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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

February 21, 2025

() Action Required
Due date:
(X) Informational

BULLETIN NO. 012-25 Child Nutrition Services

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers
School District Food Service Supervisors
Administrators of Select Private Schools

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Update to Seated Lunchtime Rulemaking

CONTACT: Elizabeth Beechler, Director of School Meal Programs
360-522-2103, elizabeth.beechler@k12.wa.us

Jessica Seale, State Initiative Program Specialist
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PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform you of the outcome of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) rulemaking regarding the amount of time students have to eat lunch.

OSPI will file CR-103P which will incorporate changes to the proposed rule to narrow the scope of the rule and to extend the implementation timeline. WAC 392-157-125 will be revised as follows:

Time for meals. (1) School mealtime. School breakfast and school lunch periods must allow a reasonable amount of time for each child to take care of personal hygiene and enjoy a complete meal. (2) **Lunch Duration for Grades K–5:** Beginning in the **2029–30** school year,

schools must provide students in grades K through 5 with the opportunity to eat lunch for a minimum of 20 minutes, once the students have received their food through the meal service line.

OSPI will continue to develop and share guidance to support implementation, including the recommend best practice of 20 minutes of seated lunch for all grades and recess before lunch for elementary students.

BACKGROUND

The Washington State Auditor conducted a [Child Nutrition Performance Audit](#) to study lunchtime scheduling practices. This audit concluded that many Washington schools are falling short of the recommended best practice of providing students with 20 minutes of seated lunchtime. The audit recommended that OPSI consider requiring schools to provide students adequate seat time to eat as well as encourage and facilitate the best practice of offering recess before lunch.

As part of the rule making process a public hearing was held and written public comments were reviewed. Commentors shared their concerns including facility limitations and staffing costs. These comments were considered when determining the final rule language.

RESOURCES

- [Performance Audit Report Summary](#) (Two-pager)
- [YouTube Video about Performance Audit](#)
- Performance Audit: [Schools Can Influence Student Eating Habits Through Lunch Scheduling Practices](#) | Office of the Washington State Auditor
- Reduction in Food Waste: [Use Food Well Washington Plan](#) (Department of Ecology)
- [B070-24 Open Public Comment for Seated Lunchtime Revisions through January 14](#)

To assist program operators with implementation, OSPI will create a Seated Lunchtime Toolkit which will include strategies, resources, and guidance around how to reach this important goal.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Elizabeth Beechler, Director of School Meals, at 360-522-2103 or email elizabeth.beechler@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

Tennille Jeffries-Simmons
Chief of Staff

Leanne Eko
Chief Nutrition Officer
Child Nutrition Services

CR:ln

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