

## **Procedures for Food and Beverage Consumption**

District and school administrators should take extreme care when authorizing food and beverages to be served at staff events. Often, the perception by other staff and community members is that district monies intended for our educational programs, are being used to feed staff. They may construe the action as a “gift of public funds” and this concern is similarly true from the state’s perspective. The Washington State Attorney General has issued several opinions on these types of activities, e.g. providing food, concluding that public expenditures made without consideration, even though minimal, violate the constitution. Consideration in this context means that the district receives something of value or benefit in exchange for the product or service provided.

Reasonable food and nonalcoholic beverage purchases may be acceptable for:

- Open houses;
- Dedications;
- Meetings;
- Study sessions;
- Training sessions;
- Parent involvement activities to encourage parents to attend meetings or increase parent involvement in schools; and
- Activities involving community and school district personnel as permitted by a grant.

Unacceptable activities using district funds to purchase food and beverages include:

- Parent teacher conferences and
- Staff related celebrations.

In order for food and beverage purchases to be allowable, there must be a public purpose, the district must receive a benefit, and district policies and procedures must be followed.

Beverages and Snacks: Nonalcoholic beverages and light snacks may be provided at meetings that are one hour or more in length if costs are reasonable.

Meals: A modest meal may be served in special circumstances where it is clearly in the district’s best interest that participants remain on site and on task. This means that the agenda and accomplishment of the goal do not provide a break or change in topic which would allow participants to leave and pursue their own meals. All meals must have prior authorization from the administrator with budgetary responsibility.

**Documentation is required that shows the following:** description of the event, date of the event, who is attending the event, itemized receipts for purchases, account code to charge, and approval of the event. Providing an agenda often satisfies much of the documentation requirements as well as provides proof meetings are for a business purpose.

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Edmonds School District

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