



Best Practices for Scheduling and Implementing Successful Meal Times for Students

BREAKFAST

- Provide adequate time for students to enjoy eating; a minimum of 10 minutes eating (seat) time for breakfast from [3.60.062-AD Student Wellness Through Nutrition & Physical Activity](#).
 - [HB 2846](#) states that the first 15 minutes of class time can be considered as academic time when students are eating school breakfast.
- In schools where breakfast is offered to all students at no charge, students have the most access and are most successful when breakfast is offered and served after the bell (as the school day begins) and school breakfast is considered part of the school day.
 - <http://healthyfutures.nea.org/breakfast-bell-serves-success/>

LUNCH

- Consider cafeteria seating capacity. How many students can comfortably and reasonably sit and move through the cafeteria during one lunch session?
- Consider number of lunch services needed based on cafeteria capacity, supervision and speed of the lunch line.
 - Nutrition Services staff can serve 7-10 students per minute
- Schedules should include dismissal from class, walking to the cafeteria and waiting in line for school lunch.
- Provide adequate time for students to enjoy eating; a minimum of 20 minutes of eating (seat) time after being served for lunch from [3.60.062-AD Student Wellness Through Nutrition & Physical Activity](#).
 - Kindergartners should be allowed 30 minutes eating (seat) time, at least in the beginning of the year.
 - For example, 100 students released for lunch at the same time will mean the last student in line will be waiting for up to 14 minutes.
- Stagger classroom dismissal to minimize time students are waiting in line. This will help reduce the supervision needed for the lunch line.
- Recess should be scheduled before lunch. [Research](#) shows that changing the traditional lunchtime schedule can decrease food waste and improve student behavior.
 - <http://www.nea.org/home/43158.htm>
- When lunches are mixed grades, schedule the older students to go through the line first. Older students can be faster going through the line, and the line will not be as long or congested.
- Communicate and encourage parents and teachers to work with new students and kindergarten students to learn their ID numbers.
- Encourage students to use two fingers or two hands when entering their number, as they would on a smart phone or game controller.

Portland Public Schools Nutrition Services



- At the beginning of the year, the students may take longer to go through the lunch line. This can be expected for up to 2 weeks, as the students are just remembering the rules and practices of the cafeteria and lunch time.
- At the beginning of the school year, preferably the first day of school if possible, give the students a tour of the kitchen and cafeteria to review the cafeteria expectations and explain how lunch time will look for them. Nutrition Services staff can be involved to review proper use of utensils with the salad bar fruits and vegetables.
- Provide adequate supervision in the cafeteria including the line, during lunch times; Nutrition Services and custodial staff are not able to and should not be asked to supervise students.
- Encourage students to clean up after themselves; this will assist in preparing the cafeteria space more quickly for the next lunch or school use.
- Provide Nutrition Services with the new schedule by the end of the year for the upcoming school year. This allows the Nutrition Services staff to adequately prepare for any changes and plan on how to support an efficient and enjoyable cafeteria experience for all students.