FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 24, 2014

CONTACTS:
Mike Wessler, Deputy Communications Director, Governor's Office, (406) 444-9725
Lisa Lee, Montana No Kid Hungry, (406) 444-3518

Governor, First Lady Announce $55,000 in Grants for School Breakfast Programs

HELENA – Today, as a part of their *Montana Breakfast After the Bell* initiative, Governor Steve Bullock and First Lady Lisa Bullock awarded $55,000 in grants to schools implementing new school breakfast programs or transitioning to models that increase participation. The grants were made possible with support from Share Our Strength, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Neptune Aviation.

"Childhood hunger is an important, but solvable issue in Montana," Governor Bullock said. "Through these grants we're removing an obstacle that many schools face to providing nutritious breakfast to their students. Montanans can be proud to know that progress is being made to ensure children don't face the school day with an empty stomach."

The Bullocks launched the *Montana Breakfast after the Bell* initiative to increase participation in school breakfast and make it a part of the school day by serving it after the school day begins. The initiative aims to ensure that all kids can have a healthy start to the day by helping schools adopt proven breakfast models that increase participation, such as breakfast in the classroom and grab n' go breakfasts. One of the most effective ways to significantly boost school breakfast participation is to make it part of the school day.

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.

Kids who start their school day with breakfast score higher on math tests, attend more days of school, and are more likely to graduate high school.

The schools that received grants in the first grant cycle are:

- Lockwood Middle & Intermediate Schools - $5,360
- Hardin School District - $11,814
- Fairview School - $4,200
- Power School - $1,500
- Rocky Boy School - $5,000
- W F Morrison School - $3,000
- Sunburst High School - $1,500
- Superior School - $5,000
- Loy Elementary - $5,000
- Lincoln Elementary - $5,000
- Arlee Elementary School - $750
- Arlee Junior High School - $750

- Arlee High School - $750
- Park City School $3,900
- Valley View Elementary - $1150

"Montana students deserve every opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. Unfortunately, hunger and poor nutrition are providing additional challenges to many students in the state," First Lady Lisa Bullock said. "Students in these schools will now have access to a nutritious breakfast that will prepare them to excel throughout the school day."

Of the 859 schools across Montana, there are 51 districts and 87 schools serving breakfast after the bell. Thirty-two of these schools started or plan to start serving a breakfast after the bell model this school year.

Research continues to show that children who eat a balanced breakfast are more likely to develop healthy eating habits, visit the school nurse less frequently, and maintain a healthy weight. Despite the many benefits of breakfast, many students come to school too hungry to learn. In a recent survey of educators, three out of four teachers and principals say they see kids who regularly come to school hungry.

Schools interested in starting a new breakfast program and/or making breakfast part of the school day can contact the Montana No Kid Hungry School Breakfast Coordinator, Rosie Cody at RCody@mt.gov or by phone at 444-3925.

Montana No Kid Hungry continues to accept grant applications on a rolling basis with hopes of announcing the second round of grants in March 2015. Schools can apply by visiting this link: grants.nokidhungry.org and the access code is **MTBREAKFAST2014** (case-sensitive).

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Mike Wessler
Governor's Office
Deputy Communications Director
Office- 406-444-9725
Cell – 406-461-7289
Facebook
@GovernorBullock