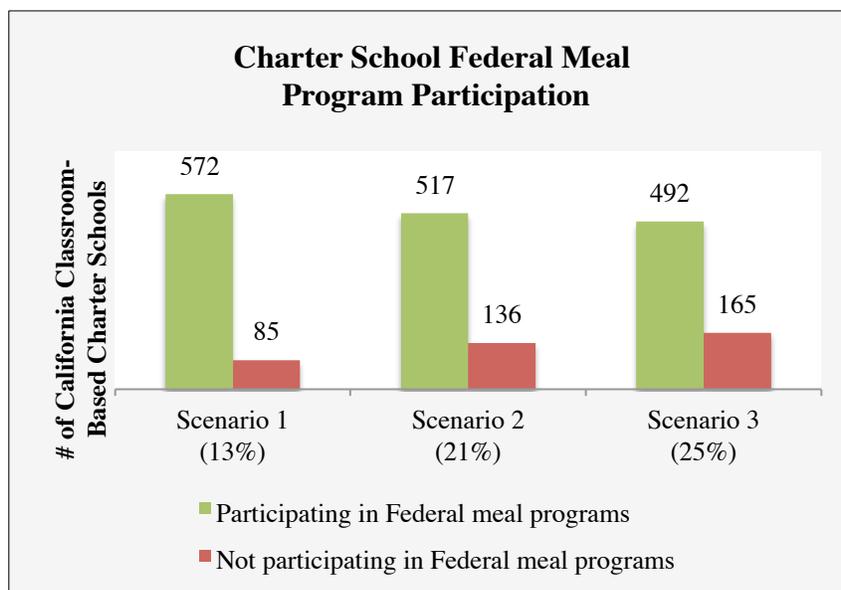


California Classroom-Based Charter Schools’ Participation in Federal Meal Programs

According to [a 2010 report](#) by the California State Auditor, **between 13-25 percent of classroom-based charter schools (i.e. EXCLUDING online, independent study, or otherwise ineligible charter schools) do not participate in Federal meal programs.** The Auditor identified 815 total charter schools in California and concluded that 451 participated in Federal meal programs and 151 provided instruction outside the classroom (i.e. online or independent study) and did not participate in Federal meal programs, based on information in state databases. The Auditor surveyed the remaining 213 charter schools to gather further information. Of the 133 that responded, 41 indicated they participated in Federal meal programs (participants), 7 indicated they provided instruction outside of the classroom or did not qualify for Federal meal programs, and 85 confirmed they did not participate in Federal meal programs (non-participants). The remaining 80 schools did not respond (non-responders) to the auditor’s survey. Due to the State’s incomplete data at the time, the percentage of non-participants could not be precisely determined.¹ However, regardless of one’s assumptions regarding the 80 non-responders, it is clear that between 13-25 percent of classroom-based charter schools did not participate in Federal meal programs at the time of the report.² The table below outlines three sets of assumptions about the 80 non-responders that resulted in the range stated above.

Scenario	Assumptions	% Not Participating in Federal Meal Programs
1	All of the 80 non-responders participated in Federal meal programs	13% <i>(absolute minimum)</i>
2	The 80 non-responders were divided proportional to the 133 schools that responded to the survey ³	21% <i>(most plausible)</i>
3	None of the 80 non-responders participated in Federal meal programs	25% <i>(absolute maximum)</i>



¹ In [a 2012 article](#), the Huffington Post stated “about 18 percent of classroom-based California charter schools don’t offer low-income students breakfast or lunch” in reference to the Auditor’s report. Although the Post didn’t explain how they arrived at this percentage, it was not an unreasonable estimate based on the information presented above (13-25%).

² If the 80 non-responders are excluded from the equation, about 15% of charter schools did not participate in Federal meal programs.

³ Of the 133 schools that responded, 30.8% (41) indicated participating, 63.9% (85) indicated not participating, and 5.3% (7) either provided instruction out of the classroom or did not qualify for Federal meal programs. Accordingly, this scenario assumes that of the 80 non-responders, 25 participated, 51 did not participate, and 4 provided instruction outside of the classroom or did not qualify for the programs.