

News Release

Board receives 2020 NACo Achievement Award for Oakland County Better with Breakfast program

August 13, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – The National Association of Counties has recognized the Oakland County Board of Commissioners with a 2020 Achievement Award in the “Children and Youth” category for the [Oakland County Better with Breakfast program](#).

“We’re honored to be recognized by the National Association of Counties for the success of ‘Oakland County Better with Breakfast’ program,” said Board Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak), who spearheaded the initiative. “Oakland County is removing barriers for student success in schools and ensuring more children in Oakland County start the day ready to learn on a full stomach. We look forward to a continued partnership with our local schools, regardless of what next school year brings.”

In March 2019, the Board announced its partnership with United Way for Southeastern Michigan and Oakland Schools, the county’s intermediate school district, to implement Michigan’s largest countywide universal school breakfast program. Since then, Oakland County Better with Breakfast has provided breakfast to all students in Oakland County public schools where more than 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced price meals. Through the program, qualifying school buildings have been supplied with equipment, technical support and food to provide breakfast to every student in participating school buildings.

"Better with Breakfast has been a tremendous program for our school," Sam Lynch, principal of Oakland Elementary in Royal Oak, said. "The peace of mind in knowing that all of our kids will start their day being well fed and prepared for what the day holds is of great benefit to the entire community. Our students are more focused and ready to learn, which in turn makes their entire day better and more productive. We are very thankful for this opportunity for our kids."

By providing all students breakfast, the program helps reduce the stigma of accepting the food for those who do qualify and ensure all students are ready to learn. In addition, federal reimbursement dollars for

schools have increased as breakfast access has increased. Through Oakland County Better with Breakfast, an additional 2,500 students in 33 school buildings have had access to free school breakfast.

“We know better nutrition can help lead to improved academics,” John Paul Torres, Waterford school board trustee, said. “A quality education in a child’s life is invaluable, it’s something no one can ever take away from them. Through Better with Breakfast, the county is helping us improve education for the future of Oakland County.”

Started in 1970, NACo’s annual Achievement Awards program is designed to recognize county government innovations. Nationally, awards are given in 18 different categories that reflect the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice and public safety, county administration, information technology, health, civic engagement and many more.

“We are seeing firsthand now more than ever that counties work tirelessly to support our residents,” NACo President Mary Ann Borgeson said. “This year’s Achievement Award-winning programs showcase how counties build healthy, safe and vibrant communities across America.”

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

#