

## Grant will provide grab-and-go breakfasts for Neosho students

By Allie Hinga | Globe Reporter | Posted: Monday, May 25, 2015 5:00 pm

NEOSHO, Mo. — A \$55,000 grant will allow the Neosho School District to provide breakfast for more students during the school year.

The grant from AASA, the School Superintendents Association, will allow the district to implement a grab-and-go model at all of its schools this fall. Under that model, a morning meal is readied in a bag that students can pick up and eat in their classrooms. That ensures that every student has the opportunity to eat a breakfast, Superintendent Dan Decker said last week.

Ten of these grants were awarded across the country.

A pilot program at Benton Elementary School this past year saw a 27 percent increase in participation in the school's breakfast program, Decker said, and the hope is that the number of students who eat breakfast can be increased 25 percent across the district.

“This is one more way that we can meet the needs of our kids and put them in a position to be most successful,” he said.

Decker pointed out that students who are hungry have a harder time concentrating, but when those basic needs are met, student achievement rises.

The pilot program at Benton Elementary has given the district an idea of how the model will work, and the school district will collect not only academic data on the program, but try to determine whether it makes a difference in areas such as school nurse visits or discipline referrals, Decker said.

He also said he wanted to survey teachers to see if the students who participated paid more attention in class.

Decker traveled to Washington, D.C., to receive the grant, where past and present grant winners from around the country attended. The chance to meet with others offered the opportunity to help the district plan for longer-term implementation, Decker said.

“It was really neat because there were people from across the U.S. in the same room with the same goal,” he said.

Decker said that after the first year of the grab-and-go program, the district will have to pick up the expense.