# 2019 Southern Nevada School Wellness Conference

**Nevada Department of Agriculture**

February 9, 2019, 8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.
College of Southern Nevada, North Las Vegas

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Dayle Hayes, MS, RD

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  TIPS for School Meals That Rock
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2019 NEVADA SCHOOL WELLNESS CONFERENCE
RECESS BEFORE LUNCH
Optimizing School Schedules to Support Learning

2019 NEVADA SCHOOL WELLNESS CONFERENCE
RECESS
before
LUNCH

Optimizing School Schedules to Support Learning

TEAM Nutrition Montana

2019 NEVADA SCHOOL WELLNESS CONFERENCE
THANKS to my colleagues

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Recess Before Lunch

Recess Before Lunch (RBL) allows students to play (go to recess) first, and then have lunch. Play, then eat.

It’s an effective School Wellness strategy that helps students eat well and perform well in school.

Schools use Recess Before Lunch for these reasons:
- Improved student behavior on the playground, in the lunchroom and in afternoon classrooms
- Improved lunchroom atmosphere
- Students eat better and waste less

Montana Schools have been leaders in using Recess Before Lunch since 2002. From the experiences gleaned from these schools, we are pleased to share our many resources related to Recess Before Lunch including an updated (2018) Recess Before Lunch Guide!


Examples of RBL schedules.

A list of important things to consider when planning for RBL.

www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/rbl.html
WHY?
The best schools make decisions based on the needs and interests of the students... not the habits and traditions of the adults.

@SteeleThoughts
School Meals Improve Learning Environments
School Meals
Feeding Bodies, Fueling Minds

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It is only NUTRITION
WHEN they eat or drink it

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More Fuel Into Students
Less Food Into Trash Cans

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So, you're telling me I gotta sit in this chair all day and don't get recess? Excuse me while I misbehave in class.
Known Benefits of Recess

- Provides time for kids to rest, play, imagine, think, move, and socialize
- Increased productivity and attentiveness after a recess break
- Valuable communication skills like negotiation and problem solving
- Promotes social coping skills such as perseverance and self-control
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“We know that Recess Before Lunch is best for our students and we see how it improves the learning environment in the afternoon. It’s a schedule shift for our staff and we continually refine our approach with their input.”

Montana School Administrator
RECESS AND LUNCH WITH THE WHOLE CHILD AND COMMUNITY IN MIND

Over the past ten years, the role of school health, especially the importance of nutrition and physical activity, has continued to evolve. The original coordinated school health model from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was expanded to the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model. According to the CDC, this model (illustrated above) “focuses its attention on the child, emphasizes a school-wide approach, and acknowledges learning, health, and the school as being a part and reflection of the local community.”

In the Whole Child Model, the scheduling of recess and lunch is important because of the numerous connections among school success, nutrition and physical activity. Recess and lunch are also part of another important discussion in America’s schools: food waste. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has recognized that schools have a special role in “reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste.” The U.S. Food Waste Challenge specifically recommends Recess Before Lunch and extending lunch periods as two important strategies for reducing food waste in schools.

This guide focuses on the many benefits of an active recess and a comfortable lunch period, preferably in that order.
RECESS BEFORE LUNCH
A Wellness Policy Strategy

32% of Montana Elementary Schools\(^1\) use Recess Before Lunch (RBL) scheduling for all or some of their students.

Greater nutrient consumption
with less food and beverage waste
Data from a Montana RBL pilot project\(^2\) shows an overall decrease in average food and beverage waste after implementation of a RBL policy.

Additional findings included:
- Fewer unopened milk cartons — more students opening and drinking milk which nourishes the body and brain.
- Lunchrooms were more relaxed, quiet and conducive to eating, as students were not rushing to get outside.
- Children returned to class more settled, calmer and ready to learn. Because they had eaten well, they tended to stay focused throughout the afternoon.

80% of Montana Principals surveyed\(^3\) report
- Improved student behavior on the playground, in the lunch room and in the classroom.
- Increased lunch consumption.
- Decreased food waste.

Time to eat matters!
Scheduling lunch periods to be at least 20–30 minutes

- Decreases food waste\(^4\) and allows students enough time to eat a balanced meal. Schools can also stagger grades into the lunchroom to minimize time spent waiting in the lunch line and maximize time to eat.
- Experts recommend that children have at least 20 minutes of seated time (once they sit down with their meal) to enjoy a complete school lunch or a lunch from home.
Reducing Food Waste: What Schools Can Do Today

USDA's Economic Research Service estimates of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level went uneaten in the U.S. in 2010:

31% Research shows plate waste now = plate waste before updated nutrition standards.

Scheduling recess before lunch can reduce plate waste by as much as 30%.

Extending lunch periods from 20 to 30 minutes reduced plate waste by nearly one-third.

Smarter Lunchroom Strategies, such as how foods are named and where they are placed in the cafeteria, can facilitate healthy choices and increase fruit and vegetable consumption by up to 70%.

Schools across the country are stepping up to the challenge with innovative new strategies, such as:

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More students get recess now because they aren’t naughty in the cafeteria. That used to be a big problem.

—Teacher
HOW?
# RECESS BEFORE LUNCH CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to consider all the issues involved in the successful scheduling of Recess Before Lunch. Adapted from Iowa Recess Before Lunch Guide produced by the Iowa Team Nutrition Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key issues for RBL success</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are school administrators supportive?</td>
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<td>Are teachers and aides supportive?</td>
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<td>Is the school nutrition program supportive?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would current school nutrition staffing schedule work with RBL?</td>
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<td>Have nearby schools with RBL been contacted for best practices, sample schedules, etc.?</td>
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<td>How will students and parents have chance to provide input on RBL?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will all affected staff (teachers, school nutrition, aides, custodians) be able to provide input on RBL?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a plan to assess success pre- and post-RBL with data collection of food/beverages consumed vs. wasted?</td>
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<td>How much seated time will students have to eat lunch (at least 20 min.)?</td>
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<td>Is there a plan for adequate staff coverage of recess, lunch and transitions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a plan for storage of coats, boots and other outdoor gear?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a plan for effective handwashing procedures (page 12)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a plan for the safe management of lunches brought from home?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a plan for the management of students with food allergies and other special medical needs?</td>
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**Next steps:**
STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHEDULING

Plan your schedule carefully

- Meet with all of the staff involved, especially those directly affected by the schedule change (teachers, aides, school nutrition and custodians) to work out any possible kinks.
- Plan procedures for all cafeteria/lunchroom needs, like how to bring cold lunches from classrooms or lockers, where to store them during recess, and process for handling winter clothing and boots.
- Realize that any schedule is a work in progress, which may need to be tweaked several times. Some schools conduct a trial run or pilot for several weeks to identify issues, and then modify it as needed.
- See examples of schedules from Montana schools.

Allow adequate time for recess, lunch and transitions

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other national organizations recommend giving elementary school students at least 20 minutes of recess daily. Successful recess requires planning, supervision and support. Read more about Strategies for Recess in Schools.
- Scheduling a minimum of at least 20 minutes for lunch from the time they sit down with their tray (i.e. seat time) is recommended, but the actual amount of time needed is dependent on the age and number of students being served in the school. Many Montana schools allow 25–30 minutes total for lunch, especially for younger students who generally require more time to get through the serving line and to eat.
- Try to maximize time to eat while minimizing the time spent waiting in the lunch line.
- Students may need time to adapt to longer lunch periods and to eat more slowly. Having adult mentors eat with students and practice conversations can help. Read more about Creating Comfortable Cafeterias on Montana Team Nutrition’s website.

Create positive transitions

- Schools know that transition times, especially those involving going outdoors, coming indoors and moving as a group into other spaces, have the potential to be disruptive.
- There are plenty of ways to get students focused for lunch and back into learning mode in the classroom. The key lies in creating structured, orderly routines and providing engaging, calming tasks that work for various grade levels. For example, using a rotation of student leaders or singing a special song.
- Invite experienced teachers and other staff to share their ideas for effective transitions and to mentor others in routines that work.

Develop a detailed hand washing plan in the schedule

- Hand washing is an important food safety issue and disease prevention strategy. It is one of the most frequently identified barriers to implementing RBL.
- The following procedure has been approved by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Registered Sanitarians:

  Include a hand washing plan in the lunch schedule. Hand washing is an important food safety issue that should not be overlooked. Most school schedules are written so that the children come in from recess, put coats away, wash hands, and then enter the lunchroom as a group. Washing hands with soap and water is the recommended method for cleaning hands. The use of a hand sanitizer is not effective in cleaning hands. Hand sanitizers are designed to work in addition to hand washing when applied to already clean hands. For more information, contact the local county sanitarian at the health department.

www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/rbl.html
Examples of Montana School Schedules

**Grades K–5**
260 students

- **K**: 8:30 a.m. Class Starts
- **1**: Recess 8:46 – 9:06
- **1**: 9:06 – 10:06
- **2**: Recess 10:16 – 10:36
- **2**: 10:36 – 11:36
- **3**: Recess 11:46 – 12:06
- **3**: 12:06 – 1:06
- **4**: Recess 2:06 – 2:26
- **5**: 3:36 p.m. Class Dismissed

**Grades K–6**
115 students

- **K–4**: 8:25 a.m. Class Starts
- **5**: Recess 10:15 – 10:35
- **5**: 10:35 – 11:35
- **6**: Recess 11:45 – 11:50
- **6**: 11:50 – 12:50
- **7**: Recess 12:50 – 1:10
- **7**: 1:10 – 2:10
- **8**: Recess 2:20 – 2:40
- **8**: 2:40 – 3:40

**Grades 3–5**
150 students

- **3**: 8:40 a.m. Class Starts
- **4**: Recess 8:40–8:50
- **5**: 8:50–9:00
- **6**: Recess 9:00–9:10
- **7**: 9:10–9:20
- **8**: 9:20–9:30
- **9**: 9:30–9:40
- **10**: 9:40–9:50

**Grades 5–8**
660 students

- **5**: 8:40 a.m. Class Starts
- **6**: Recess 9:46–10:06
- **7**: Recess 10:06–10:20
- **8**: Recess 10:20–10:36
- **9**: 11:19–11:44
- **10**: Lunch 11:44–12:00
- **11**: Lunch 12:00–12:16
- **12**: Lunch 12:16–12:33
- **13**: Lunch 12:33–12:50
- **14**: Lunch 12:50–1:06
- **15**: Lunch 1:06–1:22
- **16**: Lunch 1:22–1:38
- **17**: Lunch 1:38–1:54
- **18**: Lunch 1:54–2:10
- **19**: Lunch 2:10–2:26
- **20**: Lunch 2:26–2:42
- **21**: Lunch 2:42–2:58
- **22**: Lunch 2:58–3:14
- **23**: Lunch 3:14–3:30
- **24**: Lunch 3:30–3:46
- **25**: Lunch 3:46–4:02
- **26**: Lunch 4:02–4:18

6th and 7th grades have first lunch during 1st and 3rd quarters.
6th and 8th grades have first lunch during 2nd and 4th quarters.
Does your child’s school have a daily recess period?
Students should have at least 20 minutes of recess every school day.

Do all kids feel included?
Kids sit out because they don’t feel welcomed. Teaching new games and setting rules against exclusionary behavior help all kids feel comfortable on the playground.

Do children have a common set of rules to follow?
When kids have a clear set of rules, they spend less time arguing and more time playing and having fun.

Do kids solve their own conflicts?
Simple conflict-resolution techniques can prevent disagreements from escalating.

Are there active, trained adults on the playground?
Recess staff should be trained in play and positive group-management techniques.

Are there a variety of games for kids to play?
A good recess will give children a choice of games to play.

Does your child’s school withhold recess as punishment?
Recess is a crucial part of the school day and shouldn't be taken away to punish any child.

Are kids given the opportunity to lead on the playground?
A great recess allows students to step up and be positive role models for their peers.
Advice from RBL Schools

- Scheduling changes are do-able; they take some creative planning and flexibility. Expect the schedule to be a work in progress. After the schedule is in place, no extra staff should be required as a result of the change.
- Look past the logistics of the scheduling change and focus on what is best for the students. Collect and share examples of positive changes seen on the playground, in the dining areas, and in the classroom.
- Students may be hungrier and thirstier with this change. It is a good opportunity to promote a school breakfast program or to temporarily offer a second chance breakfast service or morning snack. Since school nutrition programs are required to have water accessible in areas where meals are served, this is an excellent time to check the availability and replenish water as needed.
- Since younger students (K-2) may accept the change in scheduling better than the older kids, pilot RBL with younger grades first.
- RBL can be implemented in a variety of ways. Schools in Montana have RBL schedules during all lunch periods or some lunch periods, with students in all grades or selected grades only. Some schools switch in the middle of the year, so grades/classes have RBL during the first semester and others have it during the second semester.

RECESS BEFORE LUNCH
Optimizing School Schedules to Support Learning
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WHO?
GAINING SUPPORT FOR RBL

Educate staff:
- Educate yourself and your staff, including teachers, aides, secretaries, nutrition staff, and custodians on the potential benefits of RBL. If possible, visit firsthand, or at least contact, another school that is using RBL. Share information and discuss concerns at a staff in-service. Share a handout on RBL benefits.
- Make a commitment to give a RBL schedule a fair chance; commit to staying with it for at least a year. Be ready to make adjustments as needed in the first few months. Involve staff in identifying areas of concerns and brainstorming solutions.
- Involve school nutrition staff at every step of the process. They will need to make adjustments and will be key to the success of any meal service.
- Expect some resistance to change and be ready for the small problems that arise. Always keep the benefits front and center. More activity and better nutrition enhance learning environments and improve behavior.

“Recess before lunch benefits everyone. Once you get the process in place, it becomes second nature to the students.”
Montana School Nutrition Staff

Educate parents:
- Share RBL benefits and links through all the channels that you currently use to educate parents, including school website, newsletters, bulletin boards, teacher conferences and meetings.
- Include RBL information in your social media postings using #recessbeforelunch as a hashtag. Here are two sample messages that can be used on any channel:
  - Our school has #recessbeforelunch, students play then eat. This way they consume more nutritious @SchoolLunch & more milk
  - Our #recessbeforelunch schedule means that students play first. They eat better @ SchoolLunch & lunches from @home too
- Emphasize that RBL will be equally beneficial to students who bring a lunch from home. When students have a more relaxed atmosphere in which to eat lunch, they are likely to bring less uneaten food home.
- Include RBL information/benefits/tips with all school lunch menus provided to parents.

Educate students:
- Any change in scheduling can be successful if students understand the reasons and process.
- Engage student leaders to promote the new schedule on campus and ask for student feedback when appropriate. Student council members and other leaders can also be involved in trouble-shooting minor glitches to help the process run more smoothly.

Educate the community:
- Share the benefits/concept of RBL at a Parent Advisory Council Meeting, or in an article in the local and school newspaper. Share a handout on RBL benefits.

“If you eat lunch before recess, you get a tummy ache.”
Montana Student

www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/rbl.html
Recess Before Lunch

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- Recess Before Lunch Guide
- Benefits of Recess Before Lunch
- Sample School Schedules
- RBL "Are you ready" Checklist


Recess Before Lunch is good for students and teachers.

Examples of RBL schedules.

A list of important things to consider when planning for RBL.

www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/rbl.html
Questions? Comments?

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before
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Thank YOU