

RATIONALE FOR RECESS STANDARDS

Federal law allows for two 15 minute breaks for *adult* workers in addition to a lunch break. State law mandates that even teachers will get a daily 45 minute “planning and preparation time” away from the students in addition to a 30 minute “duty-free” lunch without the students where the implementation of this law “may not result in a lengthened school day.” (TEC, Subtitle D, 21.404 and 21.405)

There is abundant research supporting the age old wisdom that children NEED recess through middle school and even beyond. Research supports the fact that appropriate recess facilitates efficient learning, promotes social and emotional growth, and promotes lifelong physical fitness.

Numerous prestigious professional organizations clearly state the necessity of adequate daily recess in position statements. Among them are: the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, Association for Childhood Education International, National Association of Elementary School Principals, and American Academy of Pediatrics.

In an effort to attain higher test scores and ratings, many school districts have adopted inappropriate minimum time standards for elementary school recess, disregarding the overwhelming evidence against such a policy, and have done so at the expense of the overall well-being of the children. (See attached time standards from six local school districts.)

In order to achieve a supportive and healthy learning environment for students, and in order to insure an age-appropriate recess for our children, the state of Texas could adopt a mandatory daily recess policy (where “recess” means supervised, *unstructured* free play) that provides for at least 55 minutes of recess for K, 1st and 2nd grades, 45 minutes per day for 3rd and 4th grades, and 40 minutes per day for 5th and 6th grades, in one to two blocks of time, where transition time to and from the classroom is not included in the fulfillment of minimum recess time, where recess is not within the first hour of the school day and ends before the last 30 minutes of the school day, where recess is outdoors when weather permits and where recess is not routinely denied as a disciplinary tool.

PROPOSED STANDARDS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY RE: RECESS

These standards are based on two ranges of acceptable age-appropriate breaks:

1. The federal government mandates two 15 minutes breaks in an 8 hour day for ADULTS.

2. A quality preschool will offer over 1 hour of unstructured free play within two to three play sessions in a five hour day for 5 year olds.

Taking into consideration that most children start school at the age of 5, the standards for recess in an elementary school should be closer to the preschool standard than to the standard for mandatory breaks that protect adults. Recess must be clearly defined as unstructured, child-directed free play.

***Schools that do not offer recess at all should be rated unacceptable regardless of test scores.**

***Schools offering 20 minutes of daily unstructured free play or less should be eligible for a maximum rating of acceptable.**

***Schools offering 30 minutes of daily unstructured free play or less should be eligible for a maximum rating of recognized.**

***Schools adhering to the following minimum standards would be eligible for an exemplary rating: Daily schedule with a minimum of at least 55 minutes of recess for K, 1st and 2nd grades, 45 minutes per day for 3rd and 4th grades, and 40 minutes per day for 5th and 6th grades, in one to two blocks of time, where transition time to and from the classroom is not included in the fulfillment of minimum recess time, where recess is not within the first hour of the school day and ends before the last 30 minutes of the school day, where recess is outdoors when weather permits and where recess is not routinely denied as a disciplinary tool.**

Time Standards	Coppell ISD*	Piano*	Lewisville*	Carrollton/FB Garland*	McKinney*	
Length of day	7 hours, 15 min.	7 hours	7 hours	7 hours		
Reading/Language Arts	90 minutes/day	120 minutes	up to 150 min./day		90 minutes/day	
Math	90 minutes/day		1.5 hours		60 minutes/day	
Science	30 minutes/day		30-45 minutes			
Social Studies	30 minutes/day		30-45 minutes			
Specials (PE Music Art Lib.)	45 minutes/day		45 minutes/day			
Lunch	30 minutes/day		30 minutes			
Recess	30 min./day	10-30-min/day	2-3/wk.	30 min./day	20 min. per day	
Other					20-30 min./day	
Contact person	Mary Ann Libbey	Jane Cantwell	Dr. Riddell	Holly Barber	Myra Crump	Beverly Lee
*Information obtained by phone, most often provided reluctantly						
Richardson ISD time standards obtained from records office.						
Subject / Grade	Kinder	1st-2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
Homeroom	15	15	15	15	15	
* Reading / Language Arts	120	120	120	120	70	
* Social Studies	30	25	20	20	20	
Reading Intervention	30	25	45	45	50	
Mathematics	100	90	90	90	90	
Science	30	30	40	45	90	
*Specials (Art/Music/PE)	45	45	45	45	45	
Lunch	30	30	30	30	30	
** Recess / Physical Activity	20	20	15	10	10	
Band (5th only)						
Total Minutes	420	420	420	420	420	

In grades 5-6 Reading/Lang Arts & Social Studies is taught by the same teacher
 PE, Music and recess fulfill the requirements of Senate Bill 530 of at least 135 minutes of physical activity during
 week for grades K-5