

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

3034

2005 HOUSE EDUCATION

HCR 3034

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. **HCR 3034**

House Education Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date **8 February 2005**

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	X		165 - 1500
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Jan Prindle</i>			

Minutes

Chairman Kelsch opened the hearing on HCR 3034.

Rep. Sally Sandvig, District 21, introduced the resolution. She did not reiterate the testimony she provided when introducing HB 1320. The resolution speaks for itself. It's basically the same as it was for the bill.

June Herman, senior director of advocacy, American Heart Association, testified on behalf the resolution. (Testimony attached.)

Anita Decker, on behalf of the DPI, testified in favor of the resolution. The DPI supports the concurrent resolution and will do whatever they can to help enforce it.

Kim Senn, director of the Family Health Division and Coordinated School Health

Programs for the ND Department of Health, testified in favor of the resolution. (Testimony attached.)

Gloria Lokken, president of the ND Education Association, testified in favor of the

resolution. Recess is very important. Children need a stress break just like adults do and recess provides that. It is a supervised but also chance for them to act with their peers and have the kinds of experiences that allow them to be a better person in our society. It also allows a physical break.

Rep. Hunsakor: Do you have any sense of how many schools K-6 do not offer recess.

Lokken: I know many of the larger school districts do not have recess for 4 - 6 grades. That's been my experience.

Rep. Herbel: When I drive by schools and see kids outside in the playground. They're having a picnic, they're all involved, and that's wonderful. Where does that age come when they want to sit on the side instead? Why is that? In your experience having dealt with different levels of kids, does there come a time when it is not cool to participate. What is that age level? Maybe that's the area we need to start concentrating on.

Lokken: That does happen about fourth grade when they get into their little huddles and start doing the social thing like visiting rather than the physical activity. There are things that teachers do to encourage at least parts of the time be in physical activity. I know when I was on recess duty we would run around the track once to see who was the winner and then they could about there visiting. Their social activity is very important also. We don't allow them to sit and visit with their friends as a great part of our school day. They need that kind of activity as well.

Rep. Mueller: I sat on the school board for 12 years and recall very vividly many instances when we had a bit of a struggle finding recess playground supervision. Does NDEA promote a position on getting back to doing this kind of things. Some wanted to or were willing to, but

others were not. Therein lies our supervision for this whole thing. Does the Association have a position on involvement with recess?

Lokken: No, that is a school decision. Many schools have noon supervision, but the rest of the day was taken by the teachers. I know there are districts where it is a problem.

Rep. Mueller: Again reflecting on my own days on the school board, if the Association believes this is a good resolution, I would suggest that this would be a worthy effort.

Lokken: I know that part of the argument from so many teachers is that they have so little planning time. I think that's part of the argument. It isn't so much going out with the children because you see a lot of activities in the children that help you relate to them in a better way in the classroom. I don't think that's the argument. It's the lack of preparation time and they value those fifteen minutes. We will make that part of our discussion.

There being no further testimony Chairman Kelsch closed the hearing and asked the wishes of the Committee on HCR 3034. She asked the wishes of the Committee.

Rep. Herbel: I move a **Do Pass**

Rep. Solberg: I second.

Rep. Meier: I want to thank the members of the subcommittee that worked with me on this resolution. They had some excellent, excellent ideas. Thank you.

Rep. Herbel: I see tremendous enthusiasm and I love the enthusiasm in kids at certain ages. There comes a time when that really seems to change. If they could identify that area so you can get them active and keep them active, that would be the key to being able to solve some of these problems or implement activities. We could probably find solutions to this problem.

Rep. Sitte: I know that a lot of that depends on the discretion of the teacher. I remember a fourth grade teacher than my children who was absolutely marvelous at this. The technique was so simple. She would pull different names out of a can and those children would be the team captains for the day. Those who were not so physically fit were now in charge and that really kept the whole class involved the whole year.

A roll call vote was taken.

Yes: 14 No: 0 Absent: 0

Rep. Meier will carry the bill.

Date: 8 Feb 05
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 3034

House Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass + place on consent calendar
Motion Made By Herbel Seconded By Solberg

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Kelsch	✓		Rep. Hanson	✓	
Vice Chairman Johnson	✓		Rep. Hunsakor	✓	
Rep. Haas	✓		Rep. Mueller	✓	
Rep. Hawken	✓		Rep. Solberg	✓	
Rep. Herbel	✓				
Rep. Horter	✓				
Rep. Meier	✓				
Rep. Norland	✓				
Rep. Sitte	✓				
Rep. Wall	✓				

Total (Yes) 14 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Meier

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 8, 2005 10:10 a.m.

Module No: HR-25-2098
Carrier: L. Meier
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HCR 3034: Education Committee (Rep. R. Kelsch, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3034 was placed on the Tenth order on the calendar.

2005 SENATE EDUCATION

HCR 3034

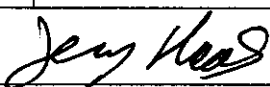
2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HCR 3034

Senate Education Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 03/14/05

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	X		50-750
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

Chairman Freborg called the meeting to order on HCR 3034, which urges school districts to provide a midmorning and midafternoon recess to all students in kindergarten through grade six. All Senators were present.

Representative Lisa Meier introduced the resolution to the committee on behalf of Representative Sandvig. See written testimony.

Senator Flakoll- Do we know of how many schools do not offer the recess?

Representative Meier- I'm not quite sure.

Karen Ehrens, Legislative Chair of the North Dakota Dietetic Association appeared before the committee. See written testimony.

Kim Senn, Director of Coordinated School Health for the ND Department of Health appeared in support of the resolution. See written testimony.

Date: 3/14/05
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 3034

Senate SENATE EDUCATION Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken To Pass

Motion Made By Flakoll Seconded By Erbele

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
CH- SENATOR FREBORG	✓		SENATOR SEYMOUR	✓	
V-CH- SENATOR G. LEE	✓		SENATOR TAYLOR	✓	
SENATOR ERBELE	✓				
SENATOR FLAKOLL	✓				

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent _____

Floor Assignment Erbele

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
March 14, 2005 2:01 p.m.

Module No: SR-46-4892
Carrier: Erbele
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HCR 3034: Education Committee (Sen. Freborg, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3034 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2005 TESTIMONY

HCR 3034

Testimony
HCR 3034



House Education Committee
Tuesday, February 8, 2005
June Herman

Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

Senior Advocacy Director, American Heart Association

Good morning, Chairman Kelsch and members of the House Education Committee. My name is June Herman, and I am the senior director of advocacy for the American Heart Association. I am here today to thank this committee for considering a statement in support of protecting and building healthier school environments for our youth.

Children don't control the environment. Adults do. Broad advancement in health happens through policy changes that build protective, healthy environments. While research has advanced much of our ability to address disease, it's estimated that 50% of health advances have occurred through public health policy work. Sewer systems, fluoride in the water, youth vaccinations are a few good examples. And while parental responsibility remains a critical piece of healthful practices, it is the passage of policy that has made the most significant change - individual education and responsibility alone is not enough.

This session, the adults in our state have had the opportunity to build a healthier environment for our children. Ensuring physical activity life skills through PE requirements, through building time for daily physical activity, through establishing healthy school vending options. For a variety of reasons, those policy actions have not moved forward.

We hope the members of this committee will continue to monitor the actions at the local level as to how well the "adults" are achieving building that healthy school environment. We encourage you to make PE, recess, physical activity time, and vending part of your interim considerations, so that you can assess what direction the school health environment is really going.

More than a third of men and women ages 45-54 have some kind of cardiovascular disease. And unlike many other diseases, heart disease is actually a disease that starts when people are in their teens. If people don't focus on it until they are older, the damage is already done.

North Dakota and the nation has a broken health system. Business costs for health care continue to skyrocket, as do costs to taxpayers and government. Too often the solution is reducing benefits and access to care, or increasing the financial burden on workplaces or businesses. More must be done earlier, to prevent disease and to build a healthier North Dakota.

We can ill afford to support a system that fails to set the right example for our youth, or abdicates an important part of their responsibility through serving as "for profit" company stores for non-nutritious beverages, while moving to reduce PE and recess requirements for our kids. Basically "super-sizing" our children and sending them to our workforce or government programs to cover their health care.

Schools are not the sole problem to the youth obesity problem, but they are definitely part of the solution.

The legislature could do more to encourage community collaboration on prevention. In North Dakota, general fund support of the state health department is only \$13 million, less than 1% of the state's \$1.8 billion budget. Federal prevention grant dollars are increasingly becoming tied to a state's investment in health prevention. We are working to increase state health appropriations in order to bridge community, worksite, health and school site efforts in building a healthier North Dakota.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your time today.



American Stroke
Association
A Division of American
Heart Association

American Heart
Association
Learn and Live

Don't supersize him.

Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic that increases death and disability from heart disease. Requiring minimum standards for physical education, such as 150 minutes per week of physical education for elementary schools and 225 minutes for middle schools, gives children a fighting chance against obesity and heart disease. And, coordinated school health programs will ensure that children have sound minds and healthy bodies. You can prevent supersized children who suffer more health problems and grow into unhealthy, less productive and disabled adults. Don't miss your chance to shape a whole new generation of Americans and stop the nation's No. 1 killer—heart disease.

Heart disease. You're the Cure.

HCER 3034
8 Feb 05

Testimony

House Concurrent Resolution 3034

House Education Committee

Tuesday, February 8, 2005; 9 a.m.

North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning, Chairman Kelsch and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Kim Senn, and I am director of Coordinated School Health for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to testify in support of House Concurrent Resolution 3034.

Separate and distinct from physical education, recess is an essential component of the total educational experience for elementary school children. Studies show that children need a variety of movement experiences to develop healthy bodies and minds capable of learning.

Inactivity is a major risk factor for serious health problems, and patterns of inactivity often begin at an early age. As a result of parents working outside the home, neighborhood safety issues, and a lack of community support, a growing number of children have limited time to participate in unstructured play in their neighborhoods. They spend more time watching TV, playing computer games or engaging in other sedentary activities. The result of this inactivity, coupled with poor nutritional habits, is that more children are overweight and obese and show early signs of heart disease, diabetes and other serious health problems. The involvement of young children in daily physical activity during school hours therefore is critical for their current and future health.

Recess provides children with discretionary time and opportunities to engage in physical activity that help to develop healthy bodies and enjoyment of movement. It also allows elementary children to practice life skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, respect for rules, taking turns, sharing, using language to communicate, and problem solving.

Recess also can facilitate improved attention in the classroom and can result in enhanced cognitive abilities. Studies have found that students who do not participate in recess have difficulty concentrating on specific tasks in the classroom, are restless and are easily distracted. In addition, recess serves as a developmentally appropriate strategy for reducing stress.

Various organizations including the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the American Association for the Child's Right to Play support recess as an important component of a child's physical and social development.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

HCR 3034

Senator Freborg and members of the Education Committee:

For the record I'm Representative Sally Sandvig from District 21 in Fargo, and I'm here as the prime sponsor of HCR 3034.

HCR 3034 would ask the legislative council to study requiring recess in schools. This legislation is a result of a Women-in-Government task force on obesity that I attended last year. The need for more exercise in school age children was one of our recommendations.

Around 14% of adolescents and children are overweight and this figure has more than doubled since the early 1970's. Type two diabetes accounts for about 1/2 of the new cases and is no longer adult onset anymore. 60% of children between ages 5 and 10 have at least one cardiovascular disease risk. These factors have tremendous implications on our nation's health spending. Recreation for children has become television, computer, and video games.

Some of the problems with attention defect hyperactivity disorder may be solved by some activity to burn off excess energy and give the mind a break.

What some states have done: Indiana developed a program to help prevent osteoporosis in women called Jump Girls Jump, where girls stand up and jump 5 times by their desks 3 times a day for 8 months. They found an increase in bone density of 3.2%. This program is based on research by the University of British Columbia; Texas Senate Bill 19 allows the State Board of Higher Education to require physical activity during every school day through grade six.

I have a couple of handouts for you; one relating to obesity and the other about recess.

Thank you for your time and I hope that you will give this resolution favorable consideration.



June 2002

Childhood Obesity on the Rise

by Carol Torgan, Ph.D.

Open your window on a sunny afternoon, and what do you hear? The chirping of singing birds? The yelling of playing children? Odds are these days that you'll hear the birds but not the children. As kids spend more time in front of television, computer and video screens, their physical activity levels have decreased. And their body weights have increased.

Obesity in kids is now epidemic in the United States. The number of children who are overweight has doubled in the last two to three decades; currently one child in five is overweight. The increase is in both children and adolescents, and in all age, race and gender groups.

Obese children now have diseases like type 2 diabetes that used to only occur in adults. And overweight kids tend to become overweight adults, continuing to put them at greater risk for heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke. But perhaps more devastating to an overweight child than the health problems is the social discrimination. Children who are teased a lot can develop low self-esteem and depression.

There are many causes of obesity. While there's no doubt genetics plays a role, genes alone can't account for the

contents

Did You Know That...

- ▶ Obese children and adolescents have shown an alarming increase in the incidence of type 2 diabetes, also known as adult-onset diabetes.
- ▶ Many obese children have high cholesterol and blood pressure levels, which are risk factors for heart disease.
- ▶ One of the most severe problems for obese children is sleep apnea (interrupted breathing while sleeping). In some cases this can lead to problems with learning and memory.
- ▶ Obese children have a high incidence of orthopedic problems, liver disease, and asthma.
- ▶ Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

huge increase in rates over the past few decades. The main culprits are the same as those for adult obesity: eating too much and moving around too little. Almost half of children aged 8-16 years watch three to five hours of television a day. Kids who watch the most hours of television have the highest incidence of obesity.

If you're concerned your child may be overweight, talk with their doctor. A health care professional can measure your child's height and weight and calculate a ratio known as body mass index (BMI). This number is compared to a growth chart for children of your kid's age and gender to determine whether his or her weight is in a healthy range.

Encourage Activity

You can help your children maintain a healthy body weight by encouraging them to be active. Try taking them to a park. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), 75 percent of Americans live within a two-mile walking distance of a public park.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health has teamed up with NRPA to offer a nationwide program called Hearts N' Parks. Park and recreation

Resources that can help!

For information on Hearts N' Parks, contact NIH's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at:

NHLBI Information Center

P.O. Box 30105

Bethesda, MD 20824-0105

Phone: 301-592-8573

Fax: 301-592-8563

E-mail: NHLBIinfo@rover.nhlbi.nih.gov

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/heart/obesity/hrt_n_pk/

NHLBI's Obesity Education Initiative (OEI) has information about weight control, including tools such as a BMI calculator for adults (see your doctor about BMI calculations for children) and Menu Planner, at http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm.

Free materials for the public with practical information on weight control, physical activity, obesity and related nutritional issues can be obtained from the Weight-control Information Network (WIN), a service of NIH's National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. **Contact them at:**

departments and other community-based organizations receive assistance from NHLBI on providing activities for kids and adults that encourage healthy lifestyle choices. The goals are to reduce obesity and the risk of heart disease by encouraging nutritious eating habits and regular physical activity. Kids may go on field trips to local grocery stores and restaurants to learn how to make healthy selections and read food labels. They might participate in soccer, tennis, basketball, bowling, swimming, or hiking.

1 WIN Way
Bethesda, MD 20892-3665
Phone: 202-828-1025 or 1-877-946-4627
Fax: 202-828-1028
Email: WIN@info.niddk.nih.gov
<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/win.htm>

Karen Donato, coordinator of NHLBI's Obesity Education Initiative, says that the program emphasizes non-competitive activities where everyone joins in the fun. "There shouldn't be kids sitting on the sidelines," she says.

An increasing number of schools are also encouraging healthy lifestyle behaviors. More nutritious choices in cafeterias and vending machines, such as salad bars and baked food rather than fried, encourage kids to try items other than sodas, candy bars and french fries. Some schools offer opportunities for increased physical activity through intramural sports programs and good-old-fashioned recess. A recent report from the U.S. Surgeon General's office calls on schools to provide daily physical education (PE) for all grades. In schools where PE classes are offered, kids are now engaging in more activities that emphasize personal fitness and aerobic conditioning, rather than the competitive dodge-ball games you may recall from childhood.

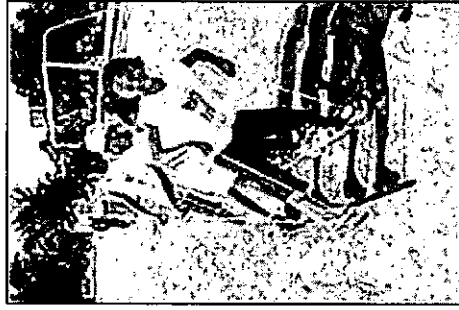
Parents can get involved by making sure that their schools have healthy food options and provide PE. PTAs are a good place to speak out and take an active role.

While children can play ball at the local park and choose healthier foods in school, at the end of the day family support is what really counts. You are a role model for your kids. Children form habits from parents, and usually maintain them into adulthood. If your children see you reach for a banana instead of a brownie, they are likely to do the same. If they see you go for a walk or wash the car, they may join in.

When was the last time you biked or shot some hoops? According to Donato, sometimes we all need to be reminded to have fun and appreciate the value of play. Instead of opening your window to listen to the sounds of the season, open your door, go outside with your children and play. — **a report from The NIH Word on Health, June 2002**

A Word to the Wise...

Help your children maintain a healthy body weight



- ▶ Be supportive. Children know if they are overweight and don't need to be reminded or singled out. They need acceptance, encouragement and love.
- ▶ Set guidelines for the amount of time your children can spend watching television or playing video games.
- ▶ Plan family activities that involve exercise. Instead of watching TV, go hiking or biking, wash the car, or walk around a mall. Offer choices and let your children decide.
- ▶ Be sensitive. Find activities your children will enjoy that aren't difficult or could cause embarrassment.
- ▶ Eat meals together as a family and eat at the table, not in front of a television. Eat slowly and enjoy the food.
- ▶ Don't use food as a reward or punishment. Children should not be placed on restrictive diets, unless done so by a doctor (for medical reasons). Children need food for growth, development and energy.
- ▶ Involve your children in meal planning and grocery shopping. This helps them learn and gives them a role in the decision making.
- ▶ Keep healthy snacks on hand. Good options include fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables; low-fat cheese, yogurt or ice cream; frozen fruit juice bars; and cookies such as fig bars, graham crackers, gingersnaps or vanilla wafers.
- ▶ Focus on small, gradual changes in eating and activity patterns. This helps form habits that can last a lifetime.



The American Association
for the Child's Right to Play

Special Focus
RECESS

Visit our Bulletin Board: <http://ipausa.org/ipw-web/bulletin/bb/>

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**The 16th IPA
World Conference
"PLAY:
LEARNING FOR
LIFE"**

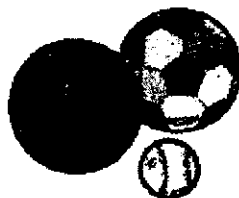
18th-22nd July,
2005

Berlin, Germany

SEE:

www.ipa2005.de
for more information

~~the case for elementary school recess~~



There is a misconception in our society that recess is purpose. The Board of Directors of the American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA) believe that recess is vital healthy development. We are pleased to offer parents and administrators the following information that supports school recess.

Recess responds to the child's social and emotional needs . . .

- If we eliminate recess, we are ignoring the fact that for many children the opportunity to play with friends is an important reason for coming to school. Ask any group of Second Graders, "What do you like most about school?" and a majority will answer, "Recess!"
- Recess can serve as an outlet for reducing or lowering the child's anxiety. As adults, we all feel frustrated, tired, and even angry at times. Adults have learned to control these emotions. The elementary school age child has very few coping strategies, and as a result sometimes resorts to inappropriate outbursts, nail biting and temper tantrums. Recess provides a means for the child to manage stress.
- Our communities continue to represent the great "melting pot," and recess is a contributing factor for cultural exchange. A vital aspect of play is the non-threatening way children of different cultures learn from each other.
- Recess provides the opportunity for solitary play. Some children need the opportunity to break away from their classmates to collect their thoughts.
- Recess gives the classroom teacher an opportunity to assess the child's peer popularity.

Recess contributes to the child's cognitive and intellectual needs . . .

- Students who do not get a break are much more fidgety in the classroom, and are deprived from interacting with different
- The mind, brain, and body are one. When children are deprived of vigorous recess activities the body's heart

peers and watching and learning from other children. Eliminating recess is counter productive.

- Unstructured play gives the child an opportunity to exercise a sense of wonder, which leads to exploration, which leads to creativity.

isn't given the opportunity to pump fresh oxygen into the blood to nourish a sluggish brain.

- Americans could learn from other countries. In Japan, for example, long classroom sessions alternate with intense periods of play outside.

Recess addresses the child's physical needs .



- Physical activity is essential for the healthy growth and development of children. Among 5 to 8 year-olds, 40% have significant cardiac risk factors like obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and an inactive life style.
- Play in the great outdoors during recess is an expanding and exciting experience for the young child. It is an opportunity to breathe fresh air, move on blades of green grass, smell fresh plants and flowers, and run to a favorite tree.
- Recess provides opportunities for children to explore many types of active play regardless of the stereotypical expectations associated with gender.
- Recess offers many children an opportunity to demonstrate favorite cultural games, hand and rhythmical chants, and other enjoyable pastimes.
- The US Army acknowledges the need for a ten-minute break every hour during training sessions. This "at rest" session increases the likelihood of greater results when training over an extended period of time. Children should be treated with no less respect.
- Recess affords an avenue for the child's natural urge for vigorous physical play. Through active and even rough and tumble play, young children learn about their bodies' capabilities, and how to control themselves in their environment.
- Traditional recess activities like jump rope, kickball, or hopscotch encourage children to take turns, negotiate or modify rules, and interact cooperatively.

Recess is not an alien word in our adult vocabulary, nor an abnormal physical and mental needs. For example . . .

- Judges call a recess when courtroom participants become
- Breaks and lunch hours are corporate versions of recess.

- tired or unfocused.
- Congressional sessions recess for similar reasons.
- Labor unions mandate breaks to ensure safety.
- Fortune 500 and cutting ed. businesses provide exercise rooms for employees.

Children need a school recess.



RETURN TO MAIN RECESS PAGE

Also Read . . .

See the : State Recess Advocates List

We now have Recess Advocates in 25 States!

Become a Recess Advocate

We are recruiting Volunteers to be Recess Advocates in each state.

Promoting Recess

Suggests ways you can get involved and promote recess at your child's school.

The Case for Elementary Recess

We are pleased to offer parents, teachers, and school administrators the following information that supports the need for elementary school recess.

Recess Rhymes

This is an adaptation of Recess in rhyming verse.

Recess Links

Read what other organizations and magazines are saying

Review and Order II
Elementary School Recess
games, and activities for

HOME - IPA Declaration - Who We Are - What We Do - Join Us - Events - Links - Programs



March 14, 2005
Testimony HCR 3034

Chairman Freborg and Members of the Education Committee:

As members of the Healthy North Dakota coalition of more than 150 agencies, organizations and businesses, we support efforts to ensure adequate physical activity for North Dakota's children, such as HCR 3034, which encourages schools to provide recess to our children during the school day. Increasing physical activity among youth and adults is a priority area for Healthy North Dakota, where the percentage of high school seniors who are overweight increased from 6 percent in 1999 to 10 percent in 2003.

As the parent of a first-grader attending public school in Bismarck, I appreciate that my daughter has the opportunity to play, socialize and be active three times per day at recess. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you comments of some elementary classroom teachers about recess:

"Students learn better after a recess break. They eat better during lunch."

"As adults we do not focus or work well after sitting for more than 1-2 hours without a break....same for children."

"During recess, students learn skills that are necessary for functioning in a democratic society. Less discipline problems."

"Unstructured play is an essential element of a child's social development. Recess is a very important part of a student's day."

The 280 members of the North Dakota Dietetic Association, with a mission to support the public through the promotion of optimal health and nutrition, strongly support efforts of school districts to provide adequate opportunities for our students to be physically active, including providing recess times for elementary students. We also encourage schools to offer nutrition education annually and in conjunction with efforts to promote a healthy school environment.

Policies and practices like recess help schools create a supportive environment for North Dakota's children so that they can learn to make regular physical activity part of their everyday lives. In order to combat the current epidemic of obesity, it will take the efforts not only of schools, but also families and communities to make physical activity a priority. Please join in making North Dakota healthy by supporting efforts to create environments where all of us can make healthy choices, including in schools where recess is a very important part of the school day.

Karen K. Ehrens, LRD (Licensed, Registered Dietitian)
Legislative Chair, North Dakota Dietetic Association and Partner in Healthy North Dakota

Testimony

House Concurrent Resolution 3034

Senate Education Committee

Monday, March 14, 2005; 9 a.m.

North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning, Chairman Freborg and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Kim Senn, and I am director of Coordinated School Health for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to testify in support of House Concurrent Resolution 3034.

Separate and distinct from physical education, recess is an essential component of the total educational experience for elementary school children. Studies show that children need a variety of movement experiences to develop healthy bodies and minds capable of learning.

Inactivity is a major risk factor for serious health problems, and patterns of inactivity often begin at an early age. As a result of parents working outside the home, neighborhood safety issues, and a lack of community support, a growing number of children have limited time to participate in unstructured play in their neighborhoods. They spend more time watching TV, playing computer games or engaging in other sedentary activities. The result of this inactivity, coupled with poor nutritional habits, is that more children are overweight and obese and show early signs of heart disease, diabetes and other serious health problems. The involvement of young children in daily physical activity during school hours therefore is critical for their current and future health.

Recess provides children with discretionary time and opportunities to engage in physical activity that help to develop healthy bodies and enjoyment of movement. It also allows elementary children to practice life skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, respect for rules, taking turns, sharing, using language to communicate, and problem solving.

Recess also can facilitate improved attention in the classroom and can result in enhanced cognitive abilities. Studies have found that students who do not participate in recess have difficulty concentrating on specific tasks in the classroom, are restless and are easily distracted. In addition, recess serves as a developmentally appropriate strategy for reducing stress.

Various organizations including the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the American Association for the Child's Right to Play support recess as an important component of a child's physical and social development.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.