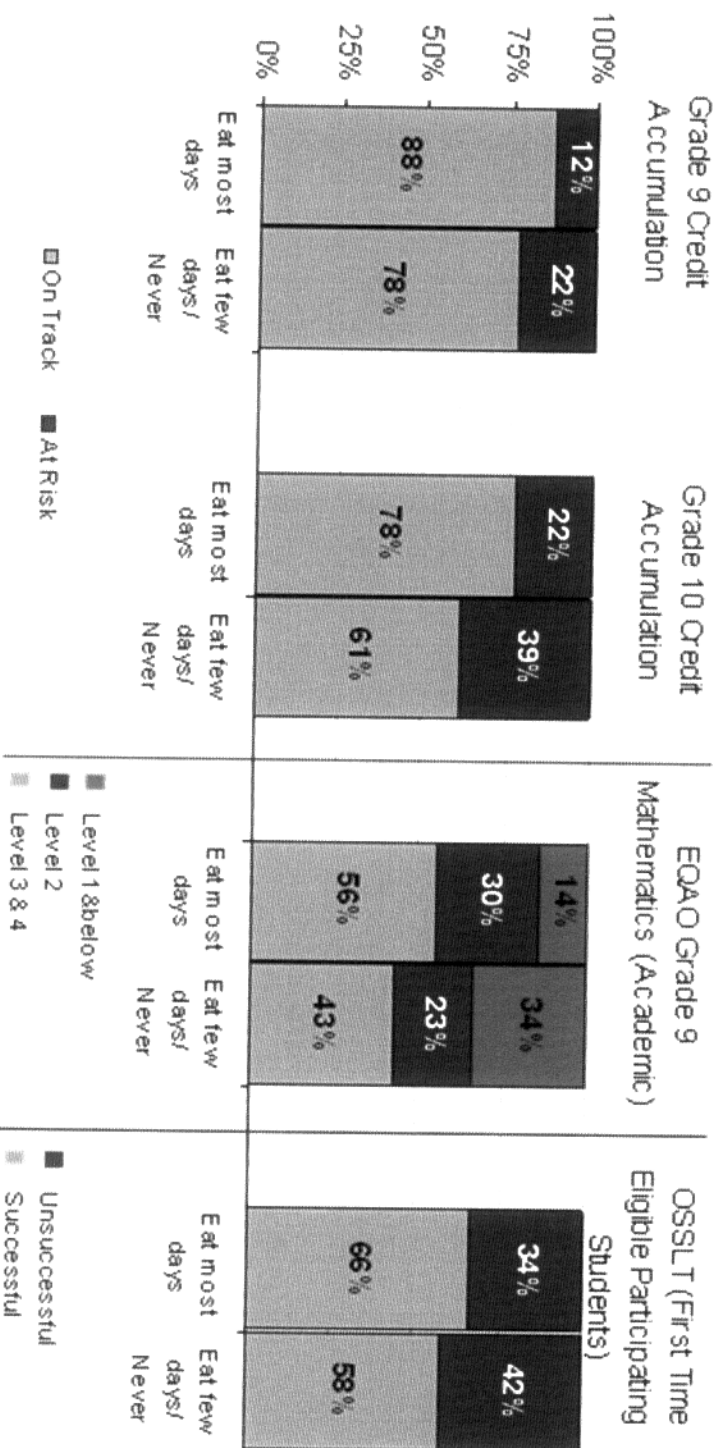
What the Data Says About Socio-Emotional Indicators

Students who ate morning meals most days in a school week achieved better results on their learning skills (i.e., excellent or good) compared to those who ate in the morning on only one to two days or who never ate in the morning. Differences were remarkable in the areas of independent work (70% vs. 56%), initiative (65% vs. 51%), problem solving (66% vs. 53%), and class participation (72% vs. 60%) (see Figure 2).

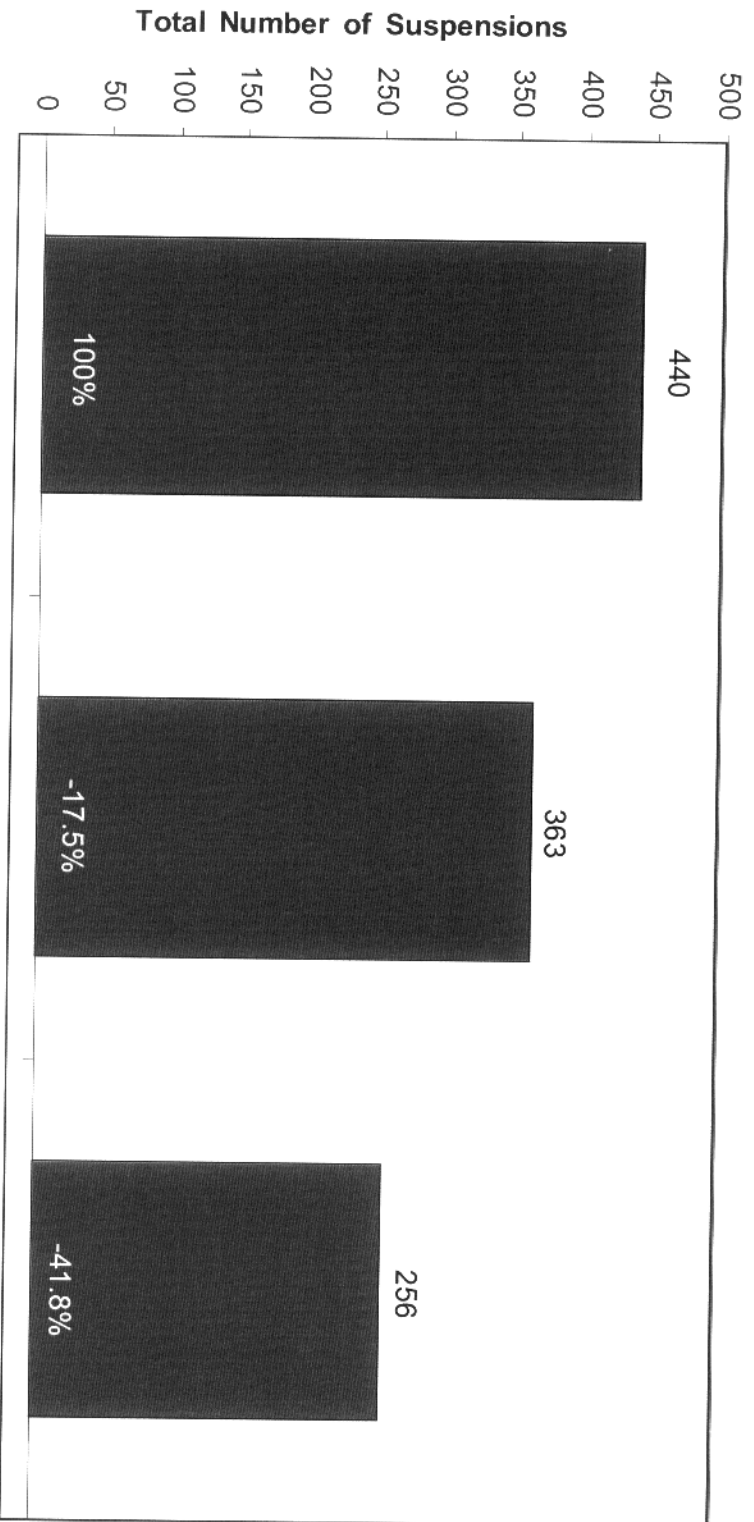


Key Findings: Academic Achievement

Secondary School Student Academic Achievement (2009-10) and Eating in the Morning During a School Week



Secondary Suspension Data Comparison



Conclusions:

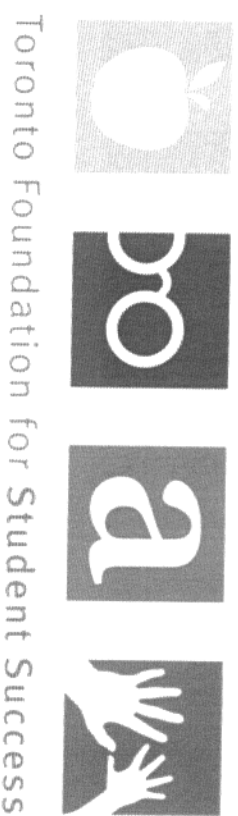
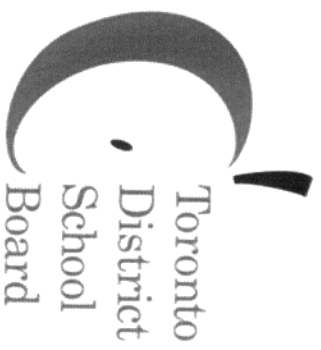
- A free, universal morning meal in classrooms, served around 10:00 a.m., providing all students with the best opportunity to benefit.
- Students, irrespective of gender, socio-economic, or cultural backgrounds, benefitted equally.
- School meals provided in the school foyer tended to restrict student participation in the meal program. In class meals raise participation rates by 50%.
- Most of the teaching staff interviewed perceived an improvement in student behaviour or attitude and student ability to stay on task.
- School administrators noted that overall student attitude and behaviour improved, while the incidence of tardiness and disciplinary problems decreased.
- Students who ate in the morning were more likely to succeed academically, were more likely to come to school regularly, were healthier and were less likely to be suspended.
- **Feeding Our Future** is an effective tool to enhance student learning and health. However, the program lacks sufficient funding to make further improvements.



Conclusions:

- 9th and 10th grade participants in the Feeding Our Future program were much more likely to be on track to graduate. There was a 17% discrepancy in graduation rates between students who regularly ate breakfast and those who did not.
- Improving graduation rates means taking people off of social assistance and reducing government expenditures.
- According to the Institut de la statistique du Québec (2004), 63% of all social assistance claimants in Canada were high school dropouts.
- As well, graduates are less likely to engage in criminal activity.
- According to Public Safety Canada, the annual average cost of keeping an inmate incarcerated is \$109,699 per year, up from \$87,919 per year in 2004-05. According to Correctional Services Canada, Grade 7 is the average education level of newly admitted offenders who are serving sentences of two years or more (“Literacy and Justice”).
- Non-graduates represent 34% of our population but make up 74% of our prison population.
- The government stands to save millions in health, social services and incarceration costs if student nutrition programs are properly implemented.





Questions?

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