

Pick a Better Snack

SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education in Iowa

Pick a Better Snack (PABS) is an evidenced-based nutrition education program for K-3 grade students developed by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services with funding from SNAP-Ed. The program consists of monthly lessons taught by nutrition educators in the classroom. Pick a Better Snack's goals are to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among youth and help students be physically active for 60 minutes or more every day. These efforts help confront Iowa's 15.7% childhood obesity rate.

Did You Know?

The Pick a Better Snack program:

- Highlights 27 different fruits and vegetables over 3 years, including locally-grown produce
- Teaches students to bravely taste fruits and vegetables.
- Impacts the foods students eat at home.
- Helps students eat fruits and vegetables in school meal programs.
- Supports Iowa's academic standards for [health education](#) and [science](#).

2024 - 2025 School Year Participation



33

school districts



41

rural elementary schools



83

urban elementary schools



747

classrooms



15,435

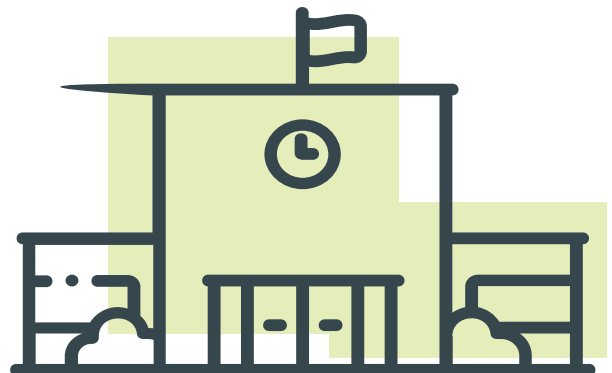
students

Iowa HHS Contracted with 22 Organizations for Implementation

- 10 county Extension agencies
- 7 county public health agencies
- 4 school districts
- 1 community action agency

Fruits and Vegetables Featured in 2024-2025

- Pear, kiwi, pineapple, peach
- Zucchini, sweet potato, chickpeas, sugar snap peas, spinach



To learn more, scan the QR code or visit

hhs.iowa.gov/pick-better-snack



Pick a Better Snack Success

Students and parents had many positive things to say about the program. Here are just a few!



"I love it when you come! Pick a Better Snack is my favorite part of coming to school!"

—Des Moines elementary student

"Ophelia loves to try new veggies with PABS, she wants the whole family to try them at home!"

—Mount Pleasant mom

"I was thrilled he wanted something healthy!"

— Keokuk PABS parent



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Program Results

An independent study conducted by Altarum assessed the impact of PABS on second and third grade students before and after participating in PABS lessons. Below are the post-survey results from over 6,000 students across 20 school districts statewide, highlighting improvements compared to the pre-survey. These findings will serve as a benchmark to guide future improvements to the PABS program.



Students who reported eating fruit yesterday **increased from 73% to 76%***



Students who said they like fruit **increased from 93% to 94%***



Students who reported being physically active **increased from 94% to 96%***

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of students reported eating vegetables yesterday



Over two-thirds (69%) of students said they like vegetables

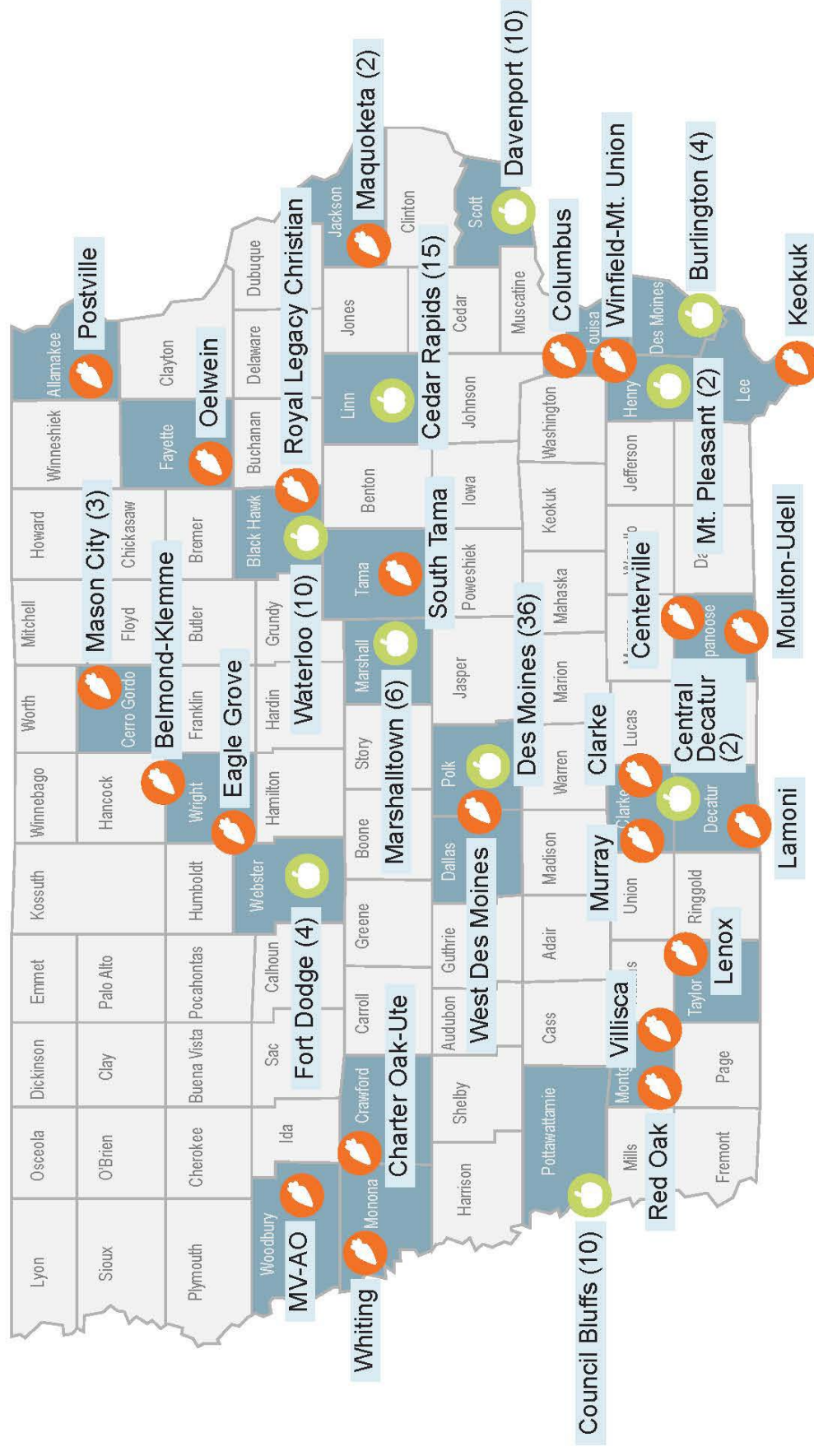


Students who said that being active is good for them **increased from 76% to 82%***



*change statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Pick a Better Snack | School Districts 2024-2025

 One participating school

 Multiple participating schools

(#) Number of schools participating