



Supporting Healthy Kids and Healthy Schools

2027-29 Biennial Capital Budget Decision Package

Agency: 3500 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Budget period: 2027-29 Biennial Budget

Budget level: PL

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Healthy Kids-Healthy Schools grant program creates opportunities to help Washington's children maintain healthy weight, enjoy active lives, and encourage good eating habits by creating healthy learning environments. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests \$22.5 million in funding to continue this grant program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Healthy Kids-Healthy Schools Grant Program creates opportunities to help Washington's children maintain a healthy weight, enjoy active lives, and encourage good eating habits by creating healthy learning environments. Beginning in the 2015-17 Biennial Capital Budget, funds for the Healthy Kids-Healthy Schools grant program were appropriated to purchase water bottle filling stations as well as other renovations to improve the health of K-12 students. In the following biennia, grant funds could be used to purchase kitchen equipment or renovate kitchens, build garden-related structures and greenhouses to provide students access to fresh produce, replace lead contaminated drinking water fixtures, purchase and install playground equipment, build covered play areas, and purchase physical education equipment. Districts could apply for a maximum grant of \$200,000 to be used for various physical education and student nutrition project requests at one or more schools. Grant applications were scored based on criteria including the project's benefit to students, the school's free and reduced-price lunch eligibility, and whether the project would increase seated lunch times or additional recess. The lead grants do not limit the award amount.

The Legislature has continued its support of this grant program by providing funding in the previous biennia. This proposal for the 2027-29 Biennial Capital Budget continues funding projects which support Superintendent Reykdal's mission to support the whole child.

Children's Nutrition and Physical Health Grants: \$15 Million

The Superintendent encourages students to maintain a healthy lifestyle that includes access to healthy meals and physical activity. This request continues the nutrition and physical health grants funded by the Legislature starting in the 2015-17 Biennial Capital Budget. Grant funds can be used for purchasing fitness or playground equipment, building covered play areas, creating

areas to promote physical health opportunities, and purchasing kitchen equipment or upgrades, such as ovens, dishwashers, or other equipment to encourage cooking school meals from scratch. Grant funds can also be used to purchase water bottle filling stations to help eliminate plastic waste and encourage students to drink water instead of sugary beverages.

The need for continued grant funding is demonstrated by the nutrition and physical grant applications received in the 2025-27 biennium. OSPI received applications from 157 school districts totaling \$25.4 million in project requests. Limited funding of \$12 million from the 2025-27 Biennial Capital Budget enabled OSPI to award grants to only 84 school districts. Due to the continued strong demand for this grant funding, OSPI requests \$15 million for children's nutrition and physical health grants and proposes to increase the district maximum grant award to \$250,000.

Remediation of Lead Grants: \$5 Million

- During the 2021 legislative session, ESSHB 1139 was enacted requiring schools built before 2016 to have their drinking water outlets tested for lead by the Department of Health (DOH). If a drinking water fixture tests above 5 parts per billion for lead contamination, the school is required to remediate. This grant program would fund drinking water fixture replacements as well as pipe replacement projects if the pipes are determined to be the source of the lead.

The need to continue funding for the lead remediation grant program is demonstrated by the fact that the grant in the 2023-25 biennium was closed after awarding funding to just 14 school districts. The 2025-27 Biennial Capital Budget provided \$1 million for the grant program. The 2026 Supplemental Capital Budget added another \$2.5 million to the program for a total of \$3.5 million for the biennium. As of July 2026, OSPI has awarded 23 school districts for a total of \$2.1 million for remediation work. The remaining funding will be obligated as DOH continues testing and publishing the results. OSPI requests \$5 million to continue assisting school districts to remediate lead in drinking water.

Lead in Water Retesting Reimbursement Grants: \$2.5 Million

OSPI requests \$2.5 million in funding to reimburse school districts that hire a contractor to perform lead testing to be compliant with the requirements of ESSHB 1139. This funding request will allow school districts to conduct follow-up lead testing based on their needs and will compliment DOH's lead in water testing efforts. This new funding request will allow schools to hire a contractor for lead in water testing for follow-up post-remediation testing to confirm that lead has been reduced to acceptable levels and meet the retesting requirements in ESSB 1139.

What will the request produce or construct? Who or what will be impacted by the budget request and how will they be impacted?

This request will help build healthy schools and learning environments in the state of Washington. The grants awarded under this program will enable students to have better access

to fresh water, increased opportunities for fresh foods in the school meal programs, safe accessible and covered playground structures and safer drinking water for a better learning experience.

Identify the problem or opportunity addressed by this request. Why is the request a priority? What would be the result of not acting?

The grant awards made to school districts will help build safer and healthier schools and learning environments in the state of Washington. The improvements made by this program address multiple student health concerns by targeting specific facility improvements. Students have better access to fresh water; increased opportunities for fresh foods in the school meal programs; safe, accessible, and covered playground structures and better lighting leading to a better learning experience. Without continued funding, the program cannot continue serving students.

For new funding requests for programs or projects that have received previous appropriations (either a phase of construction or previous grant rounds), how much has been spent or put under contract?

As of July 2026, the entire \$12 million appropriation from the 2025-27 Biennial Capital Budget has been awarded to 84 school districts for the Children's Nutrition and Physical Health grant program. In addition, the \$3.5 million appropriation for Remediation of Lead grants has been awarded to 23 school districts for a total of \$2.1 million. The remaining funding will be obligated as DOH continues testing and publishing the results.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source?

Non-state funds will not be used to complete the project.

For major construction projects, describe the viable alternative solutions you considered. Why was this alternative chosen?

This option is the best alternative since it provides state funds aimed toward making our schools healthier and improving learning environments without requiring school districts to rely on voter-approved capital levies or bonds. Local levy and bond funding is not a dependable or reliable funding source for these important programs to ensure our students have the healthiest, safest learning environments possible.

For major construction projects, what project delivery method has been or will be selected and why?

N/A

Location

- Address: N/A
- Zip Code: N/A
- County: Statewide
- City: Olympia
- Legislative District: 098

Grant recipient organization

Local School Districts.

RCW that establishes grant

28A.525

Application process used

OSPI will continue to offer a competitive grant funding process to ensure all school districts have an opportunity to apply for grant funds.

Describe Growth Management Impacts (Have you worked with local officials and describe any potential impacts)

N/A

Funding Requested

- 2027-29 \$22,500,000
- 2029-31 \$22,500,000
- 2031-33 \$22,500,000
- 2033-35 \$22,500,000
- 2035-37 \$22,500,000

STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Provide context on how this request fits into the agency's work. Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic plan or would improve agency performance.

This project supports Superintendent Reykdal's K-12 Education Vision of his goal for Washington's public education system to prepare every student who walks through our school doors for post-secondary aspirations, careers, and life.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? What are the measurable outcomes that would result from the project?

The applications for the 2025-27 biennium funding mostly included schools that were not equipped to provide a safe and healthy environment for their students using capital levies or bond dollars. Providing grant awards to such schools will help bring them on par with the other schools in the state and provide an equitable learning environment to all the students in the state of Washington.

OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIALS

If this project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda and/or the Governor's Salmon Strategy, please follow the instructions in Chapter 14 of the operating budget instructions and Chapter 3 of the capital budget instructions.

This project does not impact the Puget Sound Action Agenda or the Governor's Salmon Strategy.

Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

No.