

11.27 Best Practices – Recess and Physical Activity

Resolution passed 2018

Whereas, children’s physical fitness and children’s engagement in physical activity are associated with greater academic achievement and cognitive functioning, and increased physical activity during the school day does not adversely affect student academic achievement; and

Whereas, elementary school children who have more recess time have been found to have better classroom behavior; and

Whereas, recess is important for children’s socialization, school adjustment, and overall social-emotional development; and

Whereas, recess provides unstructured play opportunities that allow children to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity and should not replace physical education classes that provide sequential instruction to enhance the development of motor skills, movement concepts, and physical fitness; and

Whereas, children who engage in more physical activity have better physical and mental health; and

Whereas, physical activity can provide other benefits to children’s positive development such as physical competence, a sense of personal responsibility, creativity, problem-solving, and conflict resolution; and

Whereas, the establishment of an active lifestyle in childhood leads to a more active lifestyle in adulthood; and

Whereas, schools in lower-income neighborhoods often schedule significantly less recess than schools in affluent neighborhoods; and

Whereas, longer recess periods (more than 20 minutes) have increased benefits over shorter recess periods; and

Whereas, children should engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day, and children spend a large portion of their awake hours in school.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support the critical role school-based wellness policies play in influencing healthy behaviors in students’ lives and support both adequate recess and physical education classes; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for at least one period of recess for a minimum of 30 minutes total, or a minimum of five minutes per hour of daily instruction, for each elementary student every school day; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils oppose denial of school recess as a disciplinary measure for academic reasons or inappropriate classroom behavior; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils strongly recommend that school districts provide funding for ADA compliant new and replacement playgrounds, develop and implement policies for school recess that include unstructured outdoor play suitable for student with disabilities, and unstructured alternative play for inclement weather days, educate students on safe playground rules, ensure the safety of ADA compliant playgrounds and develop an adequate adult to student ratio.