



COMMUNITY DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL 30

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Resolution #119

Regarding the Imperative of Recess for All Children

Whereas, the DOE Wellness Policy states: “Daily Recess - In addition to physical therapy/education classroom time, DOE encourages principals to provide elementary school students with at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which time staff encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide appropriate space and equipment. DOE policy states that outdoor play is permitted regardless of temperature so long as weather conditions are appropriate”; and

Whereas the DOE has further instructed: “Children benefit from vigorous exercise and should be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. Unless it is snowing, there is ice on the playground, or the wind chill factor creates an effective temperature below zero degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius), temperature alone should not be a barrier to outdoor play. School officials are encouraged to work with their staff to maintain outdoor play periods, and should take precautions to keep students warm and to ensure that they are appropriately dressed on very cold days. When outdoors, schools must ensure that their students and staff cover exposed skin, wear warm clothing, and use multiple layers to maintain warmth”; and

Whereas, the American Academy of Pediatrics states: “Ironically, minimizing or eliminating recess may be counterproductive to academic achievement, as a growing body of evidence suggests that recess promotes not only physical health and social development but also cognitive performance,” and “On the basis of an abundance of scientific studies, withholding recess for punitive or academic reasons would seem to be counterproductive to the intended outcomes and may have unintended consequences in relation to a child’s acquisition of important life skills”; and

Whereas, recess is a necessary break in the day for optimizing a child’s social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development, recess should be considered a child’s personal time, and it should not be withheld for academic or punitive reasons.

Whereas, recess is a complement to, not a replacement for, physical education. Physical education is an academic discipline. While both have the potential to promote activity and a healthy lifestyle, only recess (particularly unstructured recess) provides the creative, social, and emotional benefits of play.

Whereas, while schools should ban games and activities that are unsafe, they should not discontinue recess altogether just because of concerns connected with child safety, regardless of age or grade in school.

Whereas, if weather prohibits outdoor recess, there are a number of options available for physical activity in lieu of watching a movie or television show.

Whereas, peer interactions during recess are a unique complement to the classroom and the lifelong skills acquired therein for communication, negotiation, cooperation, sharing, problem solving, and coping are not only foundations for healthy development but also fundamental measures of the school experience.

Therefore Be It Resolved, that Community District Education Council 30 emphatically requests that all Principals ensure that staff is adhering to the DOE recommendations outlined above, that their students, regardless of age, receive a minimum of twenty minutes of daily outdoor recess or, if weather prohibits, indoor physical activity, and implement a policy that prohibits using recess as a punitive or disciplinary measure.

VOTED AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED: February 22, 2016