

Going To School Hungry

Breakfast, the first meal of the day, is a very important meal, especially to children attending school. It provides students with energy, helps them to concentrate and be motivated throughout the day. Healthy breakfast leads to good academic performance. However, due to various circumstances, not all students have their first meal of the day before school starts.



According to a survey conducted by Halton Our Kids Network¹, in 2012/13 school year, about 69% of grade 7 students and 53% of grade 10 students reported having breakfast daily in a usual school week. In other words, almost one in three (31%) grade 7 students and slightly less than half (47%) of grade 10 students did not have breakfast everyday in a school week. The proportion of student eating or not eating breakfast also has an age and gender bias. In general, older students (Grade 10) are more likely not to have breakfast than their younger counterparts (Grade 7). Female students are less likely to have breakfast than male students (e.g. 47% versus 59% for Grade 10 students).

Proportion of Students Eating Breakfast Daily in a School Week

	Halton		Oakville		Burlington		Milton		Halton Hills	
	Gr7	Gr10	Gr7	Gr10	Gr7	Gr10	Gr7	Gr10	Gr7	Gr10
2006/07	65%	47%	69%	49%	65%	47%	63%	45%	58%	47%
2009/10	65%	49%	66%	53%	66%	49%	61%	44%	61%	44%
2012/13	69%	53%	72%	57%	68%	52%	66%	49%	70%	53%

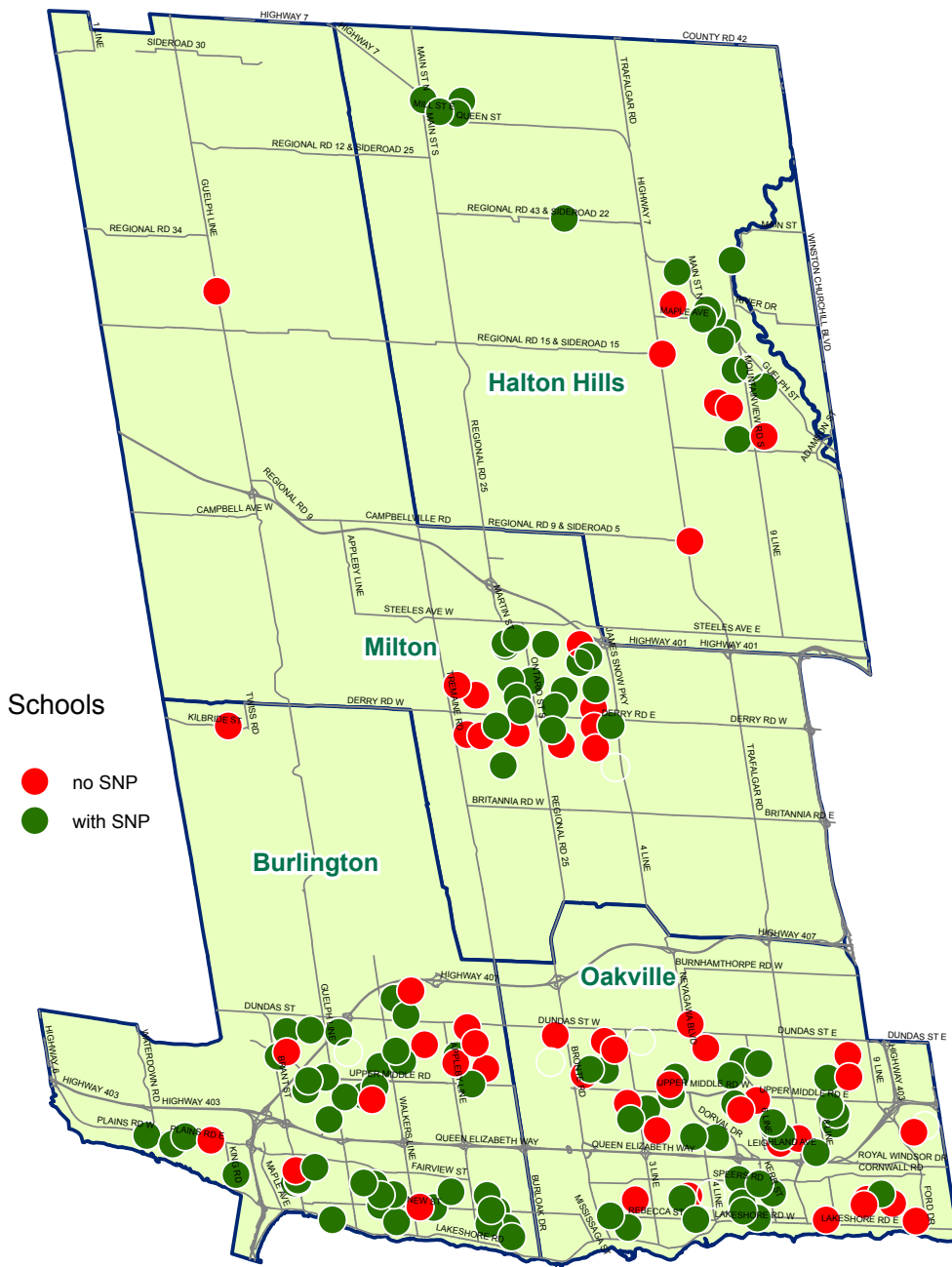
Source: Halton Our Kids Network, Health Youth Survey, Municipal Results, 2013

Although the proportion of students eating breakfast daily varies among municipalities, the trend over time (between 2006/07 and 2012/13) is positive. For example, in Halton Hills, the percentage of Grade 7 students having daily breakfast increased from 58% to 70%. In Oakville, the percentage of Grade 10 students having daily breakfast increased from 49% to 57%.

¹ Halton Our Kids Network, *Halton Youth Survey, Municipal Results: Oakville, Burlington, Milton, Halton Hills, 2012-13*

This encouraging trend is further strengthened by efforts from organizations such as Halton Food For Thought (HFFT) with a vision of “no student goes hungry at school.” In 2015, HFFT has Student Nutrition Programs (SNP) in 104 schools across Halton and feeds more than 25,000 students a week. SNP provide healthy meals to students throughout the school day. Schools in Burlington have the highest participation rate (school with SNP/total number of schools) of 77% followed by Halton Hills (68%), Oakville (54%) and Milton (53%). The map shows the schools with and without SNP.

Student Nutrition Program (SNP) in Schools, Halton Region, 2015



Source: Halton Food For Thought

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