

ESSB 5257 Elementary School Recess

Statutory and/or Budget Language

\$17,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 is provided solely for implementation of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) No. 5257 (elementary school recess).

Purpose

To support the implementation of 30-minutes of recess in all public schools in kindergarten to fifth grade (plus sixth grade when attached to elementary school) for the 2024–25 school year and beyond.

Description of Services Provided

OSPI worked with Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) to create guidance documents Policy 6701 and Procedure 6701P to advocate for recess statewide.

Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants

Legislation specially called out WSSDA to revise their policy and procedures for school boards.

Beneficiaries in the 2023–24 School Year

Number of School Districts	N/A
Number of Schools	N/A
Number of Students	N/A
Number of Educators	N/A
Other	1

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No

State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$17,000	\$8,348

Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	1



Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

N/A

Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

Ten different districts across the state applied for a recess waiver for the 2024–25 school year. The most common factor for requesting the waiver was the organizational challenge in districts with intermediate schools (grades 5 and 6 only), which had not offered a recess block of time in the past. Additionally, general scheduling difficulties in providing all elementary students with 30 minutes of recess have been identified.

Leaders within these districts emphasized the importance of adapting school schedules and policies to better support student well-being. They recognized that integrating recess into the daily routine requires not only logistical adjustments but also a commitment to fostering a holistic educational environment. By addressing these scheduling challenges, educational leaders aim to enhance the overall school experience and promote the physical and mental health of students.

Major Challenges Faced by the Program

There was only one year of funding and having additional funding for the 2024–25 school year would have been beneficial to support recess-specific training across the state. Although OSPI provided \$2000 for recess trainings in August 2024, these ESSB 5257 funds could not be utilized.

Future Opportunities

OSPI will keep trying to support districts and elementary schools with recess specific training of paraeducators. Leveraging future opportunities could include securing consistent funding streams to ensure the continuity and expansion of these training programs.

Other Relevant Information

In April 2024, OSPI released Bulletin # 025-24 covering recess requirements and seated lunch time duration. The bulletin included both WSSDA's revised policy and procedure as well as OSPI's recess waiver.

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.](#)

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