

RCW 28A.235.285 Statewide electronic repository—School meals.

(1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall initiate and oversee the development and implementation of a statewide electronic repository of household income information that is required for a student's enrollment in, or eligibility for, the national school lunch program, the school breakfast program, or both programs for the purpose of:

(a) Removing barriers that diminish access to free and reduced-price meals by students enrolled in eligible schools;

(b) Providing parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in eligible schools with a voluntary, secure, and convenient online portal for providing household information that is required for participation in the national school lunch program, the school breakfast program, or both programs;

(c) Providing student household income information to schools and school districts that provide meals at no charge to students without using school meal applications to determine eligibility for low-income programs for students and schools; and

(d) Ensuring an accessible, simplified process for enrolling students in, and administering, related nutrition programs, including the summer P-EBT program.

(2) In addition to the requirements of this section and other requirements deemed necessary by the superintendent of public instruction, the superintendent of public instruction shall ensure the electronic repository:

(a) Complies with any applicable federal requirements for participation in the national school lunch program, the school breakfast program, or both programs;

(b) Complies with any applicable requirements necessary for schools and school districts to access repository data;

(c) Complies with any applicable standards and requirements necessary to ensure that the repository data connects to the direct certification system and streamlines the process in a manner that maximizes the number of eligible students directly certified for free school meals each month;

(d) Includes robust safeguards, both technically and procedurally, to ensure that the income information provided by parents and legal guardians is secure and accessed only by individuals with express authorization to do so; and

(e) Is accessible online and easily navigable by parents and legal guardians, and in multiple languages, for the purpose of voluntarily providing the pertinent household income data.

(3) Household income information received by the office of the superintendent of public instruction, school employees, school district employees, or their designees in accordance with this section is exempt from disclosure under chapter 42.56 RCW and may not be disseminated except as provided by law.

(4) (a) Beginning in 2022, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall report annually to the legislature by December 1st on the electronic repository, including: (i) The number of schools and school districts accessing the data of the electronic repository for providing household information that is required for a school's participation in the national school lunch program, the school breakfast program, or both programs; and (ii) recommendations for increasing the number of repository users and improving the technical functionality of the repository.

(b) In lieu of the report contents required in (a) of this subsection, the report required by December 1, 2022, shall include a plan, timeline, and cost estimate for: (i) Implementing the development of the repository; (ii) securing any needed vendors for its development and, if necessary, operation; and (iii) making the repository accessible to schools, school districts, and the public through appropriate electronic interfaces. [2022 c 111 § 1.]