

August 2007

Dear 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher,

Are you looking for that little bit of something special this year to help improve your students' performance? Something to help students be more alert and attentive to the lessons you have prepared? How about breakfast? Research shows that breakfast, especially a breakfast at school, helps children perform better on standardized tests, has improved attendance and punctuality, increased attention and memory recall, and improved math and reading grades. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's School Breakfast Program is often the only morning meal available to many children and is a relatively simple intervention that significantly improves children's academic performance and psychological well-being. Studies show that students participating in the School Breakfast Program eat more fruits, drink more milk, consume less saturated fat, and have improved weight status than those who don't eat breakfast or who have breakfast at home.

The Florida Department of Education, Food and Nutrition Management (FNM) section and the Dairy Council of Florida are committed to helping ensure that students are ready to learn. In a joint effort, FNM and the Dairy Council are sponsoring an essay contest as part of the 2007 Florida School Breakfast Week. This essay contest is open to all 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Florida where students are asked to respond to an expository question. We hope this will be a fun and "rewarding" opportunity for your students, while serving as early student assessment to you. The contest is an opportunity for students to focus on thinking and writing about the importance of starting their day with breakfast...for the energy they need to be physically activity and academically successful.

The top three essays will win a prize package with a retail value of \$200 for 1<sup>st</sup> place; \$150 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place; and \$100 for 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Each of these winners will also be presented with their prize by a special guest at your school.

**Essays should be postmarked on or before Monday, October 1, 2007.**

Sincerely,

Diane C. Santoro, Administrator  
Food and Nutrition Management  
Florida Department of Education

Jennifer Whittaker, R.D.  
Director of School Marketing  
Dairy Council of Florida

# 2007 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Contest

**Sponsored by:**

**Dairy Council of Florida**

**Florida Department of Education-Food & Nutrition Management**

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Contest Theme

**“Excellence Begins with School Breakfast”**

**Question: There is a well-known saying, “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” Explain why eating a healthy breakfast would help you during school.**

Deadline for entries is postmarked by

October 1, 2007

## Excellence Begins With School Breakfast

### 2007 Rules and Guidelines

**Eligibility:** The essay contest is open to all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in Florida schools.

**Originality:** The subject of the essay must be related to the theme and be the contestant's original work. Once submitted, the essay becomes the property of FNM and Dairy Council of Florida.

**Length:** The essay must not exceed the length of the page provided. The number of words will vary with the handwriting style of each contestant.

#### **Submission Requirements:**

- All essays must be handwritten in black ink on the form provided.
- Entries must include the official entry form stapled to the essay.
- Contestant's name should be on the entry form only and should not appear on the essay itself.
- Teachers are encouraged to have their students choose the winning essay to represent their classroom as only one overall classroom winning essay from each teacher can be submitted for final consideration.
- If a teacher teaches multiple blocks of the same course, one submission from each block is acceptable, but please indicate this information on the cover page.
- Essays must be postmarked by October 1, 2007, and mailed to:

Essay Contest  
Florida Department of Education  
Food & Nutrition Management  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1044  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

**Judging Criteria:** Winning essays will be judged on: 1) adherence to the intent of the theme, 2) originality & creativity, 3) clarity, 4) style, 5) proper grammar, 6) punctuation and spelling, and 7) legibility.

**Winners:** The top three essay winners (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place) will win a prize package valued at: \$200 for 1<sup>st</sup> place; \$150 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place; and \$100 for 3<sup>rd</sup> place. These three winners will be presented their prizes by a special guest.

## **Sunshine State Standards Correlation**

This activity correlates with the following Language Arts and Health Education Sunshine State Standards:

### **LANGUAGE ARTS**

**LA.B.1.2.1.** prepares for writing by recording thoughts, focusing on a central idea, grouping related ideas, and identifying the purpose for writing.

**LA.B.1.2.2.** drafts and revises writing in cursive that: focuses on the topic; has a logical organizational pattern, including a beginning, middle, conclusion, and transitional devices; has ample development of supporting ideas; demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness; demonstrates a command of language including precision in word choice; generally has correct subject/verb agreement; generally has correct verb and noun forms; with few exceptions, has sentences that are complete, except when fragments are used purposefully; uses a variety of sentence structures; and generally follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

**LA.B.1.2.3.** produces final documents that have been edited for: correct spelling; correct use of punctuation, including commas in series, dates, and addresses, and beginning and ending quotation marks; correct capitalization of proper nouns; correct paragraph indentation; correct usage of subject/verb agreement, verb and noun forms, and sentence structure; and correct formatting according to instructions.

**LA.B.2.2.3.** writes for a variety of occasions, audiences, and purposes.

**LA.B.2.2.5.** creates narratives in which ideas, details, and events are in a logical order and are relevant to the story line.

### **HEALTH EDUCATION**

**HE.A.1.2.2.** knows how personal health behaviors influence individual well-being.

**HE.A. 1.2.10** knows the nutritional values of different foods.

**HE.B.1.2.1.** knows the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health habits.

**HE.C.2.2.2.** knows ways to effectively express feelings and opinions on health issues.