

## Quarterly Community Update

### RECENT HAPPENINGS

#### The Board met in April and June.

In April, ([watch the recording](#)) the Board met in Spokane. Among other things, the Board:

- Heard from the [NATIVE Project](#) about their work ([presentation](#)). The Native Project is an Urban Indian Health Organization that offers healthcare, dental, licensed behavioral health services, prevention, youth services, and cultural healing practices.
- Organized a second [community panel](#) to help inform the 2024 State Health Report. The panel consisted of four members representing the state's central and eastern side.

In June, ([watch the recording](#)) the Board met in Vancouver. Among other things, the Board:

- Received an [update](#) on new federal Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) standards for drinking water. PFAS are 'forever chemicals' that are often seen in nonstick, stain and water resistant and heat stable products. The federal standards affect Board rules and would require new testing standards for public drinking water systems. The Board took action to align the federal and state rules and protect public health.
- Adopted the [2024 State Health Report](#). We submitted the report to the Governor's Office and will release it publicly in August or September.

### PARTICIPATION IN OUR WORK

The Board takes public comments at every meeting. We welcome your comments on any of our agenda items or other public health issues of importance to your community. Send written comments to the Board anytime at [wsboh@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:wsboh@sboh.wa.gov). If you would like to attend online or in-person, you can sign up to provide verbal public comment. The number of commenters determines the amount of time for each public comment (usually 1-3 minutes). Find out more about giving public comment on our [website](#).

Our [meetings](#) are open to the public and anyone may attend. Please invite others from your community who may want to attend in person or online.



*Pictured left to right are community panelists Desiree Crawford, [Health & Justice Recovery Alliance](#); Joseph Hunter, [Thriving Together North Central Washington](#); Molly (Board staff); Kim Wilson, [Better Health Together](#); Anastacia Lee, [Asians for Collective Liberation](#), and Ashley (Board staff).*



If you would like to learn more about the Board or get involved in our work, contact [Hannah Haag](#), Board Community Outreach Coordinator.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

### State Board of Health:

August 7  
October 8

### Health Disparities Council:

September 18  
December 12

## PEAR Plan

Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) strategic action planning has been occurring. The PEAR strategic action plan drives systemic change. It aims to dismantle oppressive systems and promote equity throughout society. These barriers prevent everyone from having the opportunity to reach their full potential. Systems of oppression are the source of all our inequities. Addressing our systems is crucial to creating a more equitable world.

The Board wants to create meaningful changes and reduce disparities in public health. It is our goal to keep Washington a great place to live, learn, work, play, and stay. Our PEAR Strategic Action Plan will embed equity into our decision making. We want to address issues that perpetuate systemic inequities. An internal PEAR team is in place to create a PEAR Strategic Action Plan.

The PEAR team completed an assessment of the Board's work. The team identified areas where positive change can occur. The PEAR team is working in partnership with trusted community messengers. Together we will identify action steps to promote equity and measure our successes. To take part in this work, contact Ashley Bell at [ashley.bell@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:ashley.bell@sboh.wa.gov).

## HEARING SCREENING STANDARDS

Washington law requires the Board to set standards for hearing screenings for children attending Washington K-12 schools. These standards aim to identify students with hearing difficulties. They also aim to refer students, as appropriate, to a healthcare provider for follow-up and care.

Recently, a community group asked the Board to consider approving another screening technology, called otoacoustic emission (OAE). The Board accepted this request. We have started a rulemaking project to consider this extra screening technology and other minor changes to the rule.

The Board usually shares information through email, website updates, and social media posts. While planning for this project, staff noted that written English and American Sign Language (ASL) are different languages with their own vocabulary and grammar. As a result, staff worked with two ASL interpreters to make short videos with information about this project.

The ASL-recorded videos will be available in July on the Board's website and sent out through email. To learn more about this work, please contact Molly Dinardo at [molly.dinardo@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:molly.dinardo@sboh.wa.gov).

## August Board Meeting:

Our next Board meeting is scheduled for August 7 at the Pacific Tower's Panoramic Center in Seattle.

Physical address:  
1200 12th Ave. S,  
Seattle, WA 98144.

Zoom and physical information is posted on our [website](#) two weeks before the meeting.

The meeting will have virtual and in-person options. It will also include American Sign Language and Spanish interpretation services.



## SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RULES PROJECT

In 2024, the Legislature **directed the Board** (page 492) to review and propose new rules to set minimum health and safety standards for K-12 schools. These rules will also formalize school environmental health and safety inspection procedures. The current school environmental health and safety rules (**chapter 246-366 WAC**) are over 50 years old.

The Board wants to ensure that children learn, grow, and play in a safe environment. The Board recognizes the importance of school environments on all communities. These rules impact over one million students in Washington state. These students attend public, charter, and private schools. These rules also impact school staff, parents, and other visitors to the schools.

In this project, the Board will consider the size of school districts and the age of schools. We will also look at cost differences between regions. The Board will complete an environmental justice assessment on the proposed rules. We will also work the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to understand how much it will cost to put the rules in place.

These rules cover a broad spectrum of school environmental health and safety topics. Among other things, those topics include buildings, food handling, general operation and maintenance requirements. Some others include heating and ventilation, lighting, noise control, playgrounds, and plumbing. Others include school inspections, site review, temperature control, water quality and supply.

As part of this work, the Board received funding to form a Technical Advisory Committee. This group will include school staff, technical experts, and community members. The Board will submit a report with recommendations to the Governor by June 30, 2025.

The Board values your input on these topics! For more information and to learn about ways to get involved, e-mail [schoolehs@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:schoolehs@sboh.wa.gov). To learn more about this project please [visit our website](#).



# Welcome!

The Board welcomes our new School Rules team: Andrew Kamali, Project Manager; Nina Helpling, Policy Advisor; Mary Baechler, Community Outreach Coordinator; Marcus DeHart, Communications Consultant; Crystal Ogle, Administrative Assistant. This project-based team will be on staff for one year to complete our school rules review project.