

RECESS BEFORE LUNCH

A Wellness Policy Strategy

32%

of Montana Elementary Schools¹
use Recess Before Lunch (RBL) scheduling
for all or some of their students.

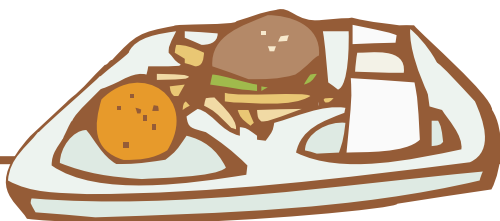
Greater nutrient consumption

with less food and beverage waste

Data from a Montana RBL pilot project³ 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
surveyed² 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 waste⁴ 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.

Learn more from Montana's Recess Before Lunch Guide, published 2018 www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/smartpleasantmeals/rbl.html

For more information: Montana Team Nutrition, www.montana.edu/teamnutrition, (406) 994-5641; kbark@mt.gov or stenberg@montana.edu

Recess Before Lunch: A Wellness Policy Solution references:

1. Montana Department of Public Instruction (OPI) School Nutrition Programs, National School Lunch Program data for Montana Schools. (2005–2016)
2. The Montana Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs [Principals Survey](#). Published 2008. Accessed October 26, 2017. <http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/documents/RBLSurveySumRpt%20new%20opi%20logo.pdf>
3. [A Recess Before Lunch Policy in Four Montana Schools: Pilot Project Report](#). Published 2003. Accessed October 26, 2017. <http://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/documents/RBL%20pilot%20project%20report.pdf>
4. Bergman, E.A., Buergel, N.S., Femrite, A, Englund, T.F. (2003). [Relationships of Meal and Recess Schedules to Plate Waste in Elementary Schools](#). (R-71-03). University, MS: National Food Service Management Institute. Accessed October 26, 2017. <https://edu.wyoming.gov/downloads/nutrition/plate-waste-and-recess-schedule.pdf>

