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Governor and First Lady Award \$55,000 to 18 Montana Schools to Expand School Breakfast

HELENA – As part of [Fight Childhood Hunger Week](#), Governor Steve Bullock and First Lady Lisa Bullock today announced that a total of \$55,000 in privately funded grants have been awarded to 18 schools as part of their *Montana Breakfast after the Bell* initiative. Funding will go towards the implementation of new school breakfast programs or the transition of existing programs to make breakfast part of the school day.

“To ensure the academic success of our kids, breakfast is a necessity.” Governor Bullock said. “I commend each of these schools for making happy and healthy students a priority. Making sure our students are healthy puts them on a path to success, benefitting our communities and our state.”

Grants were provided to schools by Montana No Kid Hungry, in partnership with Governor and First Lady Bullock. Funding was made available through private partnerships with Albertson’s Companies Foundation, Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, Jeff Bridges, Share Our Strength, Round It Up Montana, Blue Cross Blue Shield, First Interstate Bank Foundation, and Smith’s Food and Drug Stores.

Montana No Kid Hungry works directly with superintendents, principals, teachers, school food service directors, parents, and students to encourage them to apply for the grants and to implement alternative breakfast models, such as Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab-and-Go.

On average, school breakfast participation rises to more than 70 percent when schools implement a *Breakfast after the Bell* model versus 30 percent with a traditional model that serves breakfast in the cafeteria before school starts. With that, higher breakfast participation has been shown to lead to improvements in health, academics, and behavior.

“I have seen the success of serving *Breakfast after the Bell* first hand,” said First Lady Lisa Bullock. “When students don’t have to worry about where their next meal will come from, they are much more receptive to learning. A hunger free classroom creates the ideal environment for both students and teachers.”

The grants, offered through Montana No Kid Hungry, are intended to help schools pay for essential equipment and infrastructure such as grab-and-go kiosks, carts for delivering meals to classrooms, or temporary staffing through the implementation phase; programs are self-sustaining thereafter. The meals served through the school breakfast program are federally funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. Therefore, the more kids participate in school breakfast, the more funding the school district receives to operate the program.

Browning Elementary School has seen overwhelming success since recently piloting *Breakfast in the Classroom* in two classes. Second grade teacher, Christine Hansen, praised the program, stating, “I have found that *Breakfast in the Classroom* has brought my students together as a community. They are better at sharing, teamwork, and they have formed a caring outlook for one another that I have not seen all year long.” Hansen also states, “More friendships have been formed through this program, and I do not see bullying.” Third grade teacher, Katie Kuka, noted that attendance had improved in her classroom. The third grade students were happy they didn’t have to miss breakfast anymore due to tardiness and do not have to make a choice to eat or play.

The 18 schools that were awarded grants in this grant round are:

Carter County High School, Ekalaka \$5,000.00
Cayuse Prairie Elementary School, Kalispell \$5,000.00
West Valley Elementary School, Kalispell \$1,179.60
West Yellowstone School, West Yellowstone \$3,200.00
Jordan Elementary School, Jordan \$3,507.00
Napi Elementary School, Browning \$5,157.00
Browning Elementary School, Browning \$4,935.00
Helena Middle School, Helena \$4,700.00
Libby Elementary School, Libby \$736.50
Roundup Junior/Senior High School, Roundup \$5,173.00
Gardiner School, Gardiner \$1,657.46
Bolin Elementary School, Terry \$2,058.00
Rosebud School, Rosebud \$2,329.00
Absarokee Elementary School, Absarokee \$5,000.00
Choteau Elementary School, Choteau \$1,000.00
Glasgow Middle School, Glasgow \$1,156.00
Lockwood Primary School, Lockwood \$1,316.00
Roosevelt Middle School, Red Lodge \$2,000.00

There are now almost 130 schools in Montana that have decided to make breakfast a part of the school day. Through the partnership with Montana No Kid Hungry, Governor and First Lady Bullock have awarded \$91,000 to 27 schools during the 2015-2016 school year for a total of over \$200,000 to 57 schools since the fall of 2014. For a complete list of school breakfast grantees, please visit:

<http://mt.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast-program>.

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