



Seated Lunch Duration

1. **Purpose:**
Seated Lunch Duration Pilot Program

2. **Description of services provided:**
This proviso established the Seated Lunch Duration pilot program. The six school program was created to trial a seated lunch duration of twenty minutes and gather best practices and resources that can be used by districts to meet this goal.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**
Schools were selected for the pilot program through an application process. Criteria included size, location, grade level, percentage of Free and Reduced-Price students, and readiness to reach the goal of ensuring students have twenty minutes to sit and eat lunch.

Six schools of various size and grade level were selected from a pool of twelve applicants.

Beneficiaries in 2020-21 School Year:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Number of School Districts: | 6 |
| Number of Schools: | 6 |
| Number of Students: | 2,562 |
| Number of Educators: | Not Applicable |
| Other: | 0 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): | 0 |
| Number of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: | 01 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| FY21 Funding: State Appropriation: | \$60,000 |
| Federal Appropriation: | \$0 |
| Other fund sources: | \$0 |
| TOTAL (FY21) | \$60,000 |

4. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?**
 No
 Yes, please explain.

5. **State funding history:**

| Fiscal Year | Amount Funded | Actual Expenditures |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| FY21 | \$60,000 | \$0 |
| FY20 | \$66,000 | \$52,099 |

6. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:**

| Fiscal Year | Number of School Districts | Number of Schools | Number of Students |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| FY21 | 6 | 6 | TBD |
| FY20 | 6 | 6 | 2,562 |

7. **Programmatic changes since inception (if any):**

The ongoing pandemic has made it difficult to complete some of the initial objectives of the pilot program. Because students were primarily learning at home during SY 20-21, funding as awarded to move the second year of program to School Year 2021-22.

Two pilot schools opted out of the second year citing additional workloads from the pandemic. OSPI was able to find two more pilot sites to replace them.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**

During the initial application process for selecting the six pilot sites, OSPI found that all but two schools reported a seated lunchtime of less than twenty minutes. Moreover, the early findings align with the State Auditor's Office report that actual seated lunchtime is often lower than schools and school districts initially believe.

OSPI instructed each pilot site to measure their actual seated lunchtime at least once per month. This data would be the main point of reference as we worked with the sites to implement strategies of improving their seated lunchtime.

Initial data shows that there is a wide range in seated lunchtime between pilot sites. Generally, larger schools had a more difficult time getting to this goal of twenty minutes.

One of the first strategies that our pilot sites looked to employ was improving the meal Point-Of-Service (POS). The POS encompasses all of the actions that take place

when a student selects and receives their meal, including but not limited to; moving through service lines, selecting entrée choices, selecting and self-serving at a salad bar, selecting milk choice and paying for their meal (entering a PIN number / scanning a student ID card / paying cash). The time that students spend at the POS directly impacts the amount of time they have to sit and eat lunch as it's often scheduled as one lunch time block. Almost all pilot sites are focused on speeding up this meal service line to increase seated lunchtime. One benefit of this focus is that the school may not have to increase the overall amount of time allotted to lunch.

Strategies to speed up the service line have included purchasing faster computer equipment and scanners, improving line flow with additional signs and floor markings, and reorganizing the cafeteria to reduced bottle necking.

Additionally, improving the speed of hand-washing and table cleanup is being explored as a way to improve seated lunchtime.

Recess Before Lunch: There is a connection between an adequate seated lunchtime and Recess Before Lunch, the practice of scheduling recess before lunch so that children aren't motivated to skip out on lunch to go play with friends. This will continue to be explored. While Recess Before Lunch may bring some other challenges, it looks to help improve seated lunchtime.

Grant opportunity: Each site was awarded up to \$5,000 to purchase equipment or supplies to help reach the goal. Five out of the six pilot sites were able to utilize the grant program. The COVID-19 school closures made accessing this grant challenging for school and district personnel, who had many competing priorities.

Year 2 grants are now available in the OSPI iGrants system for the pilot schools.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

The COVID-19 outbreak severely limited the in-person aspect of this pilot program. The consultant and OSPI staff had visited each pilot site in Fall of 2019 to examine their current practice and begin recommending ways to increase seated lunchtime. The plan was to return in Spring 2020 to conduct a food waste study, another data point around seated lunchtime.

COVID-19 eliminated the possibility of return physical visits in 2020 and the distanced learning in spring of 2020 made it impossible for schools to track seated lunchtime as students remained at home.

OSPI is hoping to return to physical visits during SY 21-22 to resume the data collection and resource building that was established during the first year of the pilot program.

10. **Future opportunities:**

Going into the second year of the pilot program, OSPI aims to create resources and tools that districts can use to implement a seated lunchtime of twenty minutes.

Leaning on previous work and studies around seated lunchtime, as well as our initial data collection, OSPI will create a Seated Lunchtime Toolkit which will include strategies, resources, and guidance around how to reach this important goal.

11. **Statutory and/or budget language:**

Budget Proviso – Sec. 504 (4)(w) of 2021-23 Budget, SB 5092

\$60,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 is provided solely for the office of the superintendent of public instruction to evaluate and implement best practices and procedures for ensuring that student lunch periods include a seated lunch duration of at least 20 minutes. The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall, through an application-based process, select six public schools to serve as demonstration sites. Of the amounts provided in this subsection:

(i) \$30,000 of the general fund—state appropriation is provided solely for annual grant awards of \$5,000 each provided to the six school districts selected to serve as school demonstration sites;

(ii) \$20,000 of the general fund—state appropriation is provided solely for the office to hire a consultant with expertise in nutrition programs to oversee the demonstration projects and provide technical support; and

(iii) \$10,000 of the general fund—state appropriation is provided solely for the office to provide technical support to the demonstration sites and report its findings and recommendations to the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate by October 1, 2022.

12. **Other relevant information:**

N/A

13. **Schools/districts receiving assistance:**

See [OSPI's 2021 Grantee List](#).

14. **Program Contact Information:**

Name: Leanne Eko

Title: Director, Child Nutrition Services

Phone: 360-725-0410

Email: Leanne.eko@k12.wa.us