

# WASHINGTON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION PLANNING PROCESS

## Education and Behavior Change Subject Matter Expert –

### November Meeting Summary

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#### Participants

Bianca Smith – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Mary Harrington – Washington Department of Ecology  
Jade Monroe – Washington Department of Ecology  
Kendra Tyler – Environmental Protection Agency  
Elizabeth Schmitz - Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Nayiri Haroutunian – Washington Green Schools  
Dale Alekel – King County Green Schools  
Joan Qazi – Wenatchee School District  
Jodi Crimmins – Oak Harbor School District  
Lisa M Marquart – Baton Health  
Josh Hechtman – Reproduce 81  
Beth Thiel – Walla Walla Farm to School  
Heather Trim – Zero Waste WA  
Pricilla Brotherton – RE Sources  
Michelle Sanow – Clark County Public Health/Clark County Green Schools

#### Meeting Recording:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bzwm1JhAkQU>

#### Meeting Summary

- Overview of stakeholder survey input and stakeholder group input:
  - Stakeholder group greatest areas of concern:
    - Increased support for environmental sustainability education in school curricula (55.6%)
    - Increase school composting education and programs (38.9%)
    - More resources to support school gardening programs (33.3%)
    - Use of milk dispensers in schools as opposed to milk cartons (33.3%)
    - Enforcement of recess before lunch in elementary schools (33.3%)
  - Stakeholder group policy and support suggestions:
    - Funding for school composting programs/compost pick-up (24%)
      - Group agrees that food waste prevention further of the waste chain is preferred, but there is still interest in better addressing composting in schools (i.e. supporting/promoting the increase in composting efforts).
      - Don't think composting should be implemented via mandate, just support and incentives.
    - Funding to support staffing for school waste reduction/environmental education efforts (24%)
      - Stipends for key staff (like custodians, food service staff, educators, and retired/other volunteers) may be a

meaningful way to encourage work around food waste reduction

- WA Green Schools has seen some challenges with the use of stipends—not being utilized, even while funding is available.
- Having more funded positions that focus solely on environmental sustainability efforts at the local level would be ideal. These roles can also help with school and community team building needed to establish cohesive and effective food waste reduction efforts.
- We may want to reach out to school district unions to investigate any potential issues with staff stipends
- Incentivizing those we want to carry out this work would be beneficial
- Mandating longer school meal duration/recess before lunch (17%)—FYI, there is already legislation underway to address this
  - Bianca will keep team in the loop about the direction and outcomes from this legislation
  - Will longer meal durations negatively affect quality of school meals and possibly encourage use of more packaged foods to save time?
- Funding to support reduction of food container/service ware waste during school meals (17%)
  - Group suggest funding or other supports to encourage development of central kitchens in more school districts might help with this issue
  - We need to investigate where the best use of money might be to support this effort
  - Use of milk dispensers has been successful in schools and more promotion is needed to debunk misconceptions
  - Is space in the school itself or funding for staff and dishwasher itself a barrier to school use of washable service wares?
  - Some group members suggest that, overall, there is a cost savings with switching to washable service ware
- Reduce barriers to implementation of share tables in schools/donation of edible foods (10%)—FYI, there is already changes being made to the WA Retail Food Code to help address some of these barriers
- General notes from participants:
  - There needs to be more administrative support in school districts to implement waste reduction efforts
  - Teachers need better access and encouragement to receive environmental sustainability education and to provide environmental sustainability education
  - Any funding supports should be prioritized for higher free and reduced price meal eligibility schools.
  - More education should be provided to lunchrooms and custodial staff about proper waste sorting (recycle, compost, and trash)

- Stakeholders will be divided into subcommittees that share similar areas of interest for one of the proposed focus areas brought up in this meeting. These subcommittees will work collectively to research their area of interest further to identify potential solutions to address the identified areas of concern.
  - Subcommittees will share their findings at the next stakeholder meeting in January.

### Next Meeting:

- January 28<sup>th</sup>, 3pm – 5pm
- Before next meeting:
  - **Complete this survey** to help determine where you would like to focus your work in this group as we move forward:
    - <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5346128/Food-Waste-Prevention-Stakeholder-Subcommittee-Survey>
  - Participants will be sorted into subcommittees for one group priority/interest area identified in this meeting. Stakeholders can choose to participate in more than one subcommittee if they wish.
  - Subcommittees will work together to gather research, background information, and resources that related to their groups focus between now and the January meeting.
  - Subcommittees should coordinate as a group how they will share the information they have gathered during our next meeting. Each group will be given 10 – 15 minutes to share out what they found in the next meeting, with time for other subcommittees to comment and ask questions.
  - A SharePoint site is being created for sharing information gathered by groups. Information about using this shared site will be sent out in the next couple of weeks.

### Department of Ecology Food Waste Reduction Plan Website:

- <https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Organic-materials/Food-waste-prevention/Food-waste-plan>