

Meeting #4 Agenda (September 19, 3-4:30pm)

- I. Welcome & Agenda Overview (3:00-3:05)
- II. **Policy Feedback: School food waste (Use Food Well WA recommendations) (3:05-4:25)**

- Rec. #10 - Develop an emergency food distribution plan for Washington schools
- Rec. #11 - 20-minute seated lunch
- Rec. #12 - Support recess before lunch in Washington elementary schools
- Rec. #13 - Increase food waste reduction education in Washington schools
- Rec. #17 - Build more Farm to School partnerships
- Rec. #26 - Increase infrastructure investments in Washington schools.

Rec. #10 - Develop an emergency food distribution plan for Washington schools

Rec. #13 - Increase food waste reduction education in Washington schools

Rec. #26 - Increase infrastructure investments in Washington schools

NEW SECTION (OSPI) Sec. 1. A new section is added to RCW 28A.235 to read as follows:

(1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall develop educational frameworks for use by schools to integrate mathematics, science, environmental and sustainability, and social studies content standards to help support and prioritize food waste reduction in schools.

(2) **The office of the superintendent of public instruction** must establish a grant program to support the installation and maintenance of food waste reduction infrastructure in Washington schools, including food processing and preservation equipment, dishwasher, refrigerator, oven, range, coolers, and milk dispensers, and electrical upgrades for food waste prevention equipment. The grant program must prioritize applications that demonstrate both anticipated food waste reductions and reduced expenditures on food or associated packaging or serveware. **[OR ADD to the grant programs established in HB2301]**

(3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must develop guidance to facilitate the distribution of school meals to students in the event of public health or safety emergencies that disrupt in-person student attendance. The guidance must include mechanisms to prevent and rescue food waste and wasted food.

NEW SECTION (Food Center) Sec. 2. A new section is added to RCW 70A.207 to read as follows:

- (1) The center must support activities by the office of the superintendent of public instruction to reduce food waste in schools.
- (2) By January 1, 2027, and in consultation with office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department must:

Commented [SK1]: Rebecca F.: I thought we discussed this and it was clarified that Ecology was going to provide the funding. I am absolutely opposed to any unfunded mandates for schools at this time when every school district is in such dire financial straits.

Commented [SK2]: Rebecca F.: I'm pretty sure the Office of the Superintendent of Public Schools already does this and if he doesn't then I know from personal experience that individual districts are already are distributing school meals when there are public health or safety emergencies and summer breaks. Adding this to our list of must dos seems unnecessary.

- (a) identify food waste reduction educational best practices and ways to overcome food waste reduction barriers in schools;
- and
- (b) develop a school food waste reduction resource hub that is accessible to schools and school districts statewide.

Input: Rec. #13 (School food waste reduction education and infrastructure investments)

- Elizabeth K.: Love the idea of taking lessons learned on how amazing it was for schools to provide food to kids even when they weren't in school. Channeling the nutrition services staff that work in school about food waste, what's interesting is that there's a little catch-22. It's important context for this. USDA will only reimburse meals that are complete so kids are forced to take food they know they won't eat, so that may turn into waste. I could hear nutrition services say: the quality of food is a factor. Kids aren't going to eat the yucky things we serve them because we don't have money to get quality food, and everything is prepackaged commodity or heat/serve.
- Liz F.: Thinking of unintended consequences. Dig into the lessons of how food waste was caused during the pandemic. Talk to nutrition directors and if possible, some of the recipients of that food, to avoid the unintended consequences of food distribution. Even talking with food rescue organizations that were involved and saw that was going on. Speak to Heather's suggestion of combining grant money for this work with others established in grant fund. Makes sense, but one caveat is I hope that this area is called out specifically and it wouldn't lose funding by being combined in a bigger/another pot.
 - Heather T.: There are five grant programs. This would be part of the bigger one. This would be added as a line item.
- Liz F.: ReFED is having a seminar next Thursday specifically on food waste reduction. Would like extended time to give comments.
- Rebecca F.: Question about 2301 and how it applies to school – I like the idea that we're giving grants to people who are ready to make that change moving forward. My concern is that there are areas that you cannot compost food waste because you don't have food waste processing. We have no facilities, and we have to ship it to Spokane, which is costly. We also have Japanese beetle which is a quarantine. As an unintended consequence, want to make sure the grant program isn't a model where people who can do it can take advantage and people without the infrastructure will have to finance that on their own.
- Elizabeth S. (OSPI): Would like to mention the idea that – not sure where this would fit – we should remember that OSPI has a focus on partnership and partnering with community-based organizations to support community-based resource. Anything we can do as we're thinking through these kinds of programs to think about what's happening at the state/local level in terms of the infrastructure that is in place – interfacing with folks on the ground in the districts would be really helpful. Question – how would the funding need to be moved

around for the grant if it had to be moved to OSPI? There is a grant fund already with OSPI that does what is listed under the language (Healthy Food Healthy Kids grants – highly competitive). It does seem like that would support outcomes best if funding was very focused.

- Thu B.: Some schools/districts do school food sharing tables to divert waste. Kids can take what other kids may not want to eat. When schools/districts do that, they submit a request to the health department.
- Alli K.: The way this is framed: 1) burden of developing the grant program is OSPI and 2) Food Center at Ecology – is there a preference for one way or the other? It could reflect how we comment. It would be complicated between the two agencies. Who is running the program?
 - Heather T.: Leaning towards Ecology route because of the challenges of setting up a grant program and Ecology is already doing rulemaking.
 - Elizabeth S.: The funding would have to move around – already going to where it goes. It would have to get moved to OSPI so that could also be complex.
- Chris C.: What are you leaning towards, Heather?
 - Heather T.: Use Food Well had OSPI leading. I was suggesting we have Ecology lead the grant program.
 - Elizabeth S.: There is a grant fund already with OSPI that does pretty much what's listed under the new section 1, part 2. It would support outcomes for this plan best if the funding was focused on how and by whom it was distributed.
- Ecology:
 - Re: **NEW SECTION (OSPI) Sec. 1.** A new section is added to RCW 28A.235 **OR ADD to the grant programs established in HB2301]** - Ecology believes the grant programs should be placed directly within the office of the superintendent of public instruction. The Healthy Kids, Health Schools grant program within OSPI already includes but is not limited to, renovations or repairs, new purchases and improvements to cafeteria and kitchen equipment, and spaces, water bottle filling stations, garden-related structures, and greenhouses. This will streamline the awarding of grants by using and expanding an existing grant program.
 - Re: **NEW SECTION (Food Center) Sec. 2.** A new section is added to RCW 70A.207 – Ecology supports this work and recommend that the work in (a) and (b) be placed with OSPI as the primary lead agency and work in consultation with the Food Center. It is more effective to have the work on schools be primarily placed at OSPI with support from Ecology's Food Center.
- Mikhail C. (OSPI):
 - Re: **Sec. 1 (1) Educational framework for food waste**

Commented [SK3]: Ecology: (1)The center must support activities by the office of the superintendent of public instruction to reduce food waste in schools. (2) By January 1, 2027, and in consultation with office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department must:
(a) identify food waste reduction educational best practices and ways to overcome food waste reduction barriers in schools; and
(b) develop a school food waste reduction resource hub that is accessible to schools and school districts statewide.

- Re: **Sec. 1 (2) Food waste reduction grant** – I’d suggest placing this new grant under the Department of Ecology if they are interested, since our Healthy Kids Health Schools grant, which is funded in the capital budget, is already highly competitive. Including this new activity might dilute the available funding for existing priorities.
 - As a smaller lift, we might be able to add “food waste reduction” as an allowable use of the grant, but I’m confirming this with our program team. This Breakfast Meals for Kids Grant is for kitchen equipment to support the creation, expansion, or improvement of school breakfast programs, and reducing food waste is often a byproduct of kitchen improvements.
- Re: **Sec. 1 (3) Emergency food distribution** – I think this language is unnecessary. OSPI already provides guidance (attached) on serving school meals during unexpected closures, including emergencies. School meal programs are required to follow USDA regulations, and OSPI requests waivers to distribute food during emergencies when needed.
- Rebecca F.: My biggest concern with our dabbling in public school policy without having their voices at the table is the unintended consequences we may trigger. Will school districts have to give up their theatre, music programs or after school tutoring in order to meet the food waste reduction strategies we demand? School districts were very vocal in their dismay that the “fix” for funding as a result of the McCleary decision would lead to budget deficits. At least one school district has been taken over by the state because they cannot balance their budget with the state funding provided. Almost every other Washington School district is looking at significant financial shortfalls. This is not the time for us to be putting additional financial pressure on public schools.

Rec. #11 - 20-minute seated lunch

NEW SECTION. A new section is added to chapter 28A.235 RCW to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout sections xx and xx of this act and RCW 28A.235.150 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Lunch period" means the total time that students are allotted for obtaining and consuming lunches. "Lunch period" includes the student time spent obtaining and consuming a lunch.

(2) "Seated lunch duration" means the time that students have to sit and consume their lunch. "Seated lunch duration" is determined by subtracting the time students spend traveling to and from the cafeteria or other location where lunches are served, and obtaining a lunch, from the lunch period. "Seated lunch duration" includes time required for properly returning cafeteria trays or other items and clean-up duties generally expected of all students.

NEW SECTION. By February 28, 2026, the Washington state school directors' association established in chapter 28A.345 RCW shall adopt a model policy and procedure that school districts may use to ensure that students have a lunch period that:

- (a) Includes a seated lunch duration of at least twenty minutes for the consumption of their food;
- (b) Is reflective of the time spent traveling to and from the location where lunches are served and the time spent obtaining a lunch; and
- (c) Incorporates, to the extent appropriate and feasible, pertinent recommendations from the office of the state auditor.

(2) By the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, school districts must adopt and enforce policies and procedures consistent with the model policy and procedures required by this section.

Input: Rec. #11 (20 Min Seated Lunch)

- Elizabeth K.: 20 full minutes not including the time it takes to get into the cafeteria and get food.
- Chef Tom: Recess before lunch is key to making the 20 minutes work. Kids are much calmer and more likely to eat their lunch.
- Rebecca F.: All of this sounds great. The scheduling of lunches is really difficult. I don't know if we make this a mandate or if there are some buildings that can't make this happen. We were starting lunches at 10 o'clock. This is a function of school funding and space. I would be reluctant to endorse this until we have a bunch of feedback from school principals and superintendents. If you're sharing a classroom, can't eat lunch in the classroom.
- Elizabeth S.: Many schools have students eat in the classroom to reduce cafeteria pressure. I would love for students to eat outside as a lunchtime option, too! As I'm thinking about these logistics around cafeterias and lunchtime, one of my jobs is to advocate for students to get more time outside. It might not be outside the realm of possibility that schools could encourage kids to have outdoor lunchtime. Lots of schools have covered outdoor learning areas.
- Ecology: Re: *A new section is added to chapter 28A.235 RCW* – This recommendation is from Ecology's Use Food Well Washington plan and Ecology supports implementation where applicable.
- Mikhail C. (OSPI): We're currently in the rulemaking process to require 20 minutes of seated lunch and therefore this would be unnecessary - Here's a link to our published CR 101: https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2024-08/wsr-24-16-089_cr101_ada.pdf

Rec. #12 - Support recess before lunch in Washington elementary schools

NEW SECTION. A new section is added to chapter 28A.210 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) By April 1, 2026, the Washington state school directors' association, with the assistance of the office of the superintendent of public instruction, must review and update a model policy and procedure regarding nutrition, health, and physical education.

(b) The model policy and procedure must:

- (i) Strive to make elementary school recess safe, inclusive, and high quality for all students;
- (ii) Encourage elementary school recess to be scheduled before lunch, whenever possible, to reduce food waste, maximize nutrition, and allow students to be active before eating;
- (iii) Discourage the practice of withholding recess as a disciplinary or punitive action except when a student's participation in recess poses an immediate threat to the safety of the student or others, and create a process to find and deploy alternatives to the withholding of recess; and
- (iv) Discourage the withholding of recess to have a student complete academic work.

(2) By the beginning of the 2026-27 school year, school districts must adopt or amend if necessary policies and procedures that, at a minimum, incorporate all the elements described in subsection (1) of this section.

Input: Rec. #12 (Recess before lunch)

- Chef Tom: Recess before lunch is key to making the 20 minutes work. Kids are much calmer and more likely to eat their lunch.
- Elizabeth K.: Yes. Ditto what Chef Tom said earlier. There is a new recess law that already passed that went into effect this month in Washington state that prohibits the things Heather said. It mandates 30 minutes of recess for K-5. It discourages withholding recess as punishment, using recess to finish homework or do academic work. It's pretty inclusive. I was trying to get the law number because maybe it's just referencing it. This is state law ([ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5257](#) passed in 2023). It encourages recess before lunch.
 - Heather T.: That is great. We don't even need to think about this one if that's the case.
- Ecology: This recommendation is from Ecology's Use Food Well Washington plan and Ecology supports implementation where applicable.
- Mikhail C. (OSPI): This proposed language already exists in current law. It was enacted as part of House Bill 5257 in 2023. Here's a link to the existing RCW 28A.210.368: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.210.368>

Rec. #17 - Build more Farm to School partnerships

Sec. 3. RCW 15.64.060 and 2015 c 225 s 9 are each **amended** to read as follows:

- (1) A farm-to-school program is created within the department to facilitate increased procurement of Washington grown food by schools.
- (2) The department, in consultation with the department of health, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department of enterprise services, and Washington State University, shall, in order of priority:
- (a) Identify and develop policies and procedures to implement and evaluate the farm-to-school program, including coordinating with school procurement officials, buying cooperatives, and other appropriate organizations to develop uniform procurement procedures and materials, and practical recommendations to facilitate the purchase of Washington grown food by the common schools. These policies, procedures, and recommendations shall be made available to school districts to adopt at their discretion;
 - (b) Assist food producers, distributors, and food brokers to market Washington grown food to schools by informing them of food procurement opportunities, bid procedures, school purchasing criteria, and other requirements, **and to identify opportunities to reduce wasted Washington-grown food through timely and targeted procurement by schools;**
 - (c) Assist schools in connecting with local producers by informing them of the sources and availability of Washington grown food as well as the nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits of purchasing Washington grown food;
 - (d) Identify and recommend mechanisms that will increase the predictability of sales for producers and the adequacy of supply for purchasers;
 - (e) Identify and make available existing curricula, programs and publications that educate students on the nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits of preparing and consuming locally grown food;
 - (f) Support efforts to advance other farm-to-school connections such as school gardens or farms and farm visits; and
 - (g) As resources allow, seek additional funds to leverage state expenditures.
- (3) The department in cooperation with the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall collect data on the activities conducted pursuant to chapter 215, Laws of 2008 and communicate such data biennially to the appropriate committees of the legislature beginning November 15, 2009. Data collected may include the numbers of schools and farms participating and any increases in the procurement of Washington grown food by the common schools.
- (4) As used in this section, RCW 28A.335.190, and 28A.235.170, "Washington grown" means grown and packed or processed in Washington.

Input: Rec. #17 (Farm to school partnerships)

- Elizabeth S.: Farm to school program has three operating communities of practice. Recently, organizations have helped with the organization of communities of practice. Rey Cooley to help with this program. Elizabeth is part of SAGE, there is one around procurement, and one more. It's an active network and there's room for opportunity for people to come together for the topic for these communities of practice. Forwarded invite to Mikael on the nutrition side of house. He's supporting the work for Use Food Well WA plan and the implementation of that.
- Jacob L.: Agriculture is the department.
- Ecology: This recommendation is from Ecology's Use Food Well Washington plan and Ecology supports implementation where applicable.
- Mikhail C. (OSPI): Small thing, but this seems to already be addressed in subsection (c), which discusses the environmental benefits of purchasing WA grown food.

III. Wrap-up & Adjourn (4:25-4:30)

- a. Next Meeting: Thursday, October 3, 3-4:30pm – C&D waste study; Offal