

***Resolution to Support Senate Bill 308 and House Bill 235:
Acts to Mandate Recess for Elementary School Children***

- Whereas:** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states, “Through play at recess, children learn valuable communication skills, including negotiation, cooperation, sharing and problem solving as well as coping skills, such as perseverance and self-control;” and
- Whereas:** A number of national organizations (National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, and the National PTA) recommend that schools provide daily recess for elementary school-aged children; and
- Whereas:** While recess and physical education are different, and each is recognized to provide unique benefits; and recess provides unstructured play opportunities that allow children to engage in 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:** Elementary school children who have more recess time have been found to have better classroom behavior; and recess is important for children’s socialization, school adjustment, and overall social development and contributes to joy in learning; and
- Whereas:** Increased physical activity time during the school does not adversely affect student achievement; and children who engage in more physical activity have better physical and mental health; and
- Whereas:** Children’s physical fitness and children’s engagement in physical activity are associated with greater academic achievement and cognitive functioning; and
- Whereas:** The National PTA and its constituent associations support at least one period of recess for at least 20 minutes for each elementary student every school day; oppose denial of school recess as a disciplinary measure for academic reasons or inappropriate classroom behavior; recommend that school districts develop and implement policies for school recess that include unstructured outdoor play and unstructured indoor play for inclement weather days, educate students on safe playground rules, ensure the safety of playground equipment and develop an adequate adult to student ratio; and support both adequate recess and physical education classes; now therefore be it
- Resolved:** that the School Committee of Somerville Public Schools supports Senate Bill 308 and House Bill 235: Acts to Mandate Recess for Elementary School Children. Both bills state the following: “All children in grades kindergarten through five attending public schools shall receive one hundred minutes of supervised, safe, and unstructured free-play recess each week so that there are at least twenty consecutive minutes of free-play recess per day. As used herein, the term "free play" means an unstructured environment, but which is supervised by appropriate school personnel or staff. Regulations promulgated by the department may not exclude recess from structured learning time requirements for elementary school children and may not increase the total number of hours required in the school year to meet the provisions of this subsection.” and therefore be it
- Further Resolved:** that a copy of this resolution be delivered to the Governor, Attorney General, and the Somerville state and local legislative delegations and otherwise widely distributed.
- Voted:** Unanimously
- Date:** January 8, 2018
- By the:** Somerville School Committee