

FREE BREAKFAST FOR K-12 FILIPINO STUDENTS

by:

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In the earliest days of recorded history breakfast was considered a meal for the weak older people and infants. But by the 16th century, how Europeans viewed breakfast had changed. They already considered breakfast as the important meal of the day as it has an effect on the overall health of the body (Gibney et al., 2018). In a study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) about health behavior surveys to over 200,000 male and female school children ages 11-15 in 39 European states in 2009-2010, it was revealed that breakfast was common to school boys and declined according to socio economic status. The data showed that half to one third of children don't have breakfast every day.

In the context of the Philippines, 7 in 10 adolescents skipped any meals (Gibney et al., 2018). There are several detrimental effects of skipping meals, especially breakfast. Also, skipping breakfast might lead to high intake of sugary food such as soft drinks, sweets, and fast foods. In line with this issue, Senator Francisco "Kiko" Pangilinan filed a bill seeking a free breakfast program for K-12 students in the Philippines alongside the Sustainable Agriculture Act.

As a public school teacher I believe that this bill proposed by Senator Pangilinan is a big step towards helping in achieving healthy nutrition among Filipino students while at the same time helping farmers and fisherfolks as they will be the source of the fresh produce. My take on this is that I feel the excitement for the students and many opportunities that will open doors to our farmers and fisherfolk. Although I know that there are many caveats that need to be considered before its full implementations. Maybe

one of the best things to do is to benchmark on other countries who are doing the same such as Japan, Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Indonesia.

In implementing the free breakfast for K-12 students, here are the challenges that I have considered. First, the pool of manpower who needs to attend from preparation of the food up to serving to the students. Second, the fresh produce coming from the fisherman and farmers, there should be a system in place for a smooth ordering and delivery of fresh produce. Third, the safety of food from preparation, to cooking and to serving to students up to dishing out the utensils. . There should be sanitary standards. Fourth, there should be a dedicated sanitized room for preparation and meal cooking. Also, not to mention the heavy duty cooking wares. Given all of these, I hope that this bill will soon become a law and eventually will help our Filipino students in achieving a healthy life.

References:

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